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**A NEW MODEL FOR T'ANG DRESS:
MODERNISING AND
RECONCEPTUALISING
HISTORICAL CHINESE COSTUME**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of The Nottingham Trent University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

Except where indicated in the text, this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the work done in collaboration.

Hung Chih Lo

Dedication

This work is dedicated to Hong Fang and Yoshong who have been very supportive, also to my mother Sing-pin, in the last days of her sojourn in it she encouraged me to continue my study. It is a great pity she did not live to see me complete this degree. I can only hope that everything I do with the opportunity a PhD would afford me in life would make her proud.

Abstract

My research has emerged from my experience as a practicing fashion designer in Taiwan. A culturally significant segment of female fashion consumers is concerned to express their sophistication and élitist individuality by wearing clothes of a distinctively Chinese form. They are interested in wearing clothes designed and articulated in an original and evocative philosophical style embodying continuity with their Chinese heritage.

I have analysed the work of contemporary Chinese designers and discovered that they work in an Orientalising mode if they don't adopt a globalising a-cultural style. I argue that they have not shown themselves to be aware of the historical resources that are open to their use. I contend that Chinese fashion design has been dominated by a process of Westernisation instead of developing in terms of its own cultural heritage. One critically significant difference between Chinese and Western garment design relates to the way in which clothing is made to relate to the body and the symbolic significance it thereby assumes.

I argue that an excellent model for a new style of Chinese dress may be found in the T'ang dynasty. Its fashion was modernising and had a cosmopolitan quality that incorporated the influence of *Hufu* (barbarian) conventions yet at the same time deeply reflected Chinese values. I analyse original documentary and visual sources to establish its essential characteristics and theorise parallels between the historic past and contemporary trends to underscore the potential for cultural continuity.

My new collection demonstrates the potential of academic research to arrive at new contemporary design concepts for the Chinese consumer based on the principles of *Yun* (iconic silhouette), *Chih* (minimalist dress styling) and *Wen* (T'ang convention). My designs balance the demands of modern functionalism with the aesthetics of T'ang form and result in an innovative form of garment construction that is documented in my thesis.

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Lastly, I must acknowledge my gratitude to the many authors, listed in the footnotes and bibliography, whose analyses of Chinese history and art related to T'ang dress advanced my understanding of Chinese tradition, fashion and design theories have helped to inspire and clarify my ideas about Chinese fashion and its modernity. You all have been a great source of hope and inspiration to me. It is my pleasure to acknowledge it with thanks, Cambridge University Library, New Asia Library of Chinese University of Hong Kong, the SOAS library, and Boots Library of Nottingham Trent University.

Notes on Spelling and Reference

In the main text, Chinese and Japanese transcriptions are followed by English translations. This included some characters written in *fantizi* (traditional Chinese) instead of popularly used *jiantizi* (simplified Chinese). The *pinyin* system of Romanisation for Chinese words is used in this study. The exceptions being Chinese terms and names in quoted matter, academic terms using Webber system such as Chou dynasty, Ch'ing dynasty instead of Zhou dynasty, Qing dynasty, and Taoism instead of Daoism. Chinese names (surname is put in front of given names, e.g., Wang Yu-ching) that are generally familiar and used in non-Mandarin dialect form: Similarly, the author has followed individual authors' preferences in spelling (such as T'ang and *chi* (Webber system), instead of *Tang* and *qi* (*pinyin* system)). Dates are given as both Chinese imperial era and BC and AD of the Christian calendar. The classics names, dates and names adopted for historical periods for Chinese dynasties are conventional but seriously vary in different books. The author does not explore in this study the various arguments for alternative dates or names for the periods. The terminological expression of the clothes varied either with the name of the items in the language of their origin or in the description of the form of the item. All the dynastic reigns, costume terms and titles are given by connected character together as a word, such as *Hufu*, *Taizong* and *pi-bo*.

Bibliographical information is given with emphasis on the name of the author, editor or compiler and the year of publication. The *pinyin* transcription of Chinese characters is used throughout the bibliography but some of them the author has preferred to use both *pinyin* and Webber system in parentheses rather than to omit entries as it is easier for readers to refer to the entries. Preliminary annotations have been made for some works in the bibliography. More annotations will, hopefully, be introduced by other scholarship.

When Chinese writing is cited in this study, the reference is not translated or transliterated beyond the author or originating institution since the content of the source will be apparent from the text, and because a degree of linguistic competence is today indispensable to the study of the subject.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Justification and aims of the research

I was inspired to undertake this doctoral research by my experience as a designer working in the fashion industry in Taiwan¹. I have been conscious of my own Chinese cultural heritage and have tried to give it expression in whatever I have designed. It is my view that costume is an important art form that could impact significantly on the course of cultural development. I believe that what is most lacking in contemporary Chinese fashion is not technology but an ability to draw on its own cultural roots².

Noted designers, historians and theorists have contributed to establishing the foundations of Western fashion design studies. Western fashion has evolved through its history. Taste for dress has been treated as an index of different eras' characteristics, for instance, the Mediaeval, Renaissance or the Victorian periods³. By contrast, a design source derived from historical studies of Chinese fashion is lacking. The *qipao* style of the Ch'ing dynasty is one of the most popular styles on the market⁴. To present the *qipao* as the sole Chinese style is rather than to oversimplify the complexity of Chinese fashion. In present-day Chinese fashion is utterly dominated by Western styles. Chinese consumers run the risk of loosing precious cultural assets if Chinese designers continue to neglect their heritage. It is my view that the work of modern designers would be enhanced if they took a broader interest in Chinese historical resource. I argue that designing the most outstanding costumes for Chinese consumers requires a capacity to understand the connections of Chinese fashion with its past of which contemporary Chinese wearers are apparently unaware but, I would argue, need to rediscover.

In Chinese history, the T'ang dynasty is commonly acknowledged to be one of the most important periods⁵. It was a period of dazzling achievements in all the arts. During the T'ang era, China was subject to foreign influences in a new way. It was a world of elegant luxury, an era in which the aristocracy devoted itself to sartorial pursuits in an unprecedented manner. The impact of T'ang dress's influence on China's neighbours was profound⁶. For example, Japan was most deeply influenced by Chinese clothing culture and institutions. Chinese models of T'ang eighth-century court dress were copied, most noticeably the Kimono (Dalby 1993; Kennedy 1990) which was adopted by the Japanese as the dress of official Japan and continued to influence Japanese dress up to the 21st

¹ See Appendix I: The author's background-personal statement.

² By "Chinese fashion" this study refers to clothes designed and worn by the Chinese in Mainland China and Chinese societies such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. "Contemporary" in this context is the 20th and the 21st centuries.

³ See Appendix VI: Western style periods and dates.

⁴ "*Qipao*" (or "*cheongsan*") is a type of women's long garment. In Chinese, *qi* means "banner" (a colloquial term for "Manchu") and *pao* means "robe". *Qipao* has high-necked collars fastened with two horizontal metal clasps. In modern fashion, *qipao* is an alluring twentieth century adaptation of the traditional woman's robe of China, whose western-inspired tailoring emphasises the curve of the body. It is from these hybrid garments that European women's dresses copied this type of collar to give an oriental touch to their fashions. See Wilson 1986: 12-46, 93-114 and 1999: 49, 53.

⁵ For a concise description of the establishment of the dynasties, see Wechsler 1979a: 150-51.

⁶ See Twitchett and Wright 1973: 29. Other courts of states in the Chinese "cultural sphere" adopted and modified T'ang dress, i.e. the Japanese state of the Nara and Heian periods, for the Koreans, and for the Vietnamese.

century⁷. The Chinese regrettably discarded these models of T'ang dress for many centuries. My research proposes that T'ang dress was characterised by unique elements, such as multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism that have the potential to become a major design resource for contemporary Chinese fashion.

The study of historical sources for fashion design needs fresh impetus and reconceptualisation. I contest that there is a sharp contrast between theory and practice in Chinese fashion. While fashion designers and the fashion industry are sensitive to the importance of technology and the requirements of manufacture or marketing, they are less influenced by scholarly research of fashion. I am concerned about the gap between practical approaches to fashion design and academic views on them; academic analysis has not kept pace with fashion practice. An academic inquiry directed towards a better understanding of the Chinese clothing culture lying behind design practice appears insufficiently developed. Designers are hindered from consulting research because it is not readily available and also possibly because what is available proves tedious for them to comprehend and use. This had led to a culture where practitioners show little interest in the problems of design methodology.

Theorists of fashion design have written about different aspects of fashion design. What has been singularly lacking, however, is an approach that investigates the relationship between the designer's intuition and intellect in the process of translating ideas and feelings into design activities. One form of design practice is allied to art and craft. It is intuitive. Designers often rely on the occurrence of a significant event, the so-called "creative leap" (Dorst and Cross 2001: 425), which can often result in an unstable design solution. Sometimes the design solution is successful, on other occasions it is not. Therefore the quality of designers' work can not always be controlled. Most researchers on fashion have chosen to ignore the earlier stages of design, including the conceptual phase (McGown et al 1998: 432). Designers develop concepts based on their experiences in practice and thereby ignore other possibilities (Liu and Bligh 2003: 343) like adopting a more conceptual design method which may improve the quality of design and consistency of the design method. It is necessary to comprehend the cognitive aspect of the design process by investigating the progress of the activity of solving design problems within the designer's mind. In my view both "theory-based design"(academic oriented) and "practice-based research"(practice oriented) are essential for an exploration of the characteristics and meanings of costume. I propose that there is a great scope to improve modern Chinese fashion design methodology. Research on conceptual and empirical design processes can greatly contribute to the development of a design methodology that applies a historic costume resource (in the case of this study, T'ang dress) for a new model of dress for contemporary wear.

First, the research will demonstrate that the conceptualisation process is just as significant in formulating the design strategies as the physical processes of designing. It will contribute to the academic study of Chinese fashion and will be relevant to practical problems of fashion design. The aim is to create a new model of T'ang dress. It is to modernise traditional Chinese costume, drawing on the T'ang dress as a source embodying values and ideas that could be made relevant to modern

⁷ See Wang Yu-ching 1995.

lives. I will explore how the design methodology is established and how this can throw light on how the past can have a bearing on the present in the process of design. The designing therefore can be discerned as a more completely explicable rational process, particularly at the methodological level.

1.2 Organisation of the research

Chapter 2 explains my methodology of the research and design.

Part I: historical studies

In chapter 3, in order to understand the significance of T'ang dress and its traditional heritage, my research examines a number of canonical texts on the T'ang era and the period before it. I study "*Li*"⁸, primarily its rites, and modes of ethical behaviour and the cosmological nature of the emblems in the T'ang ritual dress. Modern scholarship on T'ang history that analyses the features of T'ang imperial ritual tradition, for example, the Confucian belief system embodied in T'ang codes is used to enrich and clarify my understanding of T'ang dress system⁹. I adopt the perspectives of modern scholarship of the 20th century to describe accounts of T'ang state regulations (politics, history and rites) which are found in the classics¹⁰. For example, I draw on how Confucian scholars described ritual theories in their public and private writings ("*chuen*", prose). This provides one of the major foci of this historical study. Works by modern scholars stimulated my discussion of the symbolism and social practice of T'ang dress. For example, McMullen's perspective (1987: 215) pointed out that in T'ang era there was a comprehensive worldview that

bound the human and cosmological processes together in a hierarchy of complex and highly detailed dependent relationships. As a component of the cosmos man was governed by the same series of elements, numbers, colours, directions, tastes, musical notes and cycles of season. (1987: 215)

I contemplated the artefacts of T'ang period (e.g., paintings and figurines) from the perspective of the traditional disciplines of Chinese philosophy, art and clothing history. My exploration of T'ang fashion has been based on an analysis and description of the available secondary sources. Discussions of different views of Chinese civilisations by anthropologists and art historians, and the ideas on social meanings of dress by socio-cultural historians, helped me to throw light on certain issues about Chinese clothing tradition. In Chapter 4, I have focused on what I find inspirational in literature description which attempts to discover the principles underlying the physical presentations of the T'ang artefacts. One of the major foci of Chapter 4 is the symbolic meaning that the T'ang people associated with dress. I am as much concerned with symbolism as with the appearance (the form and the construction) of dress itself, and with the concrete vehicles that generate sentiments of legitimacy or support as with the abstract ideology and values that lay behind them.

Part II: Contemporary interpretation

In Chapter 5, I undertake an investigation of contemporary Chinese fashion in both the West and in Chinese societies. I also study the social changes in China and the West that have influenced Chinese fashion in modern times. In attempting to comprehend what it was that connected the Chinese wearer's sensibilities to the evolution of fashion, in Chapter 6, I deepen my understanding of the nature of

⁸ See Glossary.

⁹ For example, the usages of T'ang codes is analysed by McMullen: "the usages and sumptuary regulations recorded in T'ang code as an aspect of the state ritual tradition bears out the hierarchical view of society that was essential to the Confucian perspective." (1987: 199)

¹⁰ See *Da T'ang Kai Yuan Li* (AD 732), compiled by Hsiao Sung, et al.

contemporary Chinese fashion through my comparison of fashion in the modern 20th and 21st centuries and T'ang periods. I investigate the parallels of fashion between the T'ang dynasty and changes in modern China in order to highlight continuities in Chinese clothing culture and provide a resource for conceptualising present practice.

Part III: Fashion design practice

In Chapter 7, I apply insights from the historical enquiry and an analysis of the relationship between changes in fashion, social contexts, and my own views on clothes to conceptualise a design methodology informed by my experience as a practicing Chinese designer. Two questions are important to my endeavour to define a contemporary Chinese fashion style. The first concerns the critical boundary between Chinese historical studies and modern approaches to fashion practice. The second concerns the problem of the relationship between the cultural, aesthetic and functions of modern Chinese clothing and its design approach against Westernisation and Orientalism¹¹. I re-appraise the traditional Western accounts of Chinese fashion and attempt to revise the Euroamerican Orientalised fixation with body exposure and bodily sensation that lies behind modern Chinese fashion. I believe that the persistence of Euroamerican Orientalisation is connected to misconstrued historical accounts of Chinese fashion. To place the T'ang dress at the centre of a new model of Chinese fashion, in Chapter 8, I situate the evolution of Chinese fashion in a wider historical and social and cultural context. This exercise will be a crucial guide in developing my design concept for modernising T'ang dress. In Chapter 9, I elicit empirical data from my design process and analyse them to explain my design methodology.

In Chapter 10, I discuss the findings of the research.

1.3 Scope and source of the research

1.3.1 Historical studies of T'ang dress and observation of T'ang artefacts

The sources that I will examine include:

Primary sources

Confucian classics such as *Analects (Lun-yu)* have been preserved¹². The moral norms they contain were as pervasive as any standards of secular conduct in Chinese society. Regarding the dress of ancient China, accounts are given in the pre-Han books¹³, *the Book of Documents (Shang Shu)*¹⁴, *Rites of Chou (Zhou Li)*¹⁵ and *Records of Rites (Li Ji)*¹⁶ considered the oldest ordinance (McMullen 1988: 120). Chinese court dress was established in the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220)¹⁷. In the centuries between the Han and the T'ang dynasties, the moral and ideological system of Confucianism in which T'ang court dress was defined by scholars of canonical traditions¹⁸. Official documents concerning ritual matters survive in a number of T'ang sources recording discussions at the court (Wechsler 1985:

¹¹ See Glossary.

¹² See *Analects (Lun-yu)*, tr. by Legge 1885.

¹³ Pre-Han period, prior to the 2nd BC.

¹⁴ See *A Concordance to the Shang-shu*, ed. by Lau 1992.

¹⁵ See *A Concordance to the Zhouli*, ed. by Lau 1992.

¹⁶ See *Li Ji*, tr. by James Legge 1885. Also see *A Concordance to the Li Ji*, ed. by Lau 1992.

¹⁷ For the discussion of Han court dress, see discussion by Harada 1967: 19-29.

¹⁸ For the relationship between Confucian rites and ritual dress, see Wang Yu-ching 1995.

29). Ritual codes were compiled by a group of Sui and T'ang scholars in works such as the "Monograph on Ritual" (*Li-i chih*) in *Sui Shu* (*The Sui History*), *Da T'ang Liau Dian* (completed in AD 738), *Da T'ang K'ai-yüan Li* (completed in AD 732), and *T'ang Hui-yao* (completed in AD 961). These materials will allow us to understand the use of ritual dress in T'ang.

The state histories of the T'ang dynasty, e.g., *Chiu T'ang Shu*¹⁹, are still comparatively full and retain considerable importance (Twitchett and Wright 1973: 38)²⁰. The records, particularly the monograph on carriages and dress (*Yü-fu chih*) which constitutes chapter 45 in the *Chiu T'ang Shu*, give details of the rules of dress in T'ang times. Compared with the *Chiu T'ang Shu*, the later compiled state history *Hsin T'ang Shu* is of little use to a modern historian as the information in it is very skeletal²¹. Rules of clothing at the state level, including taboos and ceremonial protocols surrounding them and their daily use which were all part of the politics of the T'ang court, had been annotated in canonical documentation and edited in modern editions, such as the description of variations in the forms of T'ang dress in *Xin Ding San Li Tu*²².

Of major importance for a contemporary account of T'ang secular life and T'ang thought is *Quan T'ang Wen* (T'ang prose)²³. I examine studies of the collected works of individual authors. Locating and examining daily T'ang practices in these texts will allow me to appreciate T'ang fashion in the lives of common people. The works of T'ang court painters were analysed in several histories of art, such as *Li Tai Ming Hua Yi* (Record of famous paintings in successive dynasties), *T'ang Chao Ming Hua Ju* (Catalogue of distinguished painters of the T'ang dynasty), and *Tu Hua Jian Wen Zhi* (Experiences in painting). These give ideas about how T'ang artist practiced their aesthetic theories.

Modern scholarship

A wealth of modern scholarship has been devoted to the T'ang. There are works which give a picture of early China's civilisation (Loewe and Shaughnessy 1999) and clear summaries of the central economic, socio-political and cultural dimensions of Pre-T'ang dynasty that set the stage for the T'ang period, such as Wright's work (1957: 71-104). Wright provides a picture of how the Sui ideology was a deliberate compound of the three principal religious traditions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism)²⁴. Traditional Chinese perspectives on religions and beliefs have been reviewed and elucidated by works such as Barrett (2005), McMullen (1973), Meskill (1973), Perry and Smith (1976a), Twitchett (1970), Twitchett and Wright (1973) and Weinstein (1973, 1987). T'ang was heir to three major traditions of religious (Buddhism and Taoism) and moral ideas (Confucianism). The most influential work on T'ang religions has been done by Barrett (2005) and secular and religious life by Wechsler (1985). For understanding secular as well as religious life, Perry and Smith introduce works analysing the cosmopolitan spirit of T'ang China (1976b: 123-30). Weinstein proposes that Buddhism and Taoism belonged to a later stage in religious evolution. Each of these traditions deeply influenced T'ang thoughts and lives and gives insights into the uses and meaning of

¹⁹ See edn of *Zhong Hua Shu Ju*, 1975.

²⁰ Twitchett (1979) sheds light on the nature of the materials available and the difficulties of interpreting the historical records of the T'ang dynasty.

²¹ See edn of *Zhong Hua Shu Ju*, 1975.

²² See *Empress's costume* Vol. 2 (Hou Fu Tu Juan Di Er), Southern Song edn of Beijing Library, 1992.

²³ *Quan T'ang Wen* is a sizable collection commissioned in AD 1808 by the Chia-ch'ing emperor in the Ch'ing dynasty and completed in 1814.

²⁴ See Glossary.

Chinese clothing (Wright 1973: 239-63; Wright and Twitchett 1973: 2).

The outline of the history of the major Chinese dynasties and their institutions have been elaborated by such writers as Twitchett (1979). Western scholars' critical appraisal of traditional historiography and their new perspectives and techniques, as well as the extension of scholarship into new fields have stimulated and enriched the study of the T'ang era. Sinological studies include those which reinterpreted and translated ancient documents in the light of new discoveries. Works such as Legge (1885) and Loewe (1995) help to develop ideas about the ethical values and cosmological functions of T'ang dress.

Much of the modern scholars' knowledge of early T'ang views on ritual emerges from the general encyclopaedic works on government and official ritual codes. There have been works relating various modes of analysis of T'ang thoughts by modern scholars associated with the dynastic legitimacy, administrations and institutions, such as McMullen's (1988) which provides the most rigorous critical scrutiny of T'ang scholars' attitudes to state ritual and their analyses of the canons in light of ritual theory (ethical, social values and cosmological beliefs), and the evolution of successive dynastic ritual codes. His works (1984) and (1987b) give insights into T'ang ritual practice.

Modern literature devoted to foreign influences on Chinese culture in the T'ang period sheds light on the evolution of fashion in the period. Many representations of T'ang people in foreign dress have been found, giving evidence of Western influence on T'ang clothing culture. Mahler (1959) gives a clear picture of the detailed monographs on the trades associated with fashion. Gernet (1982), Sickman and Soper (1971) have offered a historical view of the art of the time and this also indicated the foreign influence on clothing. Harada (1970) and Watson (1995) give many examples of the T'ang's interaction with foreign cultures. The works demonstrate the foreign influences which contributed so substantially to the multiculturalism of T'ang civilisation (Wright and Twitchett 1973: 1, 29, 40) and cosmopolitanism of T'ang fashion (Major 1999: 503-506; Cahill 1999: 103-118).

Authentic relics have been discovered in archaeological sites in Dun-huang and Turfan along the Silk Road in China's far western regions of Manchuria, Outer Mongolia and Central Asia²⁵. These furnish tangible materials for the understanding of how foreign clothing culture influenced China²⁶. The number of generally accepted authentic T'ang paintings is extremely small. Some Buddhist paintings preserved in Japan, other Buddhist frescoes and paintings on silk found at Dun-huang in Chinese Turketan and other sites in Central Asia. Figurines and handroll paintings are preserved in Chinese, Japanese and Western museums. From those visual images we can observe primary evidence of the T'ang style. I have observed these collections first-hand through museum visits to: Liaoning Province Museum, China History Museum; Taipei Palace Museum; British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

Works by art historians which deal with chronological analyses of surviving fragments (Zhao Feng 2004) and variations in artistic expressions of the artefacts, help the understanding of the universal, multicultural and cosmopolitan quality of T'ang dress. Important works such as: Ashton and Gray (1985), Ferguson (1927), Paludan (1994), Tregear (1979) and Watson (1995). See Ferguson

²⁵ See Glossary and Appendix IV: Silk Road after 5th century.

²⁶ See Appendix V: Map of trade routes between China & the West in the T'ang dynasty.

(1927) and Fong Wen (1984) regarding the works by painters of the T'ang dynasty, for their composition, colouring and design. The characteristics of T'ang figurative painting and the subjects of T'ang art have been illustrated by modern art historians such as Karetzky (1996). I will obtain information from the works of T'ang painters such as Zhang Xuan (fl. AD 713 to 742) and Zhou Fang (fl. AD 780 to 810) to interpret the stylistic changes in T'ang fashion.

Modern scholars' description of Chinese costume provides a historical source from which the forms of T'ang dress can be visualised. Works by Harada (1967, 1970), Fan Chun-rong (1989), Li Yi-chian (1993), Yoshito Da (1988) and Wang Yu-ching (1972, 1975, 1983, 1993, 1995, 2000a, 2000b) explain the ways in which social hierarchy was expressed in the decoration, choice of colours and style of Chinese court dress. Details on Chinese clothing obtained from archaeological finds can be seen in a more complete account in Jin (1988), O'Neill and Walter (2004), Shen Cong-wen (1988), Zhang (1959), and Zhou and Gao (1987). Their analysis of variations in clothing form and design shed light on the use of Chinese dress.

1.3.2 Fashion and design studies

There is a substantial and rich body of scholarship on the history of Western fashion. Current theories have sought to explain the fashion system. "Fashion" as a term has several connotations, some of which are sociological (Konig 1973: 1-28, 132-192; Langner 1959: 46; Daniel 1994: 3; Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997), anthropological (Bergler 1955), psychological (Flügel 1930; Soloman 1985), historical (Brenninkmeyer 1965: 259-302; Konig 1973; Roach and Eicher 1965, Roche 1994), and ethnographic (Craik 1993). Some of the contemporary debates discuss fashion in relation to democracy (Kidwell and Christman 1974; Liporelsky 1994), civilisation or capitalism (Simmel 1973: 171-91; Veblen 1979: 171-91), appearance (Blau 1999), and eroticism (Steele 1985). Others explain "fashion" as the commodification of the political economy of signs, structuralism or semiology (Barthes 1985), politics, religion, and psychology (Adburgham 1966: 15), modernism (Wilson 1987). The work shed lights on the phenomenon, signs and origin of Western fashion. "Fashion" is explained differently, even the critic Roland Barthes (1985) had yet to crystallise a firm and fixed answer to the questions of subjectivity and standards of analysis of "fashion". All of these theories assess fashion from a non-designer's view.

Modern Western democracies have been founded on consumerism and mass communications (Barthes 1985: 240; Blau 1999: 15, 63-64; Buck-Morss 1991: 23; Liporelsky 1994: 5). The term "fashion" itself is defined by Western journalism to refer exclusively to clothing behaviour in the context of global capitalist economies. Fashion audiences are over-informed by journalistic accounts of fashion from global mass-media sources (Liporelsky 1994: 3). Arguably journalism wields some arbitrary power to draw up a strict agenda about what is and what is not fashionable (McRobbie 2000: 257-58, 261). Western journalism rarely speaks of non-western fashion as fashionable (Barthes 1985: 180). The global economic system is dominated by a core of advanced Western countries while third world countries (like China in the twentieth century) remain at the periphery of the system with little control over their economic and political development (Crane 2002: 3; Tomlinson 1991: 37). I would argue that this globalised system controls the world markets in a way that impacts on Chinese fashion.

There are a few works on early China fashion (Henry 1999: 475-86), T'ang fashion (Steele and Major 1999), Chinese dress relating to sex and text (Major 1999: 503-06), modernity (Zamperini 2001: 195-214; Steele 1983: 8-15), clothing, citizenship and gender-formation (Chen Tina Mai 2001: 143-72), Orientalism (Martin and Koda 1995; Steele 1993), and modern Chinese fashion designers' work (Steele and Major 1999; Bullis 2000). These works shed light on what determines Chinese fashion.

In order to understand Chinese style fashion by both Western and Chinese designers, I have examined modern designers' work both in the West and in Chinese societies. Those works include those by Paul Poiret, Callot Soeurs, Dolce & Gabbana, Byron Lars, Christian Lacroix, Jean Paul Gaultier, Donna Karan, and John Galliano. I investigated the works of international fashion designers of Chinese descent such as Vivienne Tam, Amy Chan and Anna Sui. I investigated the work by Chinese designers in Asian cities such as Peter Lau, William Chan and Pacino in Hong Kong, Esther Tay in Singapore, Lee Kuann-i, Lo, Hung-chih in Taiwan, Bill Keith in Malaysia, I also studied works by designers in Chinese cities Beijing, Shanghai, Hhangzhou, Shenzhen and Guangzhou such as Liang Zi, Wang Hong-ying, Gu Yi, Luo Zheng, Wu Xue-kai, and Fang Ying. Their works reflect the modernisation process of Chinese fashion, western influence and the designers' personal design approach.

Design methodology has been developed in fields such as industrial design and architectural design, typically by means such as conferences and publication of research papers (e.g., *Journal of Design Studies*). In the 1960s, notions of systematic design emerged to provide systematic procedures for managing design processes. This movement, started by Johns (1963) and Alexander (1964), introduced a completely new way of designing (Chan Chiu-shui 2001: 325). In recent decades, design research has increasingly begun to focus attention on such issues as research methods and methodology (the comparative study of methods), philosophy, and philosophy of science (Friedman 2003: 515). In contrast to the methodology of science (Warfield 1994), which is seen as descriptive product oriented methodology of design (in the case of this study, fashion) is strongly process oriented and takes a normative point of view (Galle 1999: 213; Hurst and Hollins 1995: 584-89). Methodology of design aims at the improvement of design processes (Dorst 1997; Dorst and Cross 2001: 425-37; Kroes 2002: 287-302) and design problem-solving (Balkham and Mills 1979). For example, one of the processes of methodology requires generating concepts (Cross 1994; Liu and Bligh 2003: 341-355; Pugh 1991; Roozenburg and Eekels 1995).

Design methodology research has resulted in a variety of schemas for dividing the design process into various phases, varying from the very simple analysis-synthesis-evaluation scheme to the rather detailed and elaborate scheme proposed by the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (VDI) (1987). For instance, Barratt introduces the processes and terminology into methodology of design studies used by scientists and artists alike (1980: 54, 179-82, 200-07). Knoop et al contend that the increasing application of technology in design (such as computing aided design) coupled with a poor understanding of the design process conducted by human beings has led to the current lack of support of design method from the research source for the conceptual designer (Knoop et al 1996). Knoop et

al and McGown et al contend that the conceptual stages of design are ill-defined and complex (Knoop et al 1996; McGown et al 1998: 431).

In the context of my research, “fashion design” refers to the process (Friedman 2003: 507-08; Simon 1982: 112, 129) by which I devise practices based on my own idea of creation and it involves the externalisation of an internalised process (Friedman 2003: 515)²⁷. Through this process I will resolve the problems of the modernisation of Chinese fashion that have been raised in my research. It will also enable me to make research relevant to practice by creating a methodology of design for the production of Chinese style clothes.

1.4 Arguments, hypotheses and questions of the research

1.4.1 Arguments

The notion of “unchanging Chinese clothing” is profoundly mistaken

“Chinese fashion” was considered impossible to incorporate into the Eurocentred fashion system and was treated as a peripheral phenomenon: subcultural, erotic or Orientalistic. Because of the Western attitudes to Chinese fashion, it is unavoidable that the discussion of “Chinese fashion” from a Western perspective must therefore be arbitrary and leave many gaps. I would argue that there is a problem of boundaries in fashion²⁸.

The definition of “fashion” in the West affected the way the Western fashion world regards Chinese fashion. According to Steele and Major, from the Western view, Chinese style clothing differed significantly from fashionable dress, however picturesque it was: “To some extent” until the 1990s, China was “far from being fashionable.” (Steele and Major 1999: 65) It is commonly believed that there has been no change over periods of thousands of years and that the Chinese as a people ignore fashion. In 1926, a retired French missionary doctor recounted his impressions of Chinese clothing:

With [Chinese] clothing, it is the same as with houses: there is no change over periods of thousands of years. In China, one ignores fashion; even the most progressive mandarins, the most elegant *taitai* (*grand dames*), dress themselves now as did the contemporaries of Confucius; and their clothing does not differ from that of workers except in the richness of its material. (Legendre 1926: 86 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 1)

I will argue that the Chinese women followed fashion trends that they considered attractive and appropriate. To look back at Chinese fashion in ancient China, there is evidence that Chinese women tried to change their appearance in the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) and this important shift may be regarded as the period when fashion self-consciously emerged in China. One of the major changes in the society which came about during the T’ang period was the complete transformation of patterns of life including the revolution of fashion. Chinese fashion reached its apogee in the T’ang dynasty. The daring variation of costumes is evident of T’ang women’s enthusiasm about exploring

²⁷ Design and its derivatives “designing” and “designs”, are conceived of as a particular type of action, which, in turn, is described in terms of plans, intentions, and practical reasoning. See Houkes et al 2002: 303-320, Love 2000: 293-313 and Galle 1999: 212.

²⁸ The definition of “fashion” may depend on where we’re looking or which period we’re looking at. There are different origins and developments of fashions: whether they be ancient or modern, in different cultures or countries. Differences between the ways people dress would have been influenced by what was happening around them. This does, however, allow for connections and crosscurrents.

fashion. After the T'ang dynasty, people still pursued fashion, in the Ming dynasty (AD 1368-1644), every one was interested in fashion. Through the pursuit of fashion, the people of Suzhou (near present-day Shanghai) had been "habituated to rich adornment and have favoured the unusual." (Brook 1998: 221)

The Japanese scholar Naito postulated that the T'ang represented the end of China's medieval period, the time of unprecedented social, cultural and economical changes which is comparable only with the early twentieth century²⁹; it was the beginning of "modern" China, when the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) had fallen and China's traditional order changed to a new system. This period was "modern" in the sense that the patterns of government, of administration and of social organisation then began to take new forms. The transformation represented the remaking of Chinese society, including Chinese fashion³⁰. The time was marked by a pronounced change in indigenous dress styles and Westernisation brought in radical styles. During the May Fourth Movement from 1916 through the 1920s, Chinese women advanced themselves the pace of modernisation. The female face of a progressive China and what Chinese women wore assumed a transcendental importance. It signified the hegemony of "modern". Despite its persisting popularity, the belief in the notion of the "unchanging Chinese clothing", in my view, is profoundly mistaken.

Foreign influences on T'ang fashion was omitted in the historical record

Traditional Chinese historians who held an ethnocentric view left out of their records any benefit derived from contacts with foreign countries. The historical record of China's relationship with the barbarians has been one-sided. Traditional historians only emphasised what the Barbarians gained from the Chinese (Moses 1976: 61). This led to a lack of understanding of the exchange between the T'ang and barbarian cultures. It leaves us unaware of the fact that T'ang clothing culture was influenced greatly by foreign cultures. To come to a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of ancient Chinese fashion, in particular T'ang fashion, it is necessary to trace all sources of influence, including foreign ones.

Offset the "politically-centred" emphasis of Chinese costume

The "politically-centred" emphasis of Chinese costume does not give an adequate idea of Chinese people's sensibilities and tastes in fashion. Chinese state history "was written by officials for officials." (Balazs 1964: 135) The traditional form of "politically-centred" clothing regulations, promoted by imperial courts, emphasises the heritage of the moral dimension of clothing (Twitchett 1985: 84). Few of these official histories deal with the areas of art and literature, nor do they contain any information on Chinese people's lives which were so important a part of T'ang civilisation and to the understanding of Chinese fashion.

Furthermore, the historians were not simply recorders of events. Like the court diarists, they were held to be the custodians of precedents. Chinese histories were compiled by males for males, were overwhelmingly concerned with the dynastic affairs of the ruling class, whose views often focused on the hierarchical and administrative functions of clothing-traditions embodying the moral-ethical lessons of the past. Women's activities had been prejudicially concealed from male's

²⁹ For Naito's theories see H. Miyakawa, 'An outline of the Naito hypothesis and its effect on Japanese studies of China', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 14.4 (1955) 133-52, noted in Twitchett 1976: 8.

³⁰ See Huang 1999: 134.

historians' view (McDermott 1999: 17). Clothes that exposed a woman's body would have suffered severe censure in the official dynastic histories. For example, women who wore eccentric clothes were satirised by historians as dangerous witches³¹. This, I would argue, discouraged Chinese women's desires for changes in fashion. Discussion about how Chinese women felt about their roles in society is conspicuous by its omission from the record. I intend to investigate Chinese aesthetic sensibilities and tastes because it is central to my understanding of Chinese wearer's need for my design methodology.

Difficulties for modern understanding of historical source

I will argue that the traditional analyses of Chinese costume that focus on politics or objects are inadequate to provide potential design resource. In trying to understand primary sources of Pre-T'ang times, there are several handicaps: the few historical documents that exist were rewritten with every changing dynasty and most of them have rarely been authenticated. Traditional Chinese commentators elucidated the documents by reading into them the ideas and institutions of their own day (Creel 1980: 26). These documents were mixed almost inextricably with others that were false or seriously misdated (Shaughnessy 1999: 221-22). Documentation nevertheless is long on detailed description of historical facts, but is weak in chronology and some sources did not overcome the former deficiency (Wechsler 1985: 92). This poses difficulties for modern understanding of historical source.

Works purporting to inform us about the T'ang dynasty are voluminous but the documents were produced for different official purposes in different dynastic reigns (Twitchett 1985: 160). Scholars have divergent views both on the reproductions of quotations and on deductions from Pre-T'ang historians' conclusions and with some of them, the problems of authenticity are extremely complex (Creel 1980: 34). Inevitably some part of the record of dress tradition had become a meaningless convention to modern understanding. On the other hand, the canonical books on Chinese history relevant to dress as well as the codes and treatises of dress rules are immensely detailed and extensive and have struck many Western Sinologists as boring pieces of exotica irrelevant to a modern understanding of Chinese fashion history. Many Chinese scholars also share this view (McDermott 1999: 1).

With regards to clothing regulations, some classic texts and clothing styles from the records are incompatible with the evidence of archaeological finds. Those classic texts have more ambiguities than clear-cut descriptions of the form and uses of dress from historical records and express several different and even contradictory ideas (e.g., the inconsistency in quotations between *Chiu T'ang Shu* and *Hsin T'ang Shu*. The forms and styles of the huge variety of Chinese costumes pictured in artefacts and categorised by scholars are not consistently named. For example, a shawl of the same form in Han dynasty is given different names in different modern works on Chinese costume: "*pi-po*", "*chang-jin*" or "*pi-jin*" and its uses are differently attributed, either exclusively by aristocrats or by servants (Jie Mei 1990; Shen Cong-wen 1988; Wang Yu-ching 1975; Wu Min 1992; Zhang Mo-yuan 1959). Lastly, understanding the evolution of T'ang dress and fashion with the aid of archaeological findings is difficult because clothes and textiles of T'ang era that have survived are scarce. Artefacts

³¹ See *Shih Chi* 1959, the historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien recorded the eccentric dressing behaviour of Chinese women and gave his negative criticism.

such as paintings, figurines, sculptures and literary sources of the period provide the only evidence of the characteristics of the clothes. But it is difficult to identify the designs of the costume, e.g., the actual cut of the clothes on the surviving works. Some of the clothes are kept in museums or private collections and the museums just have books which have their photographs. Few fragments of garments survived. The costume study would suffer from the limitations that the designers can not directly examine original old clothes.

Contrast between the design methods and ends in shaping Chinese and Western fashions

Many of the abundant Western books on the Chinese arts appearing in recent decades have divided the subject according to technique and material (Watson 1995: Preface). This "object-oriented" analysis of costume emphasises material manifestations (Watson 1995: 95). It is therefore not surprising that the significant spiritual aspect of Chinese clothing culture has been neglected. Many designs may be attractive in a stereotypical Western sense. But little thought is given to the idea that physical beauty is only just one aspect of women's self-image.

It is reasonable, and in keeping with common experience, that people from different cultures will have different preferences in terms of their accustomed ideas of beauty (Haweis 1978). Chinese fashion systems respond differently to cultural and social changes compared to Western ones. For example, the Westerners may see the Chinese traditional painting method of using ink to produce repetitious drawing exercises on two-dimensional silk or paper, as merely a practice of translating copyist traditions and techniques. But the Chinese could perceive the subtle changes in tedious ink lines and Chinese ideas behind the images. This is one of the key elements of the psychological and philosophical, but not physical, emphasis of Chinese aesthetics: two dimensions create a spatial universe in the Chinese eye and mind which is different from the Western tradition of using three dimensions to illustrate and generate objects. By contrast, the Western development of paintings has evolved more dramatic physical changes in terms of the usage of light, paints and materials to express three-dimensions. Chinese and Western painting have contrasting approaches to design methods and ends. The different aesthetic conceptions of both cultures, I argue, have an impact on how dress is produced and fashion is evolved. Their different aesthetic conceptions would have different impact on functional views on shaping dress and fashion.

Impact of globalisation, Westernisation and Orientalism on Chinese fashion

In modern 20th century fashion, a relatively homogenous mass culture and its products are accepted uncritically by mass consumers. This has an impact on Chinese fashion. The Chinese consumers seem to passively accept global products from similar sources, disseminated by western techniques of modern marketing. This tendency to westernise Chinese clothing has grown even stronger in the 21st century. I will argue that fashion in contemporary Chinese society has been guided by a predominance of globalised American and European tastes, leading Chinese fashion to lose a great deal of its cultural identity. Orientalism, the West's fascination with and assimilation of the ideas and styles of the East, has also made an impact on Chinese fashion and design³². To identify contemporary issues in Chinese fashion, I will argue that the Orientalist or "Westernised" Chinese fashion should not be regarded as equivalent to "modernised" Chinese fashion.

³² See Preface in Whittick 1971: 163. Also see Mackenzie 1995.

Tension between theoretical and practical approaches to Chinese fashion design

Chinese fashion design confronts an unwarranted polarity between the practical and the academic. The confrontation of the practical and academic approaches suggests that a neglect of market realities. I will argue that there are tensions between theoretical and practical approaches to Chinese fashion design. Authors of design theories rarely venture into the territory of fashion product design. There are some relevant theoretical judgments of fashion design but advances have been very uneven. By contrast, the discussion of design concepts by the designers often focuses on the nature of physical features and excludes mental activities and attributes. I will argue that Chinese fashion seems to have provoked no significant theoretical work that examines the problematic issues of its modernity. Its discussion, so far, has lacked theoretical depth and there doesn't seem to be much interest in the work of Chinese designers. There exists a substantial amount of confusion created by the theorists of design with respect to the underlying basis of many theories, concepts and methods (Love 2002: 295), which is not of much use to practitioners. Some fashion practitioners assert that "theory-based design"³³, with its emphasis on profound knowledge and intellectual achievement, robs design of its artistic depth. On the other hand, the development of theories of design research has occurred in a piecemeal fashion.

1.4.2 Hypotheses and questions

I propose that

- The evolution of fashion was widely interacted with foreign cultures during the T'ang period. The study of literature on the symbolism of T'ang dress and the observation of artefacts can achieve a fuller understanding of the evolution of T'ang fashion³⁴.
- Contemporary Chinese fashion culture shares certain common features with the T'ang period. In the same way that T'ang drew inspiration from Han, the 21st century Chinese can draw inspirations from T'ang times. It proposed that certain aspects of T'ang dress may fulfil both the functionalist and aesthetic criteria of modern use.
- There are profound differences in Chinese and Western views on the human body that have an impact on their different approaches to fashion. It is proposed that the Western system cannot meet all the Chinese wearers' needs all of the time and that considerable dissatisfaction over unmet demands are bound to arise.
- Design practice requires theory and theory requires investigation into practice. The problems of the relationship between theory and practice can be tackled by in-depth historical research into the design resource so that theoretical and practical insights can be mutually integrated for an appropriate fashion design.

³³ Design is either a field of thinking and pure research, or a field of practice and applied research. Theory is abstract thought, speculation. Theorizing involves the discipline. The foundation of design rests on the fact that design solves the problems. Design creates something new, or transforming less desirable situations to preferred situations. To do this, it is important for the designers to know how things work and why. Understanding how things work and why requires us to analyse and explain. This is the purpose of theory.

³⁴ For example, evidence of women's activities can be found in the depictions of donors' portraits in many Dun-huang murals where they can be observed to play their social roles and sartorial practice.

- The development of a fashion design methodology based on a profound knowledge of design resource and embracing the empirical world can be more deeply effective than purely self-generated artistry³⁵.

On the base of these hypotheses, the following questions may be posed:

- What were the dominant features and styles of T'ang dress in different periods? What was the process of shifting dynamism and factors that drove changes in T'ang fashion?
- What are the homogeneities in traditional heritage, consistencies and variations in taste, look or social values between the T'ang and the 21st century Chinese fashion?
- To what extent did dynamics of fashion in T'ang such as desire for novelty, or foreign cultural influences that drove the evolution of T'ang fashion which equate to the development of modern Chinese fashion?
- What design resource can be derived from the study of T'ang dress and how can such understanding be applied to the development of a design methodology for modern Chinese fashion?
- How can the expressive and functionalist qualities of T'ang dress be balanced to build a new model of T'ang dress?

1.5 Limitation and contribution of the research

I mainly directed my attention to the forms of dress and their meaning and uses which I think are most valuable for contemporary design application. To understand the symbolism of T'ang dress, I have drawn attention to the problems raised by the nature of the primary source material, which to an extent impose to what I can develop. In order to keep within proper limits for a preliminary study of this subject, I chose a few representative images of T'ang dress on the basis of forms, colours and symbolic interpretations. I tended not so much to concentrate on object-centred developments but to pursue research into the broad underlying issues of cultural evolution. Historical sources helped me to judge the use of dress to a degree; its social function could be assumed by the documentary information although the determination of a more precise use is difficult. I have made attempts to describe T'ang dress but it must be deeper than described in this volume. The uneven coverage of the T'ang fashion seen in artefacts reflects very closely the uneven materials at my disposal. I have not been able to describe dress worn by the masses. To analyse how T'ang dress served a practical function, there has to be some speculation on my part as it would be difficult to test all the ancient historical theories such as T'ang's worldview in modern times. Source and time constraints made it impossible. I only touched upon them tangentially as they affected the use and meaning of the dress. For the classical materials I have drawn to some extent on both Chinese sources and modern Western works, in so far as they are available to me. I have not been able to find evidence sustaining all the images in the figures. Also I have not dwelt upon technical matters such as the methods of producing and decorating the fabrics and cutting of traditional Chinese costume.

³⁵ See Friedman 2003: 522.

However for the main sources of Chinese literature I have not able to translate them because the primary Chinese sources were written in archaic Chinese. In the absence of elucidatory source material, some of my interpretation of T'ang dress, particularly ritual dress in relation to T'ang religions, as well as contemporary 21st century fashion must await the results of further research. This study is intended to be no more than a derivation of the design source of T'ang dynasty dress for contemporary use and I realise that much remains to be done.

Since the clothing culture of the contemporary world draws on many sources, T'ang civilisation could become one of the important sources of inspiration for fashion design. The style of T'ang dress may serve as a historical source to designers seeking to promote Chinese traditions. My study focuses on both identifying the characteristics of design elements and the methodology of product design process. I have studied historical dress as evidence of values that have been instilled in Chinese society and can be derived from it through interpretative strategies. I see the production of the design model as a specialised professional activity whose outcome can be affected by an analytic approach to methodology. Further, my study of the rich heritage of T'ang dress may suggest ways in which designers can complement or enhance contemporary fashion. My work might open up a new way of thinking about modern Chinese fashion by stimulating debate over issues of modernisation and westernisation. I am hopeful, nevertheless, that certain cohesiveness will be developed in the field which constitutes Chinese fashion studies.

Chapter 2: Methodology of the research and design

2.1 Research methodology for the study of T'ang dress and fashion

2.1.1 Research procedure

The method of the study of T'ang dress, which is based on Prown's approach (1998: 133-38), uses three stages of analysis of artefacts: "Description", "Deduction" and "Speculation"³⁶. The research proceeds from (1) "description", which involves an understanding of T'ang dress and fashion in its cultural and social context, recording the internal evidence of the artefact itself, to (2) "deduction", characterising the design elements of T'ang dress, to (3) "speculation", interpreting the interaction between myself, the researcher, and T'ang fashion.

Description

The first stage of the research procedure is closely related to the basic descriptive techniques of art history, archaeology and clothing history. "Description" is covered in "Chapter 3: the evolution of T'ang dress: multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and symbolism". I conducted a literature research, which involved a search for the principles underlying the visible and the tangible. Some points are drawn from modern scholars' perspectives in the traditional disciplines of Chinese history; others are drawn from cultural analysis of Chinese philosophy, social psychology, etc. In order to understand the character of T'ang dress, my analysis attempts to go beneath surface appearances to its underlying reality.

I approached observation in the research by examining the images of dress itself; that is, internal evidence. I distinguished properties of T'ang dress which are accessible to available modes of analysis and interpretation, and which together offer a perception of how, what, when, where, by whom and why the dress was worn and its use and significance. Bearing these questions in mind, a useful way of organising the properties of T'ang dress is to divide them into four main areas: (1) Form, which includes style, aesthetics, material, construction, pattern and colour. (2) Provenance, its history and origin. (3) Uses, which includes a descriptive account of its function and value. (4) Meanings, involving its symbolism and social significance, which embraces its emotional or psychological messages. I describe the sum of the understanding of these properties as the "interpretation". This entails philosophical consideration of the classical exegesis of doctrines.

Deduction

Having progressed from the dress itself in the "description" stage to the interaction between dress and the researcher in the "deduction" stage, the second stage of my research moved from the image of dress itself to the relationship between myself, as a perceiver, and the dress. I contemplated what the represented dress would be like to use and what its form symbolised. My intellectual engagement was an attempt to understand T'ang dress in modern context. My understanding depended on the complexity of the dress and my prior knowledge and experience. My sensory engagement was performed with imagination and empathy. I projected myself into the represented world and recorded what I saw and

³⁶ See Prown 1998: 133. This approach which is not tabulated into diagrammatic form, offers three stages of analysis: description, deduction and speculation, and possesses the advantages of admitting the subjective nature of much analysis, and of bringing the interpreter's understanding and response into the interpretative frames.

felt. The “deduction” stage involved the review of the information developed in the “description” stage and the formulation of hypotheses. This stage covers “Chapter 4: The characteristic design elements of T’ang dress”. This is where I sum up what I learned from the significance of T’ang dress in a cultural and social context, developing theories that might explain the various effects that I observed and felt. I tabulated my analysis of T’ang dress, offering different aspects of analysis, to bring my understanding and response into an interpretative frame. For example, “What are the artistic disciplines which impact on T’ang wearer’s sensibilities?”

Speculation

My analysis then moves completely to the “speculation” stage. I base this on the interaction between the basis of my knowledge of both the historical mentality that I interpret and the contemporary world in which I live. An example of the relevant questions I address in this part of my work is “What is the relation between the depicted T’ang world and contemporary Chinese society?” This is covered in “Chapter 5: The modernisation of contemporary Chinese fashion” and “Chapter 6: Interpretation of the parallels between T’ang and contemporary fashion”.

There are multiple transformations and relationships between the use and meanings of T’ang dress, the culture it belonged to and between it and society, e.g., parallelism, opposition, inversion, linearity and equivalence. My cultural stance and my own sensory interpretations were major factors of this stage. An example of a question that my expertise in fashion design and life experience will be useful in answering is “What are contemporary modern Chinese wearers’ tastes in comparison to those in T’ang society?”

To obtain a clear perspective on the subject requires both the interdisciplinary nature of material culture studies and also a keen eye for observation on my part. I approach the research from the perspective of a professional designer—I am a designer of Chinese origin and therefore implicitly bring Chinese values, culture and history to the research. A wide variety of relevant sources will be drawn upon to analyse and understand T’ang dress fully. Specialists from fashion disciplines may be able to answer questions concerning the style or construction of dress that few historians could answer. Historians may be able to answer questions that few fashion specialists could answer concerning how, where and why particular dresses were used in different historical periods.

2.1.2 Model of analysis for the study of the properties of T’ang dress

I have framed a model of analysis around the properties of T’ang dress. Figure 1 is a revision of the “proposed model for artefact studies” by Pearce (1998d: 129). In Figure 1, the column of boxes on the left develops the theme of the properties, while that on the right suggests the studies and analyses appropriate to each property.

The obvious starting point in this study model is the “form”, i.e. the visual images from which the dress has been observed. This will include a written description (described in Chapter 3) together with relevant figures of illustrations or photographs. The first to the third pairs of boxes in this figure cover the characterisation of the form of T’ang dress—that is, the analysis of the style, material, construction, pattern, colour and aesthetics which is described in Chapter 4.

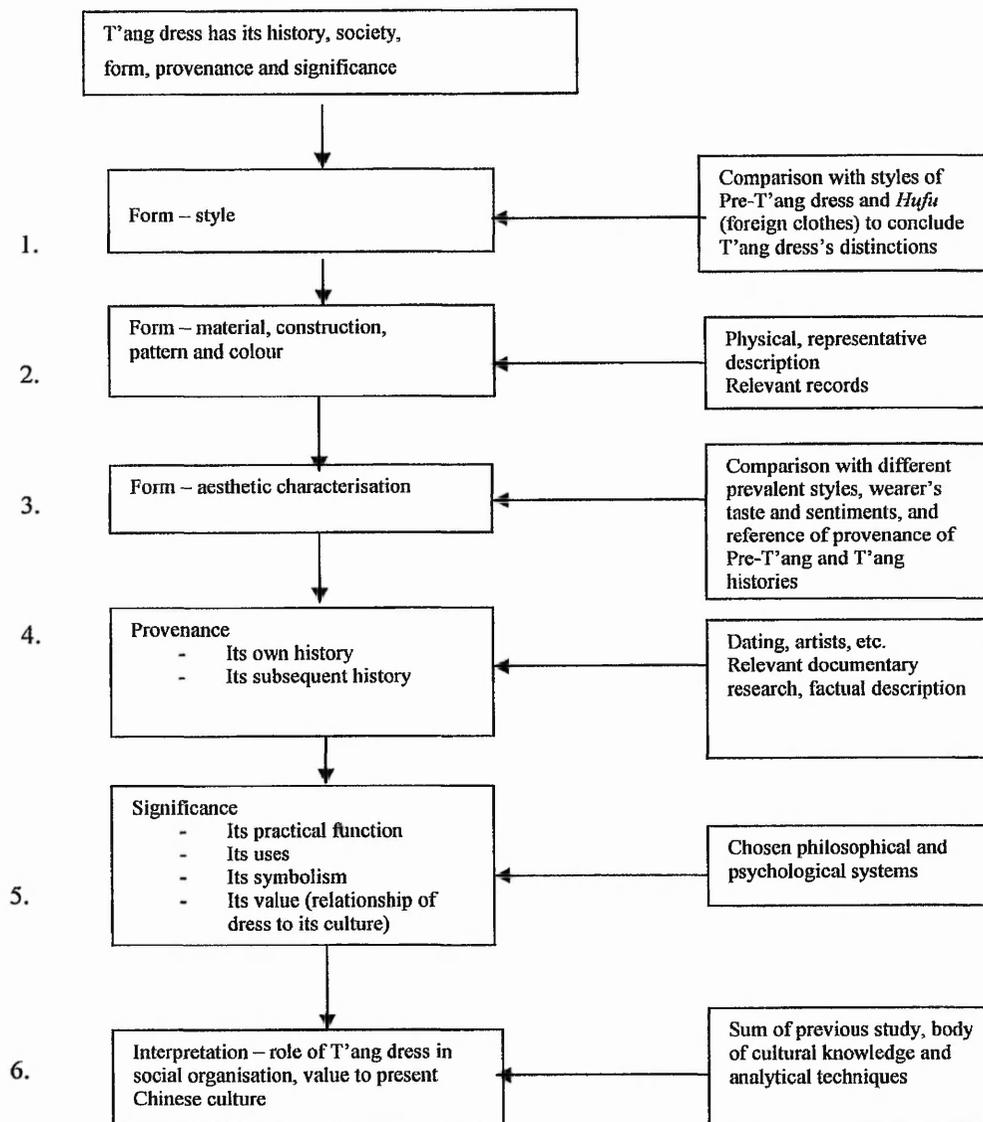


Fig. 1 Analysis model for the study appropriate to the properties of T'ang dress

The fourth pair of boxes covers the provenance of T'ang dress (described in Chapter 3)-that is, the history to be traced which might be divided into two: (1) the artefact's history, for example, that is the details of the painter or the wearer of the dress in its own time and place; and (2) its subsequent history of collection and publication. This will involve the appropriate dating and historical research into contemporary and other relevant documents in order to establish details of the facts about the dress. The fifth pair of boxes in Figure 1 considers the significance of T'ang dress which is described in the third section of Chapter 3, "3.3 Symbolism and social practice in T'ang dress". Chapter 5: and Chapter 6 which are my interpretation of T'ang dress and fashion, and contemporary Chinese fashions. A seventh to ninth-century T'ang dress is seen to have a particular set of meanings for the T'ang people and a rather different or similar set for the 21st century Chinese. The last pair of boxes in Figure 1 represents the phase of interpretation which is again covered in Chapters 5 and 6.

I present my perspective on T'ang and contemporary Chinese fashion from a Chinese designer's point of view. My discussion illustrates an argumentative process progressing as a counter-play of raising and dealing with the issues of the historical resource, modernist thoughts and contemporary fashion phenomena. My views on Chinese fashion and the possibility of the contemporary appropriation of T'ang dress which in turn define the pre-solution of my design concepts. This interpretation and analysis progress both objectively and subjectively. This will bring together the information and insight already gathered—knowledge of the current contemporary fashion trends, political, cultural-social, economy, clothing forms, wearer's psychology and so on—in order to form a view of the use and meaning of T'ang dress in its society as well as its potential applicability to contemporary fashion design.

2.1.3 Method for analysing the characteristics of T'ang dress

This investigation begins by attempting to analyse and qualify a number of methodological proposals. I adapted models of Elliot et al (1998: 109-24) for developing a methodological framework for analysing the characteristics of T'ang dress. These models arise from an essentially historical perspective. Several basic properties of Elliot et al's framework have been adapted, including: (1) Form (style, aesthetic, construction, material, pattern and colour); (2) Provenance (history, origin); (3) Function (uses, value); and (4) Meaning (symbolism, significance). This method of analysis, shown in Table 1 arose from a self-reflective procedure. The methodology describes the process of analysing the characteristics of T'ang dress into an organised procedure. My overall understanding will aspire not simply to describe the properties but also to conclude with a characterisation of T'ang dress.

Table 1 A framework of method for analysing the characteristics of T'ang dress

Analysis Process	Categories of the characteristics			
	Form	Provenance	Function	Meaning
Step 1 Observable data (Observing of the artefacts)	Style Aesthetics Construction Material Pattern Colour	History Origin	Use Value	Symbolism Significance
Step 2 Comparative data (Comparisons made with dis/similar artefacts)				
Step 3 Supplementary data (Other sources of information introduced)				
Step 4 Conclusion (which will be detailed in Chapter 4)	The characteristics of specified aspects: design elements			

Analysis process

During each phase of the information-gathering process, I sought data from specific sources:

Step 1: Observable data

In Chapter 3, I observed visible information, the dress on artefacts including paintings, murals, figurines, clothes and textiles: data that can be determined through my sensory engagement with T'ang dress, beginning with material, aesthetics, construction and function. See Table 2.

Table 2 A framework of method for analysing observable data

Property to be observed	Data to be analysed.
Form and Material	Form and material are present in the visual images of subsistent clothes and fabric fragments. The appearance and type of the dress help to determine what form and material composed the dress.
Aesthetics	Aesthetic of the dress can be recognised by the researcher's sensibility of cultural context.
Construction	Different portions, joining accessories will give different appearance. The measurements and sizes can be ascertained from archaeological evidence.
Function	Function of dress can be judged by described circumstances, the event's location and condition, and the wearer's clothing behaviour and manner. The actual role of the dress could be apparent by its size, style and shape, together with the occasions shown in the background (e.g., in paintings) to determine when, where and by whom the dress was worn.

Step 2: Comparative data

In the sections "3.2 Cosmopolitanism of T'ang Fashion " and "3.3 Symbolism and social uses of T'ang dress", I compared information acquired by comparing T'ang dress with similar objects over a period of time either before or after with cited materials in classic or archaeological findings concerning its form, use or meaning. See Table 3.

Table 3 A framework of method for analysing comparative data

Form and style	Although the shape, length, width or patterns of dresses vary, all were stylised and therefore might have been employed for a purpose that was essentially the same. The existence of many other forms and styles might suggest that they had the same historical origins. Styles with common characteristics could be grouped together in sets.
Construction, pattern and colour	To compare materials and general structural appearance with others of those types, there might be facets of construction that lent a unique character to each dress, e.g., particular size, colour and pattern were used by different wearer groups. Some styles were modified to suit certain requirements. The types differed and appeared to have changed over time. The similarities and differences could be examined when compared with others.
Function	The quality of the decoration and surface-look in images could suggest the skill of production, the value of the clothes and the social status of the wearer. For example, if a dress was of relatively simple construction, it could possibly be worn for less important occasions or by lower-ranked people in T'ang times.

Step 3: Supplementary data

I found information of historical importance in written or printed sources useful in gathering additional data. Any other form of evidence (e.g., photographs of artefacts, phenomena of fashion) consulted outside the artefact itself and others like it (or dissimilar to it) also can be used as supplementary data. Since some information might be acquired directly from artefacts without the aid of documentary sources, some selected supplementary evidence is included in the third step in Table 4. To gain as much knowledge as possible about the dress under investigation, a wide variety of supplementary data sources should be studied. These include both primary and secondary sources, and current contemporary fashion sense and knowledge, and the works of scholars, information searched from websites and assistance of specialists from varied fields.

Table 4 A framework of method for analysing supplementary data

Provenance	The information would be acquired from the primary source. The provenance of dress cannot be determined from the object itself. Documentary data would allow the researcher to formulate general conclusions concerning the artefact's place and date of origin. The producers (painter, artisan), the wearer (certain well-known figures at that time) and the styles all help to determine the provenance. However, opinions of some historians could help indicate its origins as well.
Function	To ask how the dress served a practical function, there might be speculation on the researcher's part as it would be difficult to test all the ancient historical evidence.
Uses	The historical source helps judge the uses of dress to a degree; its social functions could be assumed by the documentary information but the determination of a more precise use might be difficult.

Step 4: Conclusions

After examining all observable, comparative and supplementary data, the form, use and meaning of T'ang dress become clear. I will summarise my major conclusions in "Chapter 4: The characteristic design elements of T'ang dress". I explain most of the data gathered during the above steps in some main subjects. The conclusions will detail the design elements that derived from inspirational images, also assume how the clothing concepts of T'ang dress might function in the current contemporary society, its suitability for modern use, such as its form to be restructured, and so on.

While the historian is primarily interested in what an artefact can reveal about the culture that produced it and the designer normally is interested in merely its superficial presentation, I intend to look for evidence of cultural expression in an object. During my viewing of a variety of entirely different artefacts, it became obvious that many of the questions, which I raised in "Chapter 1: Introduction", were not always answerable in the process of analysis. While the answers for some questions are commonly found during one particular level of investigation (e.g., during the step of comparative analysis), the data for answers might be discovered in any one of the information-gathering steps. Not all the questions in relation to this study of T'ang dress which I raised in Chapter 1 can be fully answered, nor can they be expected to be analysed in equal depth. Some of the approaches discussed are likely to be more archaeological. Some of the topics broached in the interpretations on my part.

2.2 Methodology of design

Three design processes: explicating-externalising-creating

I focus on a framework for the typology of fashion design methodology. This methodology is based on a combination of the theoretical part of design concept and realisation of the design philosophy. That is, I organised method and activities around a schema implicit within my specified thinking procedures and activities. In the case of Chinese fashion design, my attempts to understand historical dress inevitably have been confounded "by the difficulties to link the vast amount of literary and visual evidence that survives." (Koda 2003: 16) This suggests that conflicts and ambiguities are common in the interaction between the designer's intellect and intuition and that I need an alternative methodology for Chinese fashion design. This methodology will comprehensively examine the relationship and interaction between rationality and imagination as a solution to the problem of design

methodology. Thus, I identify what the new methodology is based on, what disciplines and methods it involves, how it differs from purely academic or practical approaches and /how it is characterised in its own terms. As a designer I am more committed to practical aspects than other researchers who are solely interested in historical inquiry. Rather than examining theories for purely academic purposes, isolating the theories within academic approaches, or adapting a merely frivolous and ephemeral aspect of traditional clothing to the fashion market, I point out the limitations of an approach that ignores modern needs and my argument has been that modern Chinese fashion has ignored historical resources.

2.2.1 Explication of the intellectual cognitive procedures

It is essential to carry out concept generation and evolution in a progressive and disciplined manner so as to generate better designs. This progressive and disciplined manoeuvre is demonstrated in chapters 5, 6 and 7 regarding contemporary issues of Chinese fashion and its design. In order to justify the design concept with which I will attempt to modernise T'ang dress, I have adopted an analytical method that allows the design process to be scrutinised step by step. This will yield insights into the processes by which I solve design problems (Chan Chiu-shui 2001: 322). The explanation of the activities to identify the thinking that drive the design processes provides a basis for modifications that can improve design skills and processes.

In "Chapter 7: Design concept for modernised T'ang dress", I build up my design concept based on the contested issues of methodological problems of contemporary Chinese fashion design. This depends upon a dialectical argument about my design concept and an explanation of how I seek to clarify the vague and problematic notions employed in the design method of Chinese fashion. The discourse of methodology revolves around opposing tensions. I note that the methodological discourse of fashion design is based upon the problem of differences: intuition versus rationality, academic versus practice, Chinese versus Western, and traditional versus modern. For that very reason it has provided a good stimulus for a theoretical argument about the conceptual framework to define my design concepts to modernise T'ang dress. This process involves elaborating on and expanding my design theory to achieve a more principled practice than a traditional design method. It also exposes the design concerns to an organised criticism as to the functions that my design products of Chinese fashion would perform.

To evaluate the outcome of the attempt to modernise T'ang dress with contemporary methodology, questions are raised:

- Whether a conscious conceptualisation of design strategy can solve design problems?
- How can the concepts for contemporary fashion design be better utilised during design practice?

I also indicated that more research is needed to understand practice better (Dahl 2001: 6), to identify aspects of creativity in design related to the formulation of the design theory and to understand the concept of originality. This study refers to my philosophy of design. Concerning the relationship between "research" and "theory", a profound question is raised:

- How will I process the information driven from the historical source and apply it to contemporary fashion design?

Concerning the progression from “theory” to “practice”, in relation to the design methodology, I wonder:

- Is there any logic of design method that can be used to analyse the design process?

2.2.2 Externalising intuitive cognitive procedures

In this study, cultural recognition is important. It would be meaningless to speak about the dress’s physical character without the context of its cultural dimension. This design process triggers a network of design thinking. The objective of “Chapter 7: Design concept for modernised T’ang dress”, the design concept was generated by a process of tackling the design problems, identifying a point during the design process at which the key concept began to emerge. In my discussion of the critical issues about how to modernise T’ang dress, attempts were made to generate a core concept around which the strategy of design will be built, which provide more information on what will go into developing the core concept. I was confronted by the design problems of how to modernise T’ang dress. This early stage of design activity involved a problem solving process to conceptualise my design principles, that is, how to make the cultural form and modernist function equally important to design concerns. A solution to the design problem is generated by imposing a constraint on to the process and searching for parallels between historical and contemporary sources.

Since the application of a design methodology to the design process strongly influences the latter, it implies that it cannot escape questions concerning the quality of the outcome of that process. Hence, I will inquire how historical study may support actual practice. Since that outcome is the design of a cultural product, I include the context of the dress’s cultural phrase because it makes no sense to speak about the context of designing (activity, processes) without reference to the context of use. Design methodology will have to focus on this, in particular on the notion of the intended function of a dress. My designs will communicate the dress’s “proper” function, that is, the function for which the dress is designed to be worn by its potential wearer.

In “Chapter 8: Philosophy of design for new T’ang dress: *Chih, Wen and Yun*”³⁷, I examine how information is processed in the mind, and the strategies for tackling design problems. I generate solutions to the design problem elaborated for the modernised T’ang dress. My design philosophy is based on this vital process of discovery and elucidation. I ponder how the meaning of the dresses I am constructing can be informed by my interpretation of literal descriptions and cultural signifiers on objects such as those on paintings. The signifiers shown on artefacts are bearers of connotations of T’ang conventions. I try to filter these out in order to express their intended meaning. Then the following question is

- How can I develop designs which are resonant of those historical images and explicit in the way they address aesthetics?

The fundamental components—design rules, design constraints, mental images, and design goals are established as the basic factors capable of generating a tangible product: the clothes that are the outcome of this practice. Then, I begin to explore the principles of designing based on the issues and views discussed in Chapter 8. The task is that of transforming the metamorphosis of Chinese conventions which affect my idea and feelings in my design philosophy.

³⁷ Design philosophy, namely, the rules of designing or design principles.

2.2.3 Creating a new model of T'ang dress

I switched perspectives as a thinker to move from thought to action. The output of the design process, explicated in "Chapter 9: Fabrication of a new model of T'ang dress" which demonstrates how the physical structure of the designs originated, how the style of clothing emerged and how a new dressmaking system is invented, shows how to make the dress and realise its intended function and desired form³⁸. I realise my design philosophy by designing and producing a set of garments and indicating the criteria for the new dressmaking system. I create a collection of garments, enabling T'ang dress-inspired design concepts to be incorporated into contemporary fashion. To me the source of creativity is intuition. I describe how my intuition is externalised in terms of design resource derivation and creation. This is an exploration of my creativity to uncover my inner experience and incorporate it into external activities. With this fabrication, I aim to define a unique style and realise my vision of designing Chinese style in a modern mode. It tries to show how these processes work both in an abstract, literal and in a physical way, through presenting corresponding drawings and samples in which I convert my visual, sensual experience, along with conceptual articulations, into the design process.

Conclusion

The triangulation of result: historical-contemporary-practice

Having presented my framework of design linked to the source of dress and fashion in T'ang dynasty, from both a historical and practical point of view, I have been dealing with two different conceptualisations of T'ang dress based on my critical standpoint. It has been elaborated to investigate how the historical research and practice are related to each other and how it is possible to go from one conceptualisation to the other (research to theory, or theory to practice).

Part I starts with my research of historical sources (Chapter 3). My understanding of history leads to knowledge and aspirations that provide a design resource (Chapter 4). In Part II, by interpreting T'ang fashion and observing contemporary Chinese fashion (Chapter 5), I speculate on the possible parallels of the two fashions. In the second phrase of contemporary interpretations (Chapter 6), I speculate on how to solve the design problem of modernising T'ang dress. I have established my arguments on modernising T'ang dress in the process of design conceptualisation (Chapter 7). The proposed solution for the design problem is justified. In Part III, according to the line of thought discussed in my historical research, meaning, form and uses are the key notions. I apply these notions to my design concerns and develop them as my philosophy of design (Chapter 8), the physical structure (*Wen*), the technical making (*Chih*) related to its use, and the style (*Yun*). Finally, followed by an exposition of my design activities, a model is fabricated (Chapter 9).

The triangulation of the relationship between Historical-Contemporary-Practice in terms of the roles they played in this study, the goals that they achieved and their nature and activities is shown in Table 5.

³⁸ The term "fabrication" in this study refers to "production", "manufacture" and "invention". The term "model" refers to prevailing fashion or custom, or the way, manner in which thing is done. . In present research, "model" refers to how I use historical costume resource to apply a design methodology by which a new model of T'ang dress is conceptualised.

Table: 5 The triangulation of result: historical-contemporary-practice

A new model for T'ang dress: modernising and reconceptualising historical Chinese costume	Part I Historical studies	Part II Contemporary interpretation	Part III Fashion design practice
Processes	Chapter 3: The evolution of T'ang dress: multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and symbolism Chapter 4: Characteristic design elements of T'ang dress	Chapter 5: The modernisation of contemporary Chinese fashion Chapter 6: Interpretation of the parallels between T'ang and contemporary fashion	Chapter 7: Design concept for modernised T'ang dress Chapter 8: Philosophy of design: <i>Chih, Wen and Yun</i> Chapter 9: Fabrication of a new model of T'ang dress
Goals	Derivation of design source	Design problem-solving, involves a mode of conceptualisation and explicit knowledge management	Realise solutions of a model of desired dress
Nature and Stages and Adopted method	Research: - Description method for analysing the characteristics of T'ang dress	Research to theory: - Deduction - Speculation	Theory to practice: Design processes: - Explicating - Externalising - Creating
Activities	- Analysis for the study appropriate to the properties of T'ang dress - Search for knowledge (the T'ang dress and fashion) - Tackle new problems or check previous findings (to know its meaning, form and uses)	- To reach from knowing (deriving historical costume source) to doing requires the critical inquiry that leads a reflective insight to develop promising design concept (of how to modernise T'ang dress)	- To reach from doing (empirical designing) to knowing (what is the designing going on) requires the analytical explanation of the design process

Developing a philosophy of design supports application theories and practice. Attempts at solutions, I believe, have solved my design problem: a new mode of dress combining both functional and form appealing contexts, and the improvement of the dressmaking method. Research has to be conducted on how to make the product a market success. The methodology for the research and design aims to improve design processes. In this study the methodology has not addressed all issues in a purely systematic manner as designing is a craft and an art, it is also is a manifestation of human actions.

Part I

Historical studies

Chapter 3: The evolution of T'ang dress and fashion: multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and symbolism

While most western studies of Chinese costume have taken an object-focused approach, much of the work astonishes by its failure to discuss cultural aspects³⁹. A study of T'ang dress and fashion that pays attention to the cultural dimensions of Chinese costumes may be a source of inspiration to the contemporary modern designer (Hulme 1948: 36).

In this chapter, I examine topics and pose questions regarding an alternative perspective on T'ang dress and fashion to which the impact of cultural process will be central. I will:

- discuss the process of multiculturalisation of T'ang dress;
- explain the cosmopolitan features of the evolution of T'ang fashion; and
- examine the relation between cultural symbolism and clothing practices (the uses) in T'ang dress.

The last section concludes the findings of this chapter.

3.1 Multiculturalism of T'ang dress

Clothing has served to consolidate more than to segregate. While never losing the characteristics of its place of origin, clothing has shown itself a readily assimilated object. (Martin and Koda 1995: 10-11)

From the Han dynasty to the late ninth century there were widespread foreign cultural influences on China⁴⁰ in its central mainstream⁴¹. In turn, Chinese culture also spread to outlying areas during the Sui dynasty (AD 581-618). This set the stage for the multi-cultured T'ang era (AD 618-907)⁴². Prominent Chinese philosophies of Confucianism⁴³ and Taoism⁴⁴, and foreign cultural influences such as Buddhism⁴⁵ and Islam, along with Manichaenism, and Christianity flourished together (Abbate 1972: 61), all making their contribution to T'ang arts and lives. According to Twitchett, most of the T'ang Chinese "applied Confucian moral criteria to their public life and family affairs, and tended still to think of the universe in Taoist terms, even though they personally were committed Buddhists." (1976: 4) I would argue that the patterns of T'ang culture have evolved as a

³⁹ See Landis 1995:73. "Culture" is a complex set of learned and shared beliefs, customs, skills, habits, traditions, and knowledge common to the members of a society. Culture is viewed as the social heritage of a society. See Also Kluckhohn 1951: 86. According to anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, culture represents the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design for living.

⁴⁰ This foreign influence was due to Han Chinese living alongside foreigners from lands along the Silk Road that ran across Central Asia and that linked China to the Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds.

⁴¹ "Central" both in terms of culture and geographical location in China.

⁴² The age of internal division ended when rule by the Han people was reestablished in the north and the whole of Chinese soil was united under Sui leadership (AD 587-618). Sui was flooded by Western Asian culture because of the repeated invasions of the Turkits, who had gathered strength at this time.

⁴³ Confucianism, the philosophical school based on the writings of Confucius (c.551-479 BC). See Glossary. Also see Michaelson 1999.

⁴⁴ Taoism, the philosophical school inspired by Laozi (c. 399-295 BC). See Barrett 2005, and Boltz 1993d. Also see Glossary.

⁴⁵ Buddhism was introduced into China from the India sub-continent as early as the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). It flourished during the Tang dynasty and the powers and privileges of the Buddhists were quashed during great proscription of AD 842-845. Also see Glossary.

result of complex confrontations and interactions. Social and cultural factors, which are the focus of this chapter, were crucial to the historical evolution of T'ang dress and fashion. In the T'ang dynasty, the readiness and ability to adopt and assimilate outside influences determined the character and style of T'ang dress. This assimilation will be interpreted, in this study, from a wider perspective, as a process of alteration and transformation to a new T'ang system, a process of multiculturalisation.

The T'ang was characterised by a cosmopolitan civilisation attended by territorial expansion and prosperity⁴⁶; the adoption of foreign practices was symptomatic of a far-reaching process of cultural exchange. "The processes in terms of using cultural elements in dress are involved in constant differentiation, development, and integration." (Hauser 1974: 135) During the T'ang era, the Han mode of Chinese dress was influenced heavily by styles of central Asia, India, Iran and the Roman Orient. Through this process, Central Asian and Indian art styles were modified through integration with indigenous Chinese elements.

The approach presented in this section explicitly considers the multifarious nature of the historical and social context in which T'ang dress and fashion evolved. It examines:

- the relations and interactions between Chinese indigenous tradition and Western cultural inspirations,
- the extent to which changes in clothing forms are associated with cultural factors such as T'ang contemporary art and the importation of foreign clothes, and
- the extent to which the attitudes and values of Buddhism and the spiritual dimensions of Taoism influenced the aesthetic of T'ang dress.

I am arguing that the historical heritage of these processes of assimilation and exchanges can explain a number of contradictory pulls that characterise Chinese culture: Chinese versus barbarian, Sinofication versus Hufication, conservatism versus cosmopolitan, and Buddhism and Islam versus Taoism and Confucianism.

3.1.1 Chinese versus barbarian

The Han mode

In the Chou dynasty (1027-771 BC), dress was regulated (*Shih Chi*, ca. 87 BC) and was largely preoccupied with correct usage⁴⁷. The prototype of T'ang dress was inherited from earlier periods back to the Chou dynasty which in this study is referred as the "Han mode". The record of the actual use of court dress can be traced to the form of the Han mode (206 BC-AD 220). (See Figure 2). The Han mode of lapover neck style consisted of *yi* (an upper garment) and *shang* (lower garment, or a

⁴⁶ It was during a time of territorial expansion and prosperity that the T'ang capital, Chang'an (modern day Xian), became a centre of cosmopolitan civilisation which was coloured by the influence of central Asia, of India, of Iran and the Roman Orient."

⁴⁷ See *Shih Chi* 1959. See *Hou Han Shu*: "Yu-fu chih" (Si bu bei yao ju zhen ben 四部備要聚珍本: "夫禮服之興也, 所以報功彰德, 尊仁尚賢. 故禮尊尊貴貴, 不得相踰, 所以為禮也. 非其人不得服其服, 所以順禮也.") Also see *Guanzi Lizheng* (管子.立政), "Di si fu zhi" (第四服制) (*Guanzi* said: "sui you xian shen gui ti, wu qi jue. Bu gan fu qi fu...tian zi fu wen you zhang, er fu ren bug an yi yan xiang miao... san ming bu gan yi fu za cai." 管子說: "雖有賢身貴體, 毋其爵. 不敢服其服... 天子服文有章, 而夫人不敢以燕以饗廟... 散民不敢以服雜采.")

skirt)⁴⁸. Formal dress was hemmed at the end of the sleeves and the bottom of the skirt. The shape of the Han mode, as a prototype of classic Chinese dress “衣” (pronounced “yī”, means “dress”), seems to have originated from the idea of *hsiang-hsing*, one of the ways in which Chinese characters were structured⁴⁹. The character “衣” (See Figure 3) mimicked the shape of a classic Chinese court dress of the Han mode.



Fig. 2 The Han mode, a classic Chinese robe.
Source: Dalby 1993: 25.



Fig. 3 Ancient form of the Chinese character “yī” (dress)—early Chinese prototype of dress.
Source: Dalby 1993: 25.

⁴⁸ This traditional form of Chinese dress was front-wrapping, crossed left side over right, with wide rectangular sleeves. This lapover neck style was considered to be southern mode, basically from agricultural peoples typified by the Han. Han is one of the 56 peoples in China.

⁴⁹ According to Boltz: In ‘Shuo wen chieh tzu (*Shuo Wen Jie Zi*), the first comprehensive dictionary of Chinese characters. Hsu Shen categorised and analysed the characters according to six graphic structural types, the so-called *liu shu*. “*hsiang-hsing*, ‘pictographs’, or better ‘zodiographs’; graphs which (in origin) were more or less realistic depictions of the things corresponding to the words for which the graphs stand.” (1993e: 430) For other five ways of structuring Chinese characters, see Boltz’s translation with explanations (1993e).

***Hu*, the barbarian**

There were classic divisions between the cultural practices of the Chinese and non-Chinese people (the barbarian). Different norms were encoded in the forms of dress. Certain clothing forms were reserved for high ranks and many other forms and colours could be worn only by imperial permission in the Chinese court. This reflected the Confucian principle that the dress should reveal cultural distinction⁵⁰. The notion of using the right "sidedness" in clothes⁵¹, was of great import to express cultural difference: the use of right sidedness symbolised the authenticity of Chinese culture, as opposed to left-sided style clothes, a sign of *Hu* (barbarian), while providing Chinese with a standard for distinguishing themselves from non-Chinese people. Under the influence of *Hu* culture, these values and norms changed through the process of Hufication of the T'ang era.

3.1.2 Sinofication versus Hufication

Sinofication

Sinofication in this study refers to the process of non-Chinese peoples' adopting Chinese institutions and absorbing Chinese cultural subjects. These non-Chinese peoples included the Westerners and the peoples to the far east of China. Their assimilation of indigenous Chinese cultural and social mores and Sinitic reforms had direct repercussions on the multiculturalism in the T'ang.

The assertion of political authority by the T'ang ruling house

During the early fifth to the late sixth centuries, China was ruled both by the Northern dynasties, under non-Han nomadic peoples from the steppes, and the Southern dynasties, under traditional Chinese rulers (Paludan 1994: 31). Inter-marriage of the *Hu* peoples to the Han people may have been one of the political strategies by means of which the T'ang court in Chang' An (modern day Xian) and the elite attempted to assert their political authority on the impact of the assimilation process⁵². The T'ang ruling house⁵³ like that of its predecessors⁵⁴, came from the north-western tribal aristocracy, and was "heavily intermarried with the nobility of the Turks and other non-Chinese peoples;" they "found themselves forced to adopt Chinese institutions" and "to be absorbed by Chinese subjects⁵⁵".

The Far Eastern states' Sinitic reforms

In the T'ang era, extensive Sinitic reforms of culture and fashion were practiced in the Far Eastern states⁵⁶. The Japanese, Koreans, and other peoples of Central and Southeast Asia and elsewhere, in turn received cultural influences from the T'ang court (Morton 1982: 83). For example, Japan adopted rules for court dress explicitly based on those of the official T'ang clothing codes⁵⁷. Dably pointed out

⁵⁰ For example, the clothes which concealed the body, expressed propriety.

⁵¹ A gown or a tunic that was fastened on the right side.

⁵² According to Moses (1976: 61): "The barbarian way of life, pastoral nomadism, was in almost every way antithetical to the sedentary, village-based world of China."

⁵³ The T'ang dynasty was founded by Li Yuan and Li Shih-min who were of *Hu* origins.

⁵⁴ At the beginning of the fourth century, the north of China was overrun by waves of non-Chinese nomadic peoples. These included the Tibetan Ch'iang and Ti in the North-west, and the Hsiung-nu and various Turkish, proto-Mongol and Tungusic peoples in the North. The Toba Turks (the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 385-534) was established in AD 440.

⁵⁵ See Twichett 1976: 1-16.

⁵⁶ The country of any culture aspiring to be a proper realm and be recognised as such would have been powerfully drawn to adopt the rituals, writing, and technology of T'ang Chinese culture.

⁵⁷ See Dalby 1993: 27: "'The Yoro Clothing Code' of [AD] 718 marked a high point of Chinese-influenced policies for the early Japanese state." For factors that Chinese clothing culture influenced Japanese costume, see Kennedy 1990 and Liddell 1989.

that the Kimono, the well recognised Japanese national dress, was borrowed from models of T'ang aristocratic clothing styles: "The thread leading back to the prototype of Kimono ultimately must be traced to China. Nevertheless, Chinese styles made a massive impact on Japan in general only several centuries later." (Dably 1993: 25-29) The section on "Eastern Barbarians: The Country of Wa [the early Japanese state]" of the *Sui Shu* (the *Sui History*) recorded: "To the Japanese, to be civilised was increasingly to be Chinese.⁵⁸" "In the year of AD 600 an envoy of Sui court recorded: the Wa king has instituted a system of caps to indicate rank." (Dably 1993: 337)

Hufication

Hufication in this study refers to the process by which China assimilated *Hu* cultures. As in other eras such as the Northern Chou dynasty (AD 557-581) of Chinese history⁵⁹, the northern barbarians possessed the mobility to penetrate into the great mass of China⁶⁰. Under the invasion of the Westerners, of elements of distant cultures and of exotic products, people in the T'ang were enamoured of anything "*Hu*" (Morton 1982: 83; Twitchett 1985: 4-5). Exotic goods and foreign fashions were in vogue at court (Abbate 1972: 53) and revolutionised native Chinese tastes which affected the sensibilities of the age and enriched T'ang civilisation with new contributions (Gernet 1982: 282, 284). In the T'ang, some women dressed in the court style with gowns resembling those of the Pre-T'ang times following the Han mode, while new styles were borrowed from *Hu* and integrated into a new composite system-Hufication. For instance, facial features such as *mian-ye* (dots on face), garments such as the turned-back lapelled, front-opening fitting jacket, *mi-li* (veils) and *wei-mao* (*Hu* style hats), and the male style equestrian dress worn by women were all legacies of Hufication.

3.1.3 Conservatism versus cosmopolitanism

The time preceding the T'ang probably can be defined as eras of cultural conservatism during which classical Chinese clothing culture was preserved. T'ang culture was open to outside influence as never before. Large contributions were made towards cosmopolitan development and innovations (Ferguson 1927: 61; Twitchett 1976: 1-16). This was manifested in the practice of ritual dress and the modification of men's court dress.

Practice of ritual dress as conservatism

The directives for prescribing the practice of ritual⁶¹ and the use of ritual dress⁶² were recorded in Confucian canonical texts and in the classical histories of the Han period⁶³. (See Figure 4) According to the "Monograph on Rites and Music" in *Hsin T'ang Shu*, there were a total of twenty-four sacrifices (or

⁵⁸ See *Sui Shu* 1973.

⁵⁹ See Moses 1976: 61: "The Türk emerge in the historical record in 545, . . . China north of the Yellow River-Wei River line had been under barbarian rule for more than two centuries." "The two semi-barbarian states, the Northern Ch'i (AD 550-577) in Shanxi [province, China], and the Northern Chou (AD 557-580) were the "Chinese" dynasties with whom first contact was made with the Türk."

⁶⁰ See Twitchett 1979: 4: "The non-Chinese peoples had a lifestyle strongly influenced by nomadic customs, even in the T'ang times they spoke Turkish as well as Chinese; they were essentially a military group rather than a civilian elite, living a hard, active outdoor life; and, as among the nomads, their womenfolk were far more independent and powerful than in traditional Chinese society."

⁶¹ See McDermott 1999: 1, ritual practice in China has been at least four thousand years. The influence of ritual "stretched beyond the sphere of religious worship and even traditional rites of passage, into the quotidian world."

⁶² Men's ritual dress (*mian-guan-fu*) was the official dress with headgear worn by monarchs and officials of antiquity [the Chou dynasty] when they attended grand sacrificial rituals. It continued to be used as before by emperors, aristocrats and high-ranking officials in the Han dynasty. For more description see *Xin Ding San Li Tu* 1992; Wang Yu-ching: 1975: 2.

⁶³ See *Shih Chi*, *Han Shu* and *Hou Han Shu*.

rituals) (Wechsler 1985: 107)⁶⁴. The practice of ritual dress was governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a symbolic nature⁶⁵. The practice also related closely to the directives in the *Da T'ang Kai Yuan Li* (*The Kaiyuan Ritual Code*) of AD 732 (McMullen 1987: 181-236 and 1999: 15) which was the most important code regarding the use of ritual dress in the T'ang period (Harada 1967: 16; Mahler 1959: 106) and sought to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour. This established continuity with the T'ang past (Hobsbawn and Rager 1983: 1; Seng and Wass 1995: 230). See Figure 4, a ritual dress called *mian-guan-fu* for an ancient Chinese emperor.

The directives embraced a wide range of ceremonial garments worn by ritual participants or spectators for ritual occasions⁶⁶. They specified distinctions according to ceremony, status, class, gender and place. Dresses for women were without hats. Different clothing accessories such as head ornaments were worn according to the occasion and the use of such was also differentiated according to the wearers' status. The dress seen in Figure 5 was worn by Chinese court lady on such occasions as the festival of the ancestral shrine while another kind of dress (shown in Figure 6) was used mainly for ceremonies performed in connection with sericulture, although it was also used as court dress.



Fig. 4 Ritual dress, an emperor's *mian-guan-fu*.
Reconstructed drawing by Zhou Xun et al. Based on historical documents and pottery figurines, from Han tombs at Jinan and Yinan, Shangdong Province, China.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 34.

⁶⁴ Following Sui practice, the T'ang divided their state sacrifices into three categories: great (*ta*), intermediate (*chung*), and lesser (*hsiao*), see Wechsler 1985: 107 and *Hsin T'ang Shu*.

⁶⁵ For the correct usage of rites, see Chard 1999: 261: "the principal justification for perpetuating rites was that they were observed by the kings of antiquity."

⁶⁶ See Riegel 1993a: 293-97. *The Li Ji* (or *Li chi*, *Li Ki*) which is a ritualist's anthology of ancient usages, prescriptions, definitions and anecdotes.



Fig. 5 Chian-di, women's ceremonial dress (*miao-fu*).
Source: *Xin Ding San Li Tu* 1992.



Fig. 6 Gu-yi, women's sericulture dress (*can-fu*).
Source: *Xin Ding San Li Tu* 1992.

Features retained by court dress

Court dress indicates the standards or a strict regulation that clothes must conform to in order for subjects to be able to appear in them at the emperor's court⁶⁷. The regulations of the Han dynasty in regard to court dress were followed in Sui and T'ang times. Court dress retained features that were mostly derived from the Han. This can be observed in artefacts such as the portraits of an emperor in the mural "The Emperor on A Journey" in Mogao Cave 220 in Dun-huang. The features reflected the glory and stability of T'ang court.

Modification of men's court dress

During the T'ang dynasty, the traditional Pre-T'ang forms of court dress were replaced by a new system based on modifications of the use of the forms of *Hufu* (foreign clothes) that had originated in the *Hu* world (the West of ancient China). These evolutionary changes were confined to a few details. The first change was the *ku-xi* dress (dress with trousers), which consisted of *xi*, a short upper piece with broad loose sleeves, and *ku*, lower-body garment, or trousers. (See Figure 7) Under the influence of *Hu*, beneath the skirt, men wore trousers. Largely based on the tradition of the Han dynasty, women's clothes remained unchanged.



Fig. 7 T'ang officials in round-collared robes, *pu-tou* (hat), trousers and black leather boots. T'ang dynasty. Fresco from Li Zhongren's tomb, Qian County, Shanxi Province, China. Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 83.

⁶⁷ Court dress has, in the past, been "both an expression of, and a diversion from, contemporary fashion." For centuries, garments worn at court were simply the best and most splendid-looking that courtiers could afford. Gradually, more formal regulation of the clothes worn was introduced. See Baclawski 1995: 83.

The second change was the widespread usage of a round-necked collar, narrow-sleeved style, a form of *Hufu* (*Hu* style clothes), which had only been used on non-official occasions before. Previously, only the right-sided style signifying “Chinese civilisation” would appear on official occasions. In the T’ang, round-necked collar, narrow-sleeved style robe was increasingly used for formal occasions. (See Figure 8) Prior to the Taizong reign (AD 627-649)⁶⁸, a major modification was initiated in the formal court dress which appropriated the *Hu* practice. Evidence shows that outside of state occasions of supreme importance, even the emperor wore a round-necked collar⁶⁹.



Fig. 8 A court dress consisted of *ku-xi*, fish-shaped cloth bag and six-sewn boots. T’ang dynasty. “Lin-yen Honoured Officials”. Stone linear sculpture, Xian, Shanxi Province, China. Source: Shen 1988: 240.

3.1.4 Buddhism and Islamism versus Taoism and Confucianism

Buddhism had reached China by the first century AD. It became properly established by the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386-534). It gained imperial and popular support (Gernet 1982: 258; Michaelson 1999; Twitchett 1976: 3-4)⁷⁰ and became one of the two major religions in T’ang, the other being Taoism (Ashton and Gray 1985: 109; Barrett 2005; McMullen 1999: 193; Twitchett 1985: 4). Its assimilation of indigenous Chinese cultural and social mores had direct repercussions on its spread and popularity⁷¹. According to Twitchett, Buddhism “introduced a new level of sophistication in

⁶⁸ For full details on the T’ang emperors, see Twitchett 1979: xviii-xix.

⁶⁹ For example, the painting “Emperor Taizong Receiving Tibetan Envoy” in Chen-kuan era (AD 627-49) by painter Yen Li-ben (T’ang), preserved in Beijing Palace Museum.

⁷⁰ See Michaelson 1999. Buddhism flourished during the T’ang dynasty until the powers and privileges of the Buddhists were quashed during the great proscription of AD 842-45. See also Karetzky 1996: 8, in contrast with preceding rulers Empress Wu Ze-tian (AD 684-705) was wholly supportive of Buddhism.

⁷¹ As a foreign teaching Buddhism was able to adopt to indigenous traditions, such as Confucianism’s emphasis on family cohesion and ancestor-worship, which encouraged its adoption.

philosophical thought and in theology.” (1976: 4) There has been, as McMullen observed, “since the start of the T’ang, a conflict of interest between Confucian priorities and the ambitions of Buddhists and Taoists.” Sickman and Soper (1971) remarked that Buddhism was an entirely new system of intellectual and spiritual values which met the conditions of the people in the T’ang period⁷².

3.1.4.1 Change inspired by Buddhist art forms

Buddhist thought and art reached their peak (Karetzky 1996: 64-65; Weinstein 1973: 265-306 and 1987) and made decisive impacts on innovative developments in the T’ang era. It is evident that the artefacts of the time were inspired by new heights of spirituality and were certainly influenced by contemporary Buddhist art⁷³. I shall refer to this process of cultural change as Buddhist art-inspired change (Ashton and Gray 1985: 109; Karetzky 1996: 69; Mahler 1959: 91-92, 98; Meskill 1973: 435-36, 439, 484; Paludan 1994: 37, 41; Rawson 1984: 75; Twitchett 1979; Watson 1995: 128, 217)⁷⁴.

Through the Silk Road which connected the West and China⁷⁵, Buddhism brought along the strong influence of Indian sculpture, which was itself influenced by Persian, Hellenistic and Roman art, and gave China the necessary foundation to develop a sculptural tradition of its own (Meskill 1973: 432). Its art profoundly affected the form and content of much of Chinese art (Sickman and Soper 1971: 87). T’ang rulers allocated resources for building temples⁷⁶ and the creation of enormous quantities of Buddhist artefacts which is evidence of the wide dissemination of the Buddhist influence (Ferguson 1927: 61)⁷⁷. Western designs from India and Central Asian that were used to decorate Buddhist monuments on utensils of daily use influenced the pattern and style of clothing. The assimilation of Buddhist art can be seen in the inclusion of characteristically Chinese objects in Dun-huang Cave in Gansu Province, China, which demonstrates this cultural exchange and also how the ancient Chinese world-view was incorporated into Buddhist imagery⁷⁸.

⁷² See Sickman and Soper 1971: 87, tenets of Buddhism taught that a release from suffering comes through subjugating the desires of this world in order to achieve individual salvation that answered the needs of the masses. As Sickman had remarked, “insecurity and loss of faith in the ways of the ancient were potent factors in the spread of Buddhism. . . During the first centuries after the fall of Han, Buddhism became firmly implanted on Chinese soil. . . An inspired religion, demanding faith from its followers and offering the reward of salvation.”

⁷³ See Abbate 1972: 46. Buddhist sculpture represented the Buddha and Bodhisattvas (beings who have attained enlightenment and who remain on earth to help others).

⁷⁴ The strong mass of the figure, the sense of vigour in the face and the clinging drapery on the body, were characteristics of the Indian sculptural style with traces of Hellenistic and Roman naturalism. The Chinese had turned the drapery folds into flat, abstract patterns that did not reveal the body structure underneath. Yet both the archaism and schematism, together with the colossal size, seem to have imbued the statue with an otherworldly, spiritual power befitting the Buddha. The seated bodhisattva, in limestone at the Freer Gallery shows roundness and massiveness. The halo, the headdress, the jewellery, the beads, and the folds of the garment all attract attention; it was the Indian influence that was responsible, but the floral motifs and surface decoration were more Near Eastern in origin. All these were blended together in this statue of Chinese Buddhism (Meskill 1973: 435-36, 484).

⁷⁵ For Silk Road, see Glossary and Appendix IV. Also see Michaelson 1999.

⁷⁶ Especially under the greatest patron by the Empress Wu Ze-tian (AD 684-705). They perished, with much of the rest of the great T’ang Buddhist art, during the persecution of 841 to 845. For details see Ashton and Gray 1985: 113.

⁷⁷ These have many murals in present-day Xian (ancient T’ang capital Chang’An), Shanxi Province, and sculptures in Dun-huang, Gansu, China. See Ashton and Gray (1985: 113): “Buddhist painter, Wu Tao-tzu (ca. 680-ca.740) was said to have painted more than three hundred Buddhist frescoes in the palaces of Chang’An and Lo-yang, to have used a violent, sweeping style,” “his draperies blown out, as if caught in the wind.”

⁷⁸ See Royal Academy of Art 2002.

Naturalism and idealism

Some of the important features of T'ang dress, like naturalism and idealism, seem to have derived from Buddhist sculptures. Karetzky's description of Buddha's statue reads like a description of someone modelling clothes and emphasises abstract qualities which both the clothes and the "wearer" convey: "The drapery of Buddha's clothes is realistically depicted, the anatomy of this figure is clearly defined, and the idealisation of his divine wisdom and benevolence takes on concrete expression." (Karetzky 1996: 3) In the images of T'ang dress, one can see influences derived from Buddhist sculptures, the build of the figure, the facial type, the treatment of bare flesh and diaphanous drape, floral additions and ornaments placed against the bare skin (Binyon: 71-72; Karetzky 1996: 69-70; Mahler 1959: 91; Meskill 1973: 439; Watson 1995: 128). (See Figure 9) All these reflect the distinguished naturalism of the dress of Buddhist figures.

The linear, geometric style, inherent in Han art, soon began to modify the forms, reducing still more any naturalism that Central Asia had retained from the modified Hellenism of Gandhara and the sensuousness of Indian sculpture. . . Specifically the Chinese modified the forms away from any lingering naturalism and towards a formal stylisation, forced the fluttering scars and ribbons into sweeping curves of controlled tension, reduced the drapery forms to flat planes interrelated in patterns of linear rhythms which successfully concealed any indications of the body underneath. By the end of fifth century, in the best caves of Yin-kang, all the polyglot language of Buddhism [had] reached China-Hellenistic, Gandharan, India, Iranian, and Central Asian—were beginning to be fused into a consistent Chinese declaration of faith and zeal. (Sickman and Soper 1971: 90)



Fig. 9 Image array with linear drapery.
Mid T'ang. Dun-huang Cave 45, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Watson 1995: 192.

With attempts at naturalistic modelling⁷⁹, the diaphanous clothing⁸⁰ revealed the gentle contours of the body⁸¹ and the carved folds of the clothes circumnavigated the body with clarity and fluency. (See Figure 10) These features were realised mostly in bodhisattvas⁸². The robes gently enfolded the figure in rhythmic curves which defined the portions of the body realistically and joined the throne cloth in a continuous pattern (Watson 1995: 128, 217)⁸³. Linearity as a way of depicting drapery of clothes was also an important element used by Taoist artists in the T'ang (e.g., Wu Tao-tzu, ca. 680-ca.740).

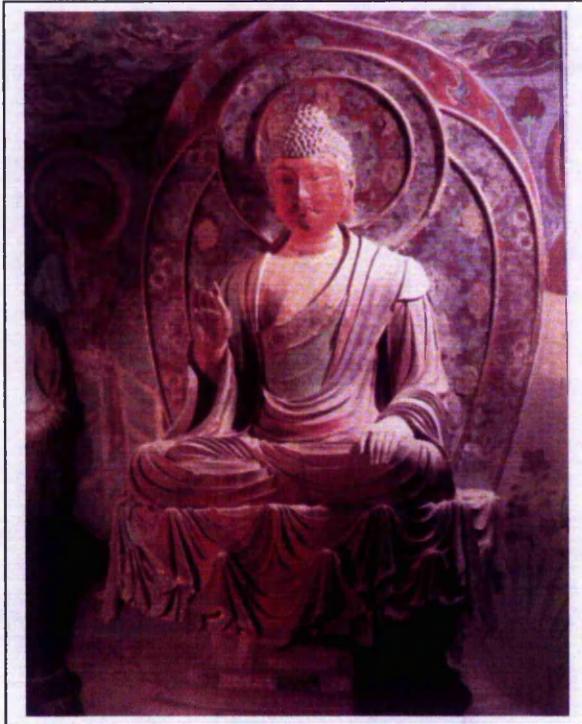


Fig. 10 Bodhisattva in draping clothe.
Mid T'ang. Sculpture. H: 143 cm.
Dun-huang Cave 194, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Duan 1987a: 160.

Patterns such as Hellenistic floral and arabesque foliage designs became important parts of the essential elements of decoration on T'ang textiles and clothes (Jin 1981: 23; Rawson 1984: 75⁸⁴). The use of motifs showed an acceptance of western ideas. For example, the ancient red bird, symbol of the

⁷⁹ Ashton and Gray 1985: 109, pl. 139.

⁸⁰ The dresses on Buddha figures of the period show a grace and voluptuousness often associated with the India subcontinent.

⁸¹ See Paludan 1994: 37: Since Northern Wei (AD 386-534) "the folds and pleats of clothing in figurines reflect Buddhist sculptural styles, and for the first time in figurines a distinction is made between the body and its clothing, enabling the viewer to perceive the human form beneath its dress."

⁸² See Watson 1995: 217: "The post-660 robe more gently enfolds the figure in rhythmic curves which now define the portions of the body more realistically and join the throne cloth in almost continuous pattern, as exemplified in the Baoqing-si sculpture described in *Some Standing Image of Sakyamuni*. ca AD 600-620," and in *Nelson-Aikings Museum of Art, Kansas City*. Ht 71.1 cm and *Some Seated Sakyamuni*. ca AD 700. *Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm*. Ht.45 cm

⁸³ Watson pointed out that in the use of extended scarves and ribbons there is a point of contact with Buddhist style of dancers and flying genii adopted from ca. 700. (1995: 204)

⁸⁴ According to Cahill, the earliest Chinese poetry, the lyrics in the Chou dynasty, *Book of Odes* (c. 800-600 BC), already began to introduce plant, animal and other images from nature as a prelude to the statement of somewhat congruent emotions. (1960: 27, 55)

South, had entered into Chinese art in the late Chou period (1027-771 BC) and became a motif of T'ang textiles. Another example is that of Buddhist lotus motif, which entered into decorative art in the Han dynasty and continued from that time on to be a motif on T'ang textiles. In the present century, it is still one of the favourite Chinese motifs (Rawson 1984: 122).

From those naturalistic modelling representations of T'ang dress⁸⁵, the anatomy of the figure was clearly defined and the idealisation took on concrete expression. A new cosmopolitan ideal of beauty was therefore formed (Karetzky 1996: 69; Paludan 1994: 37; Rawson 1984: 75). I would surmise that there might have been a conflict between the Confucian doctrine and Buddhist naturalism in T'ang society; the society was caught between traditional moral values, e.g., modesty, and strict restrictions on the display of physical charms and new modes of fashion, e.g., the T'ang woman's low-neckline-cut bodice with translucent wide sleeved jacket which resonated with the naturalistic depiction of religious images in human form seen at such places as the caves of the Mogao grottoes.

In the realm of T'ang secular art, there were also traces of Buddhist art. In murals, aristocratic ladies can be seen dressed as donors; the organic and rhythmic treatment of the body form was again partly a result of Buddhist art influence. The depiction was thoroughly Indian in its roundness of form, greater naturalness and impression of vitality and life (Mahler 1959: 91).

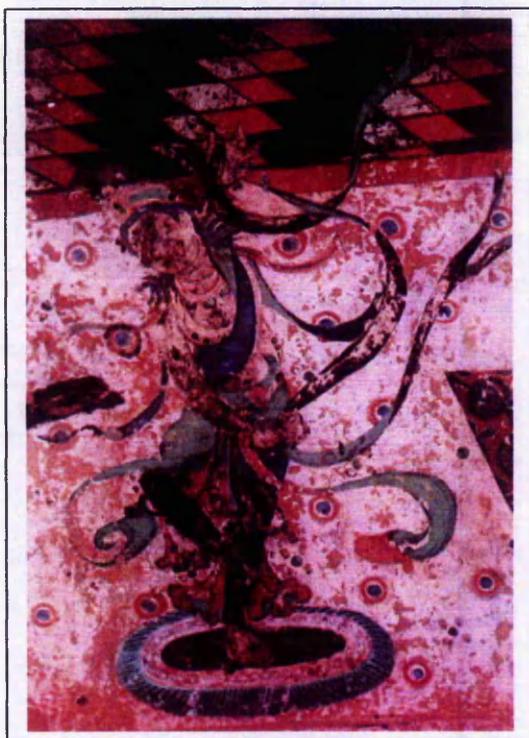


Fig. 11 A dancer.
T'ang dynasty. Dun-huang Cave 217, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Watson 1995: 192.

Ribbons borrowed from the Near East from the fifth century remained a persistent element of dress of Buddhist figures (Rawson 1984: 165). It had an impact on the secular use of *pi-bo* (shawl) which

⁸⁵ See Ashton and Gray 1985: 109, the most beautiful of these statues were to be found in the Tien-lung shan series of sculptures in Shanxi, many of which have now been removed to Western collection.

figured widely in images of the dress of sophisticated T'ang ladies (Rawson 1984: 163, 165). (See Figure 11) The other features were the incomparable vigour, effective realism and nobility of form which can be seen in much of the figurative sculptures in Dun-huang cave which had a great impact on the style of T'ang forms.

Materialism and hedonism

Buddhism became important in T'ang life, both in a spiritual⁸⁶ and in a temporal way. I would surmise that Buddhist hedonism characterised mid T'ang people's enjoyment of life's pleasures, being fashionable and living for the moment. The bodhisattvas' sumptuous jewellery style made an impact on the popular jewelled hairstyle of T'ang women. (See Figure 12) The culture of conspicuous consumption led to the use of sumptuous headdresses and large amounts of jewellery that demonstrated wealth and status. I would argue that there was a confrontation of Buddhism with Confucianism and Taoism. Under the influence of Buddhist art, the traditional Chinese ideas of clothes changed. Despite the traditional attitude toward a more conservative approach to life that was based on ideas of Taoism or Confucianism, T'ang people flaunted their wealth through decorative jewelled clothing (Mahler 1959: 110; Paludan 1994: 41, 51)⁸⁷.

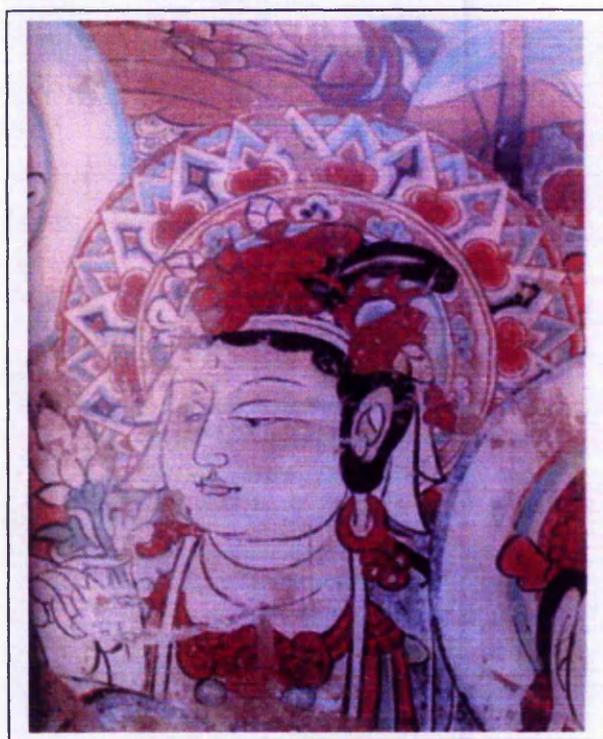


Fig. 12 Head of bodhisattva.
Early tenth century. Dun-huang Cave 36, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Watson 1995: 190.

⁸⁶ Originally, a similar world was used by Buddhists to convey the fleeting nature of human existence. Implicit in that definition was the importance of spirituality and other-worldliness.

⁸⁷ T'ang young girls also pulled up their hair into distinctive knots in the fashion of Buddha.

3.1.4.2 The impact of central Asian clothing style

The culture of T'ang clothing was greatly altered through contacts and interaction with Central Asian cultures. Hufication was affected by the adoption of certain forms and practices. "At the beginning of the Heavenly Treasure reign period of the Emperor Xuanzong (AD 742-56, also named Kai-yuan and Tian-pao periods), both nobles and commoners loved to wear foreign clothing and foreign hats. Ladies stuck *bu-yiao* hairpins in their hair, and the sleeves of their garments became narrow and small", copying western models. They reddened their faces like women in Turfan. The front-opening fitting jacket which was associated with the Turfan also became very popular in the early to mid T'ang periods ("Treatise on The Five Elements" in *Hsin T'ang Shu*).

Ideal beauty of roundness

The corpulent and mature feminine beauty dressed in high fashion evidently showed that there was a preference for plump shape and luxuriant fabric and this fashion reflected the prosperity of the mid T'ang era. The renowned beauty Yang Guifei (Yang Kuei-fey) (719—56), concubine of the T'ang emperor Xuanzong (Hsüan-tsung; 685-762), is said to have won the favor and passion of the emperor to the extent that he eventually began to neglect state affairs. She was renowned for her plump style which involved many poets, music composers and fashion followers in T'ang times. See Figure 13.

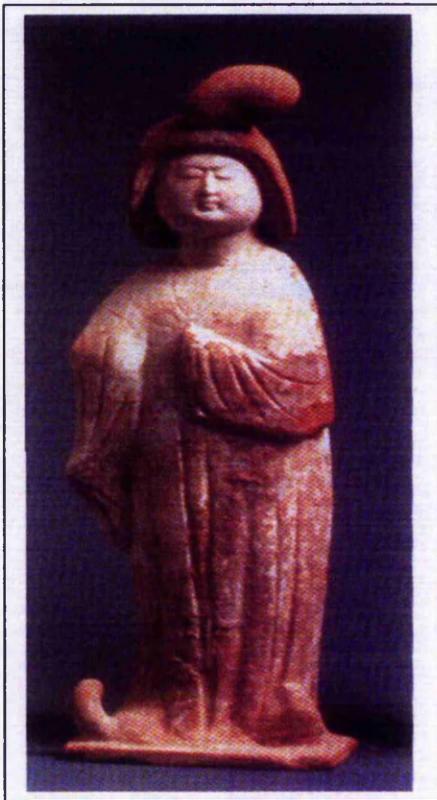


Fig. 13 Plump aristocratic woman with a high chignon.
Mid to late eighth century.
Schloss Collection, New York.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 110.

As Cahill suggested, the ideal body type of the mid T'ang women may have had Central Asian influence. The grand size and powerful appearance of mid T'ang women was similar to the model of the confident queens of Central Asia (Cahill 1999: 110-11). See Figure 14.

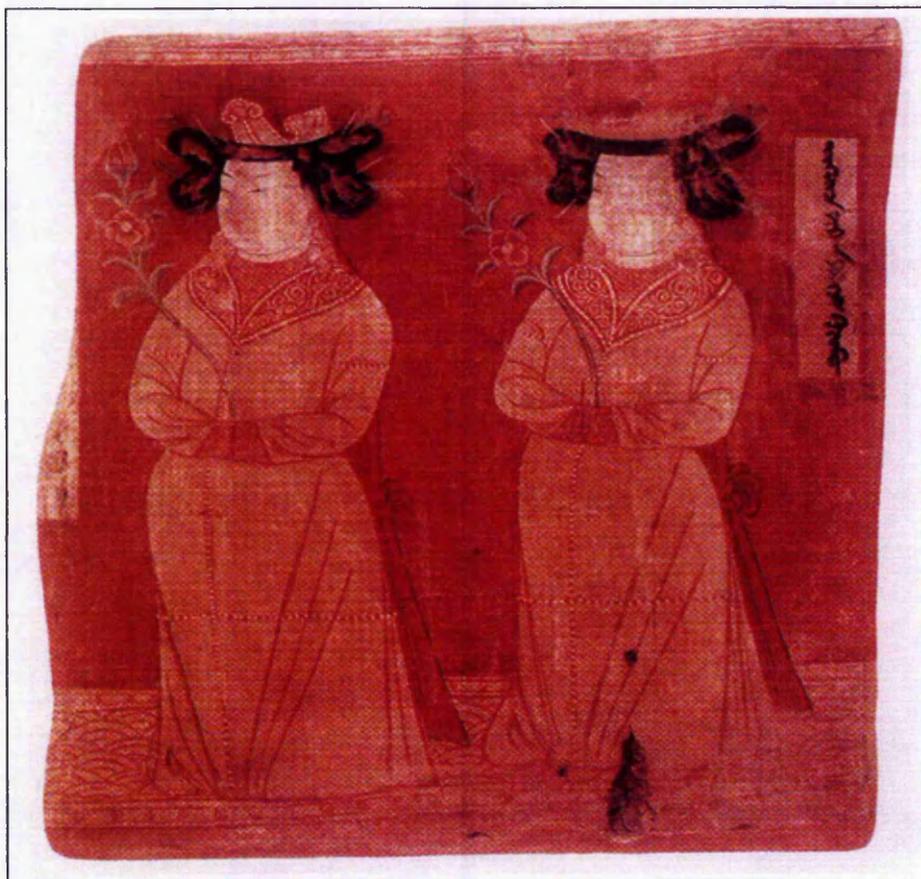


Fig. 14 Two Uyghur princesses.
Ninth century. Mural from Bezeklik.
Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 111.

Women's adoption of male style equestrian dress

Even though clothing was restricted by the customs and regulations of the T'ang court, T'ang women donned outsiders' attire, dressing in imitation of exotic models, including the special case of female transvestites. They dressed as *Hu* male equestrians, in wide-lapelled belted tunics, trousers and tall leather boots (Karetzky 1996: 17; Paludan 1994: 45), and engaged in non-traditional activities such as horse riding and playing polo. (See Figure 15) It is my opinion that that T'ang woman went out more often wearing equestrian dress for greater freedom of movement. They may have worn men's style clothing to do men's work and they might have put on "masculine" tunics, fitting jackets and trousers for functional reasons of comfort and convenience. Later, they may have seen cross-dressing as an escape from the restrictions of Confucian doctrines and gender-based limitations on their social roles.

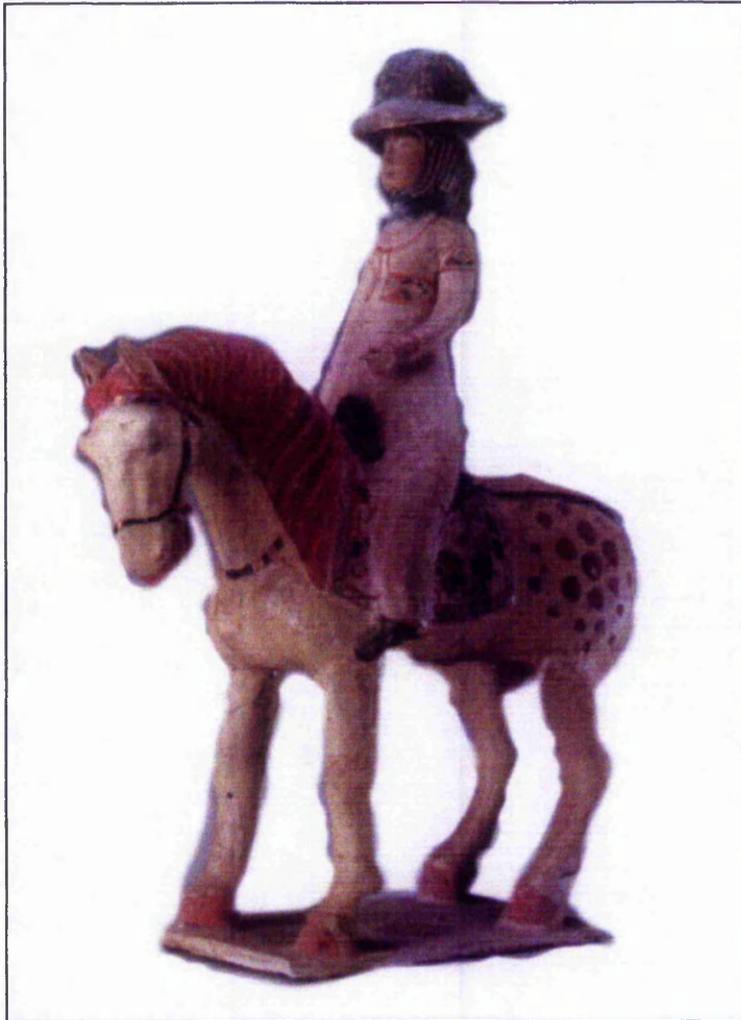


Fig. 15 An equestrian woman wearing veils (*wei-mao* and *mi-li*).
Early T'ang. Funerary figure.
The Schloss Collection, New York.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 109.

Veiling practice as a sign of sexuality

Women in T'ang can be seen in some paintings that wearing veils identical to the foreign fashion of wearing *mi-li* (cloth for veiling), that was termed Islamic in vernacular texts (Mahler 1959: 108). In Islamic culture, to reveal the body was viewed as immodest of women⁸⁸. According to Abu Lughod: "Veiling practices may be said to cover the shame of women's dependency on men. . . ." (1979: 38 quoted in Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997: 15-16) My argument assumes that in T'ang, sartorial rules changed and inevitability transformed social identities. This may be the kind of assumption which lays behind the dress codes and dress reforms introduced by veiling. In some contexts, veiling

⁸⁸ See Bridgwood 1995: 35, "In the past, respectability and modesty in dress were assured by concealing the body and, in the case of women, the face. . . The act of covering or concealing the hair has frequently been interpreted as a sign of self-restraint, control, and a denial of sexuality."

may be associated with the sexual position of T'ang women⁸⁹. (Also see Figure 15) Within such a cultural context, the function of *mi-li* was to conceal the body with no accentuation of body forms. Islamic veiling might have denoted stereotypical attributes of gender difference and inequality. This modesty code rested on an assumption that veiling was to protect T'ang women against external offences of society. On the other hand, wearing veils might have been regarded fashionable.

3.2 The cosmopolitanism of T'ang fashion

Central Asian and western cultures, together with that of India, all contributed to the evolution of T'ang fashion. The combination of indigenous Chinese and western elements that was T'ang fashion itself became an international style. The dynamic and creative clothing culture grew in an environment of multiculturalism that enriched the changing scene of T'ang (Beaton 1989: 329-30; Wright and Twitchett 1973: 1-4) which in this study is referred to as cosmopolitanism. I am arguing that the major changes in fashion revolved around changes in the court culture and the interaction between China and *Hu* areas. This can be proven by investigating artefacts which reflect the styles of clothing and prevalent aesthetics in different periods⁹⁰. The study of the vivid images they provide will complement the information in written texts (Hulme 1948: 36).

The form of dress is a kind of material culture, something tangible that T'ang society created. My study of changes in T'ang fashion will examine images depicted on murals⁹¹, silk handroll paintings⁹², tomb figurines⁹³, fragments of clothes and textiles. These are to be consulted in readily available eastern or western publications of books. I will also analyse the collections of archaeological finds that are preserved and accessible in public collections in museums in China, Taiwan, Japan and Western countries. I will:

- attempt to discover the criteria of beauty and the range of the styles of clothing in T'ang fashion,
- examine the extent to which items of clothing denoted social attributes such as sexuality and class distinction, and
- investigate the extent to which major social, political or cultural factors impacted on T'ang fashion.

⁸⁹ Veiling may be said to prevent a woman from becoming an object of a man's desire. Veiling may denote other stereotypical attributes of gendered difference and inequality. See Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997: 15-16.

⁹⁰ T'ang periods have been commonly divided into three: the early T'ang (AD 618-712), the mid T'ang (AD 713-811) and the late T'ang (AD 812-907).

⁹¹ Many artefacts have been recovered from T'ang tomb murals. Of the T'ang tombs excavated to date, the three preserving the finest examples of mural painting—the tombs of Princess Yongtai, Crown Princes Yide and Zhuanghuai were constructed in 706 during the second reign of Emperor Zhongzong (AD 705-10) and are thought to have brought together a large number of artists from the court Painting Academy. See Doi 1983: 118.

⁹² There were numerous silk paintings unearthed from Astana tombs in Turfan, Xinjiang. See Doi 1983: 118. Also see Ashton and Gray 1985: 114; a number of the paintings on silk and paper recovered by Sir Aurel Stein and M. Pelliot, and now in the British Museum, in Paris or in Delhi, are dated and it is possible to place them all between the years AD 729 and AD 1030.

⁹³ See Paludan 1994: 46; the real history of Chinese tomb figurines spans a millennium. From the clay figurine armies of the Han to the magnificent glazed models of the T'ang, these miniatures reflect the changes in Chinese society.

3.2.1 T'ang fashion depicted on murals

T'ang fashion can be readily traced archaeologically to the early eighth century from the tombs that were filled with images of the court's pastimes and amusements. The images on the chamber walls in the T'ang murals reflected the sensitivities of the T'ang wearers. In the mural in the tomb of the Princess Yongtai (AD 706) (Fig. 16)⁹⁴, the images indicated a belief in a royal afterlife (Capon 1989: 130). Although they were oriented towards an afterlife, they still provided important information about life at that time. Eight ladies and one maidservant in male style dress were shown with a natural poise in their poses and a graceful drapery in their dress⁹⁵. The images were abstract and stylised and the whole silhouette encodes slimness and youthfulness, reflecting the ideal noble beauty of early T'ang. Billowing layers of fabric that surrounded the wearer and the undulating folds of silk produced an aesthetic of softness and fluidity. The colour, which may have been stronger, appeared pale green, purple and orange (Sickman and Soper 1971: 177).



Fig. 16 The mural in the tomb of the Princess Yongtai (part).
AD 706. Xian, Shanxi Province, China.
Source: Shen 1988: 246-47.

Some clothes worn by those court ladies consisted of a *pi-bo* (shawl), a long skirt gathered at the waist by a band and tight-sleeves. In some of their clothes, a short-sleeved jacket completed the upper ensemble. The maidservant wore the Central Asian male style tunic with boots, previously foreign to the Chinese. The shawl draped gracefully down to the front of the skirt, with one end tucked into the band and the other encircling the shoulders, wrapped round the arms (Doi 1983: 118; Karetzky 1996: 11; Sickman and Soper 1971: 177). The sensuous style showed the impact of Taoism and Buddhism and was characterised by the linear figure style of flowing serenity and essential quality of simplicity (Abbate 1972: 53; Ashton and Gray 1985: 114).

⁹⁴ It was surmised, as the best of an artisan tradition in tomb embellishment—a tradition which one surmises to stand in some relation to the sophisticated art of the period. See Watson 1995: 199.

⁹⁵ See Sickman and Soper 1971: 177, this figure painting by professional craftsmen, wall paints, was discovered in 1960, Xian, Shanxi Province, China. The tomb was built in AD 706 for the imperial Princess Yongtai.

T'ang people wore different styles of clothing in a variety of colours, and some of the robes were embellished with rich images of flowers, cloud and foliage patterns and intricate borders adorned with pearls, roundels and other ornaments on their sleeves, collars and hems. In the mural of Yulin Cave, a late T'ang lady wore a *Hu* style bun, a golden phoenix hat and a turned-back lapelled, left-sided gown with narrow sleeves, which were influenced by *Hufu*. (See Figure 17) The stately quality of novelty was enhanced by the high and jewelled chignon.



Fig. 17 An aristocratic lady in jewelled *Hu* style bun. Late T'ang. Mural in Yulin Cave, Anxi, Gansu Province, China. Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 99.

3.2.2 T'ang fashion depicted on silk paintings

The figurative painting by Yen Li-ben (b. AD 600; d. 673)⁹⁶, "The Tribute Bearers" (Chih Kang T'u) (See Figure 18) depicts the T'ang emperor Taizong receiving a Tibetan⁹⁷. The emperor wore a *pu-tou* (hat) and round collared robe. The visitor from the West was in typical *Hu* style belted tunic, trousers and black leather boots. The female attendants wore narrow-sleeved jackets and high waistline

⁹⁶ Yen Li-ben, worked with his brother, Yen Li-te, at the courts of the Emperors Taizong (AD 627-49) and Gaozong (AD 632-83). He became a high officer of state and a very successful painter and was made Prime Minister in 668. The best known painting attributed to Yen Li-ben that survives is "The Thirteen Emperor", collected in the Boston Museum which allows us to imagine the statuesque T'ang picture behind it. See Ashton and Gray 1985: 160-61.

⁹⁷ According to the *Hsuan Ho Huao P'u* (noted in Ferguson 1927: 63), there were four copies of this painting in the Hsuan Ho Collection. The historical event depicted in the picture is that of bearers of tribute coming to the palace with various types of offerings to be presented to the Emperor Taizong. It is meant to represent the great influence of the T'ang dynasty in extending the borders of the empire so as to include all of the outlying barbarian tribes. Related works see O'Neill and Walter 2004: 305.

Jian-qun (paneled skirts)⁹⁸ which were likely influenced by the striped skirt of Persian origin. The relationship between the wearers (the superior and the inferior) and *li* (etiquette)⁹⁹ at T'ang court were observed (Jin 1988: 6-7; Shen 1988: 230-31; Zhou and Gao 1987: 82)¹⁰⁰.



Fig. 18 The tribute bearers ("Chih Kang T'u") (part). AD 627-49, Chen-kuan era. By Yen Li-ben (b. 600; d. 673). H: 38.5 cm, W: 129 cm. Beijing Palace Museum. Source: Jin 1988: 6-7.



Fig. 19 T'ang scholars at literature centre. Late T'ang. "Literature Centre" (part) by Han Huang. Source: Shen 1988: 284.

⁹⁸ For *jian-qun* (panelled skirts), it seems plain that this type of T'ang clothes was made of bands of different coloured material sewn together. In the tomb figurines, lines incised in the skirt may possibly represent pleats, instead of sewn panelled skirt, which Mahler surmised were also often a part of eighth century fashion in China. For related work see Mahler 1959: 32. Also see Ashton and Gray 1985: 152. Related work: "Figure of A Lady", T'ang dynasty, glazed earthenware, height: 12", Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Eumorfopoulos Collection).

⁹⁹ For the meaning of "*li*", see Glossary, also description will be given in the following section 3.3.

¹⁰⁰ See "Scholars of Northern Ch'i Dynasty Collating Classic Texts", 11th century adaptation of a painting by Yen Li-ben, School painting in ink and light colours on silk, size: 27.6 cm x 1.14 m (10.9" x 45") in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. That is a copy after a T'ang original by some good hand in the Song dynasty (AD 960-1279).

As this study focuses only on women's clothes, the explanation of the origins and meaning of T'ang women cross-dressing might be inadequate and this might detract from a full appreciation of the significance of aesthetics and symbolism in T'ang dress. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse some aspects of T'ang men's clothes. From the painting "Literature Centre", (Fig. 19) T'ang literary officials wearing *pu-tou* (a type of clothes with hat) can be seen. The clothes used plain fabric and colours, consciously restricted to blue, green, white and brown, creating an impression of sombreness, solidity and introspection. The natural fabrics and comfortable form of the clothes are vehicles for expressing the T'ang wearer's sensibility.

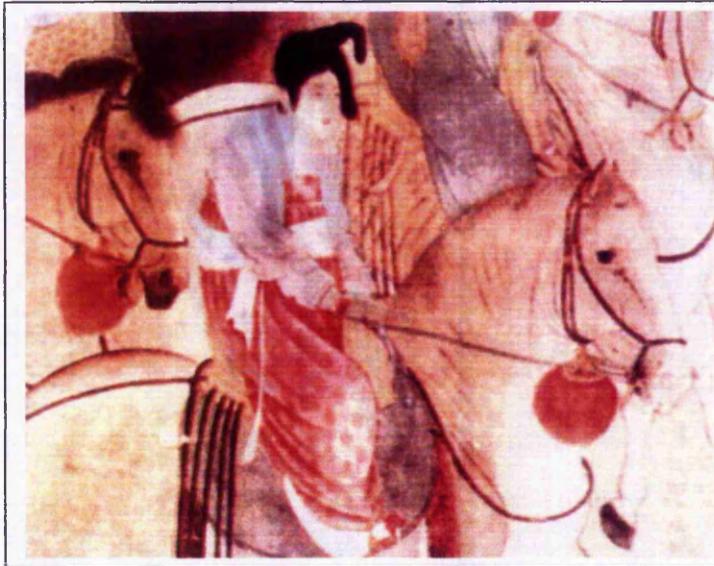


Fig. 20 Lady Guao and her sisters setting out on horseback (part).
Song dynasty. Copy credited to Li Gong-lin (ca AD 1100). After Zhang Xuan (ca. AD 713-42). H: 52 cm; W: 148 cm.
Liaoning Museum, China.
Source: Jin 1988: 44-45.

Scenes of palace life in the manner of the T'ang painters Zhang Xuan (fl. AD 713 to 742) and Zhou Fang (fl. AD 780 to 810) were popular and became a T'ang tradition. Their works, created under court patronage, transmit a flavour of elegance and aestheticism¹⁰¹, and "such sensitive portrayals of aristocratic pleasures and pastimes suited perfectly the taste that prevailed within this fragile enclave of culture." (Cahill 1960: 45) In the painting, "Lady Guao and Her Sisters Setting out on Horseback", (Fig. 20) the lady wore a very fine narrow-sleeved upper dress and a short and narrow *pi-bo* (shawl). The skirt was tied at the waist with a ribbon. When upper-class T'ang women wore rider's clothes as outer attire, the going-out style might have taken on the meaning of something fashionable. The painting represented the luxurious and sophisticated world of contemporary upper class life (Paludan 1994: 52) and the elegant style of T'ang fashion (Watson 1995: 199)¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ Related works: the picture in the Freer Gallery of ladies playing at a kind of backgammon, called "Double Sixes", 30.7 by 48 cm, is traditionally attributed to Zhou Fang.

¹⁰² According to an early thirteenth century attribution, this was a copy, commissioned by the Emperor Huai Tsun (AD 1082-1135, the Song dynasty) of the original painting Zhang Xuan. See Ashton and Gray 1985: 162-63.

“Ladies Preparing Newly-Woven Silk” (Fig. 21) by Zhang Xuan¹⁰³ described an everyday scene in the women’s quarters of the palace and was “idealised and turned to the evocation of a quiet mood¹⁰⁴” (Cahill 1960: 19). The dresses worn by the three aristocratic ladies were meticulously depicted. This was, in this study, referring to a style of Yuen-he period (AD 742-756). The sleeves were narrower than those of the mid T’ang and the outline of the dress was straighter and the waistline seemed higher. The colours of the clothes were unusually varied: light blue, pink, light purple and brown (Watson 1995: 199).



Fig. 21 Ladies preparing newly-woven silk.
Song dynasty. Copy by Huzong (r. AD 1101-25). After Zhang Xuan (ca. AD 713-42).
Scroll painting in full colour, on silk; left-hand portion, Height: 37 cm; Width: 147 cm.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Source: Jin 1988: 49.

One of the rules for the painters portraying court ladies was an attentive demeanour and a plump, pomaded and rouged face with thick eyebrows. The scene in “Beauty with Flowery Hairpins” (Fig. 22) by Zhou Fang represented royal life in the mid T’ang period¹⁰⁵. The lady was dressed in a sumptuous style. The diaphanous wide sleeves and painted shawl were in white, red and brown¹⁰⁶. This style is typically Kai-yuan and Tian-pao style (in the period of AD 742-56). This court dress style was somewhat simultaneously detached from its Han origin. With these figures, the change from the traditional court style of Han mode of wide gowns, which crossed at the front and had long full sleeves, to the low-necked, high-waisted, semi-transparent sleeved gowns, worn with shawls and popular in the eighth century, became apparent (McNamee 1972: 62-64).

¹⁰³ The whole painting shows four women, one carrying a child, and one maidservant dressed in male style clothes (some surmised as male attendant).

¹⁰⁴ Of the similarly attributed ‘Emperor Ming Huang Playing A Flute’, see Sickman and Soper 1971: 179.

¹⁰⁵ Related work may be compared with another piece of work of Zhou Fang in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a scroll on silk “Ladies with Fans” (*Shih Nu*). The colouring of this picture is exquisite. See Ferguson 1927: 67.

¹⁰⁶ For more Zhou Fang’s work, see Watson 1995: 196-98; “Woman Seated At An Embroidery Frame”, a Ming-date (AD 1368-1644) exercises in the same manner, Freer Gallery; and “Round-Fan Painting of Beautiful Women”, Beijing Palace Museum, China.

It was traditional Confucian thought that women should avoid clothes that revealed their bodies. Traditional Chinese opinion frowned at women who wore revealing clothes or those that accentuated body forms. This low neckline blouse influenced by *Hu* attire that was deemed immodest in earlier times in Chinese history, became fashionable in T'ang times. This court style typified the aesthetic of half-hidden glamour, hinted at but did not openly display, which was likely to be seen as enhancing the attractiveness of T'ang women. This epitomised a mid T'ang ideal of feminine beauty, as eulogised by the famous T'ang poet Fang Gan (d. ca. AD 888):

The highs and lows of those vermilion lips imitate cherries.
Half covered breasts are snow on a sunny day.

("To a beauty" by Fang Gan (*Quan T'ang Shi*, vol. 19: 7478)¹⁰⁷)

In the painting "Beauty with flowery hairpins", the lady's make-up emphasised dark eyebrows and her hair is held in place by delicate flowered pins. The proportion of the lady's head and cheeks were larger than those of the Pre-T'ang eras (Karetzky 1996: 19). The low-necked bodice appeared to indicate western influence in its daring exposure of the breast (Karetzky 1996: 15, 55; Paludan 1994: 46). Karetzky suggested: "The aesthetic goals are seen in the paintings being treated relatively with individual appearance but also psychological characters." (1996: 2-3)



Fig. 22 Beauty with flowery hairpins.
Mid T'ang. By Zhou Fang (fl. AD 780 to 810). H: 46 cm, W: 180 cm.
Shenyang Museum, China.
Source: Jin 1988: 59.

In the late T'ang period, the sumptuary laws limited the privilege of wearing certain luxurious silk and shortened the permissible length of clothes. Due to this restriction, the clothes worn were shorter and less opulent. (See Figure 23) The rate at which changes in fashion evolved may have been slowed down. The direction of T'ang fashion may have been affected by the social changes caused by the negative impacts of the rebellion of An-lu Shan from AD 755 to the end of eighth century. This impact included inauspicious economic conditions. Nevertheless, the inner-war had wide repercussions. Intellectual life in T'ang had changed¹⁰⁸. In essence, this change of social mentality consisted of a deep desire on the part of some people to go back to the ancient sources of the Chinese tradition¹⁰⁹ combined with an attitude of hostility to the *Hu* influences which had permeated so widely since the end of the Han period and peaked between the early to mid T'ang periods.

¹⁰⁷ *Quan T'ang Shi* 1960.

¹⁰⁸ For more details see Peterson 1966, Pulleyblank 1976: 32-60.

¹⁰⁹ Confucian and Taoist doctrines of austerity provided the idea that living in a plainer life as a virtue. The Chou dynasty's concept of ritual and ritual dress was rather modest in comparison with the more elaborate accession rituals that evolved in Han and later times down to the mid T'ang.

On the other hand, there was a tendency of Taoist influence toward the introspective and highly personal, in part escapist, which pressed clothing sensibility and sensual response to the limit and was assumed by me to affect clothing psychology as well. Gernet described this action as “culturalism” since this movement reflected the idea of culture but not quite the recent idea of a nation (1982: 292-93). This “nationalist” or “cultural’ reaction and the return to the sources of the Han Chinese tradition also affected fashion mentality. The foreign influence of *Hufu* thus declined¹¹⁰.



Fig. 23 A concert at court.
T'ang dynasty, Yuen-he period (AD 742-756). By Zhou Wen-ju.
National Palace Museum, Taipei.
Source: Shen: 282. FD

3.2.3 T'ang fashion depicted on tomb figurines

Musicians and dance troupes from a region of the west of China were reputed for being fashionable in Sui and T'ang times (Morton 1982: 84)¹¹¹. In the west region of China, in figurines excavated from the large tombs¹¹², well-born ladies with their attendants, serving maids, and female dancers and musicians provided clear illustration of fashionable ladies of the time¹¹³. The *Hu* music was linked to fashion and the musicians were fashionable people. (Fig. 24) A woman with the dancer's padded

¹¹⁰ Part of this movement was also reflected in T'ang literature: “Now literature is not just a kind of aesthetic relaxation. If it did not express sound and strong ideas, it was no longer anything but a contemptible exercise in virtuosity. The educational, moral, and political function which it had possessed in antiquity was inseparable from its form. Implicitly, it is also true to the forms of ritual dress. Such were the themes which were to be elaborated by Han Yu (AD 768-824), the greatest Chinese prose writer after Ssu-ma Ch'ien [Chinese greatest historian, composer of *Shih Chi* (145-ca. 90 BC)].” See Gernet 1982: 293.

¹¹¹ In addition to inherited traditional Chinese dances, the northwestern Tartar dance became popular in the T'ang era.

¹¹² See Paludan 1994: 59. Tomb figurines belong to the mainstream of the Chinese classical tradition of sculpture. They reached their peak in the first half of the eighth century and examples from this period combine all that is best in Chinese sculpture. “The T'ang combined Han concentration on the inner nature of the subject with their own distinctive genius for accurate reproduction. The result was fully rounded figures caught in the moment of action. The proportions could be varied. . . but the result is always harmonious.”

¹¹³ Beautiful girls were sent to the court as tribute, those from Turkie or Kucha, an oasis city in Central Asia. Being particularly famed for their music and grace.

shoulders and a pendent sleeves appears to represent a dancer. Trumpet-shape sleeves and a sinuous waist with exaggerated versions given to the dancers can often be seen¹¹⁴. The T'ang's dance describes the dramatic, romantic and lyric feelings, based on the character's gender (male, female, animal or goddess) and age (childhood, youth, mature or old). The feelings develop by the inspiration of the events, and both the costume and the music contributes to the whole harmony of the show and become an integral part of the dance.



Fig. 24 The dancers.
T'ang dynasty.
Pottery figurines unearthed in Luo-yang, Henan Province, China.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 97.



Fig. 25 Serving ladies holding a fish on a plate, a gourd, a musical instrument, a flask, and a censer.
Late seventh century.
Painted earthenware with transparent glaze. Height ca. 25cm.
The Glasgow Museums, the Burrell Collection.
Source: Paludan 1994: 48.

¹¹⁴ Related works: "Kneeling Female Musician with Zither (*qin*) [musical instrument from *Hu* area]", T'ang dynasty, height 16.5 cm, the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum; and "A Lady of T'ang Dynasty", ca. AD 720-750, white painted earthenware, height: 46 cm, the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, see Paludan 1994: 48, 50.

Extravagant head-dress with wing-like extensions and elaborate chignon indicate an actress (Watson 1995: 232). It was apparent that basque high waistline pleated skirts adorned with patterns drawn from Persian art were prevalent at the court in the seventh and eighth centuries (Mahler 1959: 32; O'Neill and Walter 2004: 288-89; Paludan 1994: 46)¹¹⁵. (See Figure 25) Patterns on clothes also showed foreign influence. As might be supposed, the sleeves of dancing costumes were small so as to facilitate jumping and moving around¹¹⁶. The sleeveless jacket worn by the figure (See Figure 26) was of silk with a simonised pattern of two medallions of confronted birds within a pearl roundel. The shawl was of silk with patterns of circles. The belt was silk tapestry also woven to scale. The skirt was made of alternating strips.

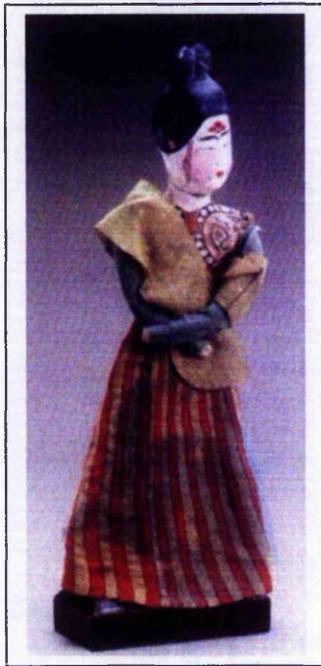


Fig. 26 A female figure.

Early T'ang. Wood with pigments, paper and silk. Height: 29.5 cm.

Excavated from the tomb (dated AD 688) of Zhang Xiong (d. 633) and his wife Qu (d. 688), Astana, Turfan.

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China.

Reference: EXCAV. REPORT in *Wen Wu* 1975.

Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 288-289.

Prior to the T'ang, the *mi-li* from the Islamic world, a body-long veil which completely covered the body and was designed to block the strangers' gaze, became popular amongst women who rode horses on public roads¹¹⁷. One of the *Hufu* fashion included a new wide-brimmed hat with shoulder-length veil that was known as a *wei-mao* (See Figure 27). The T'ang official historian acknowledged in "Vehicle and Clothing" in *Chiu T'ang Shu*:

The custom of wearing *mi-li* (veils) was introduced [to the capital] by barbarians," "at the beginning of the dynasty, court ladies wore a *wei-mao*, or [*Hu* style hat with] full-length veil, when they went out and that they would wear a hat with a skirt going down to the neck."

¹¹⁵ Such elegantly costumed, seated figures represent ladies of the court. They have been excavated from tombs of middle T'ang date at Wang chia-fen-ts'un in the Xian, Shanxi Province, China. See McNamee 1972: 62-64.

¹¹⁶ The sleeve-whirling dance was often praised in T'ang writing and represented among the figurines.

¹¹⁷ For discussion of veiling practice, also see 3.1 in this volume.



Fig. 27 A female rider with *wei-mou*.

T'ang dynasty. Glazed earthenware with pigments. Height: 37 cm.

Excavated from the tomb (dated 664) of Zheng Rentai, Liqun, Shanxi Province, 1972. Shanxi History Museum.

Reference: EXCAV REPORT in *Wen Wu* 1972.7.

Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 291.

From a functional point of view, wearing a veil seems practical as it protected the wearer against the wind or desert sands (O'Neill and Walter 2004: 290). It was, according to some historians, adopted for reasons of modesty. I would suggest that it was much more likely a matter of fashion. Despite its original meaning with association with *Hu* cultures, by the 650s the *wei-mao* had become popular. With time, the *mi-li* in T'ang had become less conservative in style, as the veil only concealed the face. In the edicts (650s and 671) in "Vehicle and Clothing" in *Chiu T'ang Shu*, enforced the wearing of the more modest *mi-li*. The edicts, it seems, were almost completely ignored. The *mi-li*, which was in the T'ang sometimes adorned with jewels, was viewed as an expression of the highest propriety; presumably it was the "height of fashion" in the period. This can be interpreted as a reflection of the force of popular fashion. As shown in Figure 26, some ladies wore short-sleeved jacket of waistline length that was embellished with an embroidered border that complemented the embroidery at the wrist (O'Neill and Walter 2004: 291). The *wei-mao* was worn without any veil at all, having the advantage of showing the female rider's face as can be seen below.

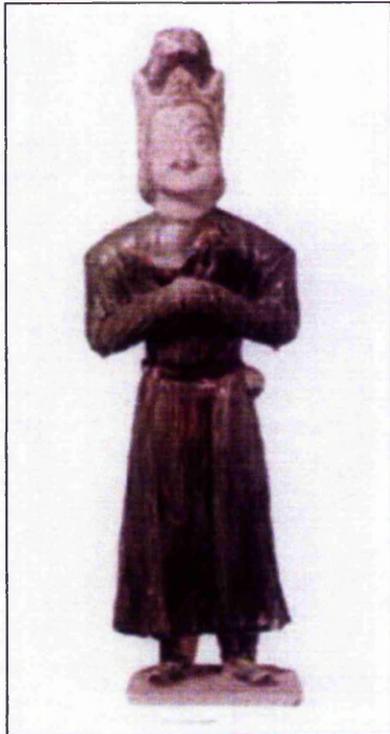


Fig. 28 A woman in central Asian-style dress.
T'ang dynasty.
Excavated in Xian, Shanxi Province, China.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 93.

Many women in T'ang pottery and painting were depicted in male style clothing. Equestrian figures can also be seen in masculine coats or belted tunics with side slits and turned-back lapels, trousers, tall boots and a Tartar hat. The reason why women could have dressed in men's cloths is not clear; it was presumably either for the pleasure of fashion or to fulfil a specific function such as serving. The gender of the figures who dressed entirely in male style clothing can be recognised from their feminine gestures and postures (Karetzky 1996: 17; Paludan 1994: 44-45)¹¹⁸. See Figure 28.

Figure 29 shows a figure was dressed in the fashionable menswear of the day. On the blue Persian-style round-collared robe, a band with a Central Asian floral design ran along the front from top to the bottom. A leather belt below the waist was slung over the hips, and the hair was swept up into a topknot and wrapped in a black kerchief *pu-tou*. She wore red-bordered trousers and sky-blue "thread" shoes together with her makeup (O'Neill and Walter 2004: 293-94).

¹¹⁸ Related works: in the imperial tomb of Prince Li Zhonggren, many figurines wore Central Asian-style dress with a wide-lapelled belted tunic, trousers, and tall boots.



Fig. 29 A female attendant in male style dress.
T'ang dynasty. Glazed earthenware with pigments. Height: 32 cm.
Excavated from the tomb (dated 664) of Zhen Ren-tai, Liqun, Shanxi Province, China, 1971.
Zhaoling Museum.
Reference: EYCAV. REPORT in *Wen Wu* 1972.7.
Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 293.

3.2.4 T'ang fashion seen from remnants of clothes

In T'ang, the shape of garments changed noticeably. Distinctions can be seen from different kinds of clothes and accessories—as well as between the types of clothing appropriate for different categories of people. From the remnants of clothes such as garments, belt plaques and footwear, western cultural influences can be seen, demonstrating the fascination of the period with things foreign and exotic.



Fig. 30 Silk braided belt, with diagonal lattice patterns.
T'ang dynasty. W: 4.7 cm.
Source: Matsumoto Kaneo 1984: 141.



Fig. 31 Silk shoes, with embroidered flowers.
T'ang dynasty. L: 117 cm.
Source: Matsumoto Kaneo 1984: 156-57.

The clothes worn by T'ang people were evident in their use of gold, precious stones and jade braided belt or plaques, which were often decorated with images of the clothes of musicians and entertainers. (Fig. 30) Court silk shoes, which resemble a boat with a high prow, were worn with elaborate ceremonial gowns. See Figure 31, the treasure brocade shoes had toe-caps shaped in cloud pattern. According to T'ang historians (*Chiu T'ang Shu*) double-plated shoes were for ceremonial use and soft silk shoes worn by aristocratic ladies were for casual use but lower-ranked women wore them for formal occasions.



Fig. 32 An embroidered sock.
 7th to 8th century. Ankle: woven silk; instep and sole: embroidered silk. Height: 22.5 cm. Length: 27.3 cm.
 Excavated at Reshui, Dulan, Qinghai Province, 1983.
 Qinghai Institute of Archaeology.
 Reference: *Zhongguo wenwu jinghua* 1997: 338.
 Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 344.

The sock was made of three separate textiles with different designs. It can be seen that T'ang fashion had delicate tastes. (See Figure 32) The complex combinations demonstrated the elaborate patterning and colour schemes. There were floral patterns, palmettes, hexagonal floral medallions, with six-pearled rosette in the centre and geometric pattern and lines. It may have been worn indoors by the ethnic groups living in northwestern China (O'Neill and Walter 2004: 344).

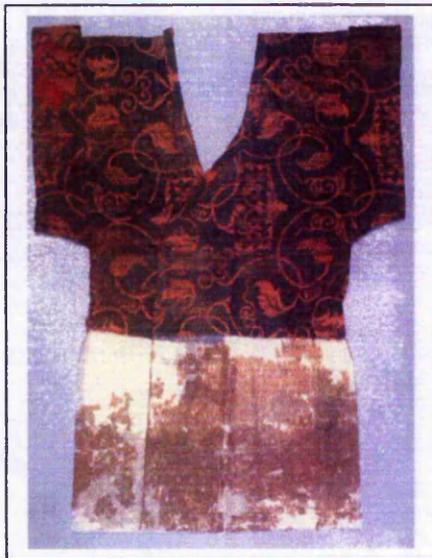


Fig. 33 Silk narrow half-sleeve garment (*pan-bi*), with grapevine scroll patterns on a green ground silk.
 T'ang dynasty.
 Source: Matsumoto Kaneko 1984: 152.

Images of grapevine scroll and flower called "T'ang grass" were used very often on patterns of T'ang clothes. (See Figure 33) Jackets and skirts were made from three different textiles (silk, hemp and wool) and in a variety of designs but silk was the main fabric. See Figures 34-37.

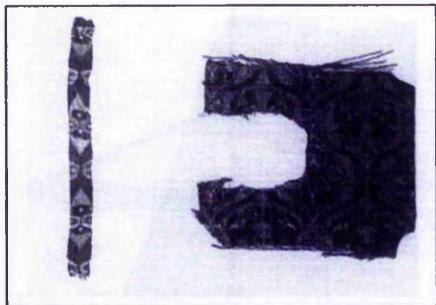


Fig. 34 Silk belt and double-bird and animal patterned *yi*.
T'ang dynasty.
Source: Xianjian Uyqur Autonomous Region Museum 4 (29): 104.

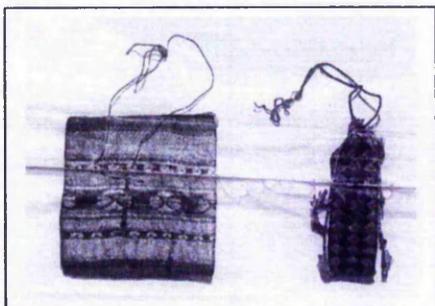


Fig. 35 Shaded colour and diverse patterned *yi* and square chess patterned *yi*.
T'ang dynasty.
Source: Xianjian Uyqur Autonomous Region Museum 4 (29): 104.



Fig. 36 Printed floral patterned, dark brown red silk skirt.
T'ang dynasty.
Source: Xianjian Uyqur Autonomous Region Museum 4 (29): 105.

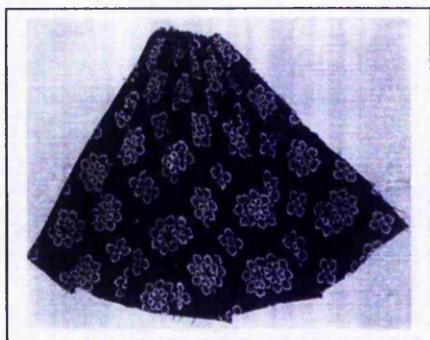


Fig. 37 Printed floral patterned, green ground silk skirt.
T'ang dynasty.
Source: Xianjian Uyqur Autonomous Region Museum 4 (29): 104.

3.2.5 T'ang fashion seen from fragments of textiles

In T'ang period, the designs of the silks combined realistic, symmetrical and geometric patterns in both western and eastern styles. The floral vine arabesques, pearl roundels and naturalistic motifs played a dominant role in the design of T'ang textile. As Watson pointed out, these motifs became the international style (Watson 1995: 342-43). Painted, dyed, embroidered or drawn silk were generally used. Judging from the accounts of the textiles excavated, the T'ang seems to have been fond of designs composed of cloud-forms, plants (Fig. 38), birds (Fig. 39) and animals (Fig. 40).



Fig. 38 Fragment of flowered damask.
Eighth to ninth century. W: 8 cm.
Dun-huang Cave 17, Gansu Province, China.
British Museum.
Source: Watson 1995: pl. 308.

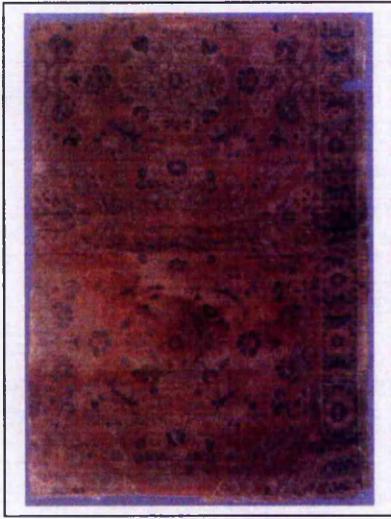


Fig. 39 Textiles with flowers and birds.
Second half of eighth century. Woven silk. Warp: 36.5 cm, weft: 24.4 cm.
Excavated from Tomb 48 (dated AD 778), Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 1968.
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum.
Reference: Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu bowuguan 1991.
Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 343.



Fig. 40 Textile with hunting scene.
Late seventh-early eighth century. Resist-dyed silk tabby. Warp: 41.9 cm; weft: 29.2 cm.
Excavated from Tomb 191, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang, Uygur Autonomous Region, 1973.
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum.
Reference: Xinjiang Weiwu'er zizhiqu bowuguan 1991:185, no. 61
Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 342.

Seventh-century western style silks were excavated in sites along the Silk Road, from Turfan in Xinjiang, Dulan in Qinghuai, Russia, Dun-huang, and Chang'An¹¹⁹. Textiles were excavated in China¹²⁰; they possessed western characteristics which could be traced to Greek and Scythian influences. During the first half of the eighth century, floral motifs were commonly used on silk damask. (Fig. 41) Hellenistic, Sasanian, Persian influences were apparent in the floral and vine arabesques (Simmons 1948: 5, 7, 14, 16).

The use of roundels¹²¹, confronted animals and intervening palmette forms straight from Persia, absorbing elements from Turkestan¹²², sanitised the use of roundels and other Chinese elements with *Hu* motifs and transformed them into Chinese style. The designs were originally large¹²³: after the process of sinofication, the pearl roundels became smaller with designs such as confronted dragons¹²⁴, (Fig. 42) the phoenix or hexagons and Chinese characters (Fig. 43) which strongly reflected the Chinese culture (Zhao Feng 2004: 74-75). This cultural influence is also seen in the most-widely known Chinese silks attributable to T'ang period, in the Shoso-in, Japan¹²⁵. They are generally considered to date from the first half of the eighth century or earlier¹²⁶.



Fig. 41 Red ground bird-and-flower, medallion style pattern on silk. T'ang dynasty.
Source: Shen 1988: 306.

¹¹⁹ Chang'An (present-day Xian) was the capital of the Sui and the T'ang dynasties.

¹²⁰ See Simmons 1948: 4, the first Han textiles were discovered by Sir Aurel Stein on his expeditions to Chinese Turkestan in 1906-1908 and 1913-1916, in sites along the old Silk Road to the West. In 1924-1925, a Han site in Mongolia was excavated by Colonel P.K. Kozlov.

¹²¹ It was evident that from the fifth to the sixth century, the pattern of the pearl roundel was introduced into China.

¹²² A connection can be easily traceable in the frescoes from Kyzil, now in the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Berlin.

¹²³ According to Watson, their origins in the Iranian tradition were made very clear by the large part played by them in Sogdian painting of the sixth and seventh centuries. The floral jewels might have appeared alone, often in five-colour weave in which beaded and lobed roundels alternate with florets placed at the centre of four symmetrical leaf-sprays of the stiffest sort. See Watson 1995: 186-87, 189.

¹²⁴ Textiles with confronted dragons in pearl roundel are also preserved in the Shoso-in, the eighth-century imperial repository in Nara, Japan and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

¹²⁵ Pieces can be seen as the banner of Prince Shotoku in the Tokio Museum. See Ashton and Gray 1985: 111.

¹²⁶ See Simmons 1948: 18, some original textiles were said to have been used as part of a banner carried in the ceremony of the "opening of the eyes" of the great Buddha at the Todaiji in AD 752. A ceremony in which ten thousand priests and musicians took part, and which was a performance of unparalleled grandeur in Japanese history, with the Empress and officials of all ranks in attendance.



Fig. 42 Textiles with confronted dragons in pearl roundel.
Early eighth century. Woven silk. Warp: 21 cm; weft: 25.1 cm.
Excavated from Tomb 221, Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 1973.
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum
Reference Zhou Xuejun and Song Wenmin 1998, no. 53.
Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 341.



Fig. 43 Textiles with hexagons and Chinese character.
Seventh century. Woven silk. Warp: 31.4 cm; weft: 30.5 cm.
Excavated from Tomb 44 (dated 655), Astana, Turfan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 1966.
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum.
Reference: Xinjiang Weiwuer zizhiq *bowuguan* 1973: pl. 31.
Source: O'Neill and Walter 2004: 337.

There was growing taste for naturalism in T'ang. The themes on textiles were mostly describing nature. (See Figure 44) and foreign influence including religions. Watson pointed out that from the detail of the Taizokai Mandala showing the "rainbow colours", one can interpret the Chinese use of colours which was influenced by Buddhism. (See Figure 45) The floral sprays popular during the mid- and late T'ang periods reflected this change in taste (O'Neill and Walter 2004: 343)¹²⁷. References were constantly made to flowers, clouds, birds and beasts. (Fig. 46) The development was strongly

¹²⁷ Similar naturalistic representations can be seen in a piece of damask with running deer and floral medallions from Dulan, Qinghai, in the collection of the Qinghai Institute of Archaeology; another textile with a similar arrangement is preserved in the Shoso-in imperial repository in Nara, Japan. See Matsumoto 1984: 41.

influenced by the West. As the Chinese people were also a land-loving people, this facilitated the assimilation of landscapes into fashion creations. A poem by Li Bo, a T'ang poet, writing of nature and dress, was a good description of the theme:

Her robe is a cloud, her face a flower,
Her balcony, glimmering with the bright spring dew,
Is either the tip of earth's Jade Mountain,
Or a moon-edge roof of paradise.

There's a perfume stealing moist from a shaft of red blossom,
And a mist, through the heart, from the magic Hill of Wu—
The palaces of China have never known such beauty—
Not even Flying Swallow with all her glittering garments.
(“A Song of Pure Happiness”, translated by Kiaug and Bynner quoted in Morton 1982: 90)



Fig. 44 Flowerly tree and double deer.
T'ang dynasty. Patterned thin silk (*ling*).
Source: Shen 1988: 307.

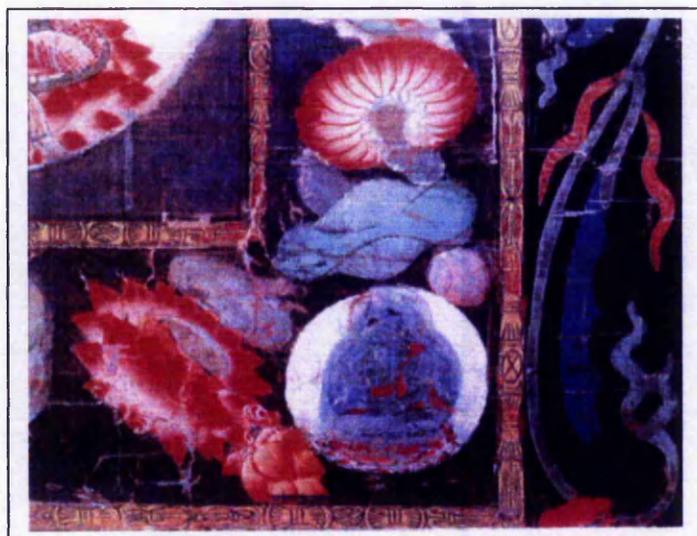


Fig. 45 Detail of the Taizokai Mandala showing the “rainbow colours” influenced by Buddhism.
T'ang dynasty.
Source: Watson 1995: pl. 310.

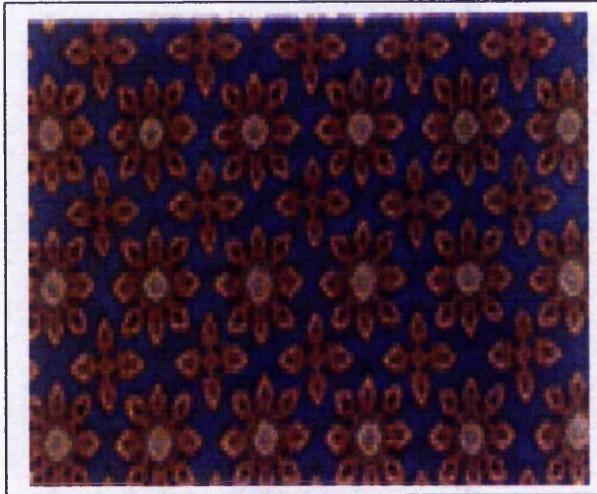


Fig. 46 Little flower on blue ground silk (*qi*).
T'ang dynasty.
Source: Shen 1988: 307.

3.3 Symbolism and social uses of T'ang dress

T'ang fashion was not simply about the temporal and physical changes in clothes that people wore, rather the significant alterations in cultural ideas and social relationships are also important to discussions of T'ang fashion. According to Barthes, dress “suits the social and cultural history of sartorial appearance. . . as an individual act by which the individual adapts himself to what is proposed by the group.” (Barthes 1985)

Symbolism of dress was a kind of non-material culture, an abstract creation of customs, laws, norms, values and beliefs (religion and cultural identity)¹²⁸. It has a moral dimension, as well as being a cultural phenomenon, making metaphysical statement about the meanings underlying the dress's form. This section discusses the relations between social practices and T'ang dress and aims to interpret the values T'ang dress portrayed in the society in which it was worn. It examines:

- the extent to which T'ang clothes displayed class distinctions through clothing regulations on the basis of social status and to which it displayed spiritual convictions through religious symbols; and
- the extent to which the norms of dress to have emerged from the processes of social interactions and the extent to which they reinforced the belief of the T'ang in their heritage.

3.3.1 Symbolism in T'ang dress

Cultural anthropologists conceived of culture as a system of symbols (Wechsler 1985: 31). The psychological and philosophical elements underlying T'ang people's choice of clothing which might have been influenced by the spirit and character of Chinese symbolism. To comprehend the significance of the expressive quality of T'ang dress, as a cultural object and what it meant to the wearer, it is important to understand that the concept of symbolism had strong metaphoric and cultural implications for the T'ang wearers.

¹²⁸ See Landis 1995: 75-77. “Values”, the general opinions and beliefs, represent the broad perspectives people carry regarding usually intangible concepts such as Confucian normative moralism. “Norms” represent one aspect of non-material culture, the rules for conduct: what we are supposed to do in specific situations.

The formal quality of T'ang dress was analysed in the previous section. The ways certain items of T'ang dress conveyed its meanings might have been more important than the actual tangible pieces of clothes themselves. As opposed to a merely superficial visual account, this section is intended to analyse T'ang symbolism using social theories to interpret and recontextualise its meanings. I believe that those fashion historians or designers who tried to dismiss the symbols in Chinese clothing as merely decorations were wrong. This is particularly because it was a period in Chinese civilisation when the wealth of rituals that the code embodied was almost without exception sanctioned by the traditional Confucian outlook on the cosmos and on society and when nature and natural forces were so important in religion and daily life¹²⁹. This study might provide an understanding of what the present-day society has inherited from T'ang dynasty clothing culture and in turn this might provide insights into clothing phenomena in Chinese societies¹³⁰.

Since early times in China, symbols and ritual had been inextricably commingled (Wechsler 1985: 10). The visual impact of symbols in ritual played an important part in proclaiming and reinforcing the social order. It helped to secure and maintain status at court and contributed to the ordering of court ritual. Symbolism in dress seemed crucial. For example, the dress a particular individual was wearing determined whether others would bow to or ignore the wearer (Rawson 1999: 22). Such consciousness of social ordering was "crystallised and concentrated in the pictorial symbols is beyond pure graphic representation." (Li Ze-hou 1994: 49) Wechsler pointed out:

The rites and symbols that were employed aroused a deep sense of identification with the regime and its organs and a common interest among its members. The colours of court dress, the code of laws, the names of bureaucratic offices, as well as establishing its own music and ritual, . . . allowed the people to perceive it's the regime's surpassing moral qualities. (1985: 4, 7)

As *I Ching* stated: "*tian-wen* - the pattern of the heavenly bodies as the sun, moon and constellation)¹³¹, and *ren-wen* - human pattern that were associated with rituals." *Shih Chi* (*The Book of History*) introduced ideas that influenced Chinese notions of symbols for some three thousand years, down to the present day (Wechsler 1985: 12). The passages on suburban sacrifices in *Li Ji* (*The Book of Rites*)¹³² suggest the cosmological nature of some of the symbols (such as the figures of the sun and moon) designs were imitating (*hsiang*) the heavens. The symbols were designed on the ritual dress of the people performing the sacrifices. Wechsler also remarked: "It seems apparent that the ancient Chinese understood the process of symbolisation to encompass not just physical objects but human actions in ritual." (1985: 34- 35)

Karlgren has interpreted several meanings for *hsiang*, the Chinese written word ("wen") for "symbol", or "symbolise." denote substitution for or representation of physical objects. The meanings which the character *hsiang* suggest, "in the ancient literature, among them figure [the sun, the moon], to

¹²⁹ See Creel 1980: 42, 52. Escarra in his book *Le droit chinois* (1936: 7-11), discussed the conceptions of the most ancient guiding principles of the Chinese spirit is the belief in the existence of an order of nature and in the efficacy of an accord between it and the social order.

¹³⁰ See Whittick 1971: 13, n. 2: in Whitehead (1928) that "society is held together by acceptance of, and reverence for, its symbols."

¹³¹ *I Ching*, tr. by Legge (1882), see edn. of American Library, 1971.

¹³² See *A Concordance to the Li Ji*, Lau and Chen 1992.

represent, to imitate, image, shape, appearance, to depict, picture, emblem, and symbol¹³³.” (Wechsler 1985: 33) Devices such as visual puns, motifs and styles incorporating colours exemplified the pictorial motifs at the basis of the imagery on T’ang dress. I am proposing that the value of wearing ceremonial dress might be strongly associated with the symbolism of these pictorial motifs. I am interested in enquiring:

- Whether any forms (patterns or colours) in T’ang dress embodied philosophical ideologies that impacted T’ang people’s sensibilities.

This enquiry would enable us to identify and comprehend the significance of T’ang symbolism and enrich our understanding of the social context of T’ang dress. (1) The concept of *Li*, the symbolic codes in the dress worn for rituals based on (2) the Doctrines of *T’ien-ming*, and (3) the Theory of Yin-yang and *Wu-hsing*, which gave aesthetics and sensations to dress, are three important topics that I analyse below.

3.3.1.1 *Li* (etiquette)

From the Han dynasty onwards, Confucianism had been the guiding philosophy in Chinese political and social life¹³⁴. *Li Ji* (*The Book of Rites*) contained the codes of traditions, orthodox ideology and approved norms, especially to the concept of “*Li*”, to which officials must abide. *Li*, etiquette¹³⁵, embraced ceremonies and sanctioned social practices¹³⁶, traditions, and notions of morality and culture (Bodde and Morris 1967: 19, 29; McMullen 1988: 120, 134; Wechsler 1985: 24-25), as the most important Confucian principle, denoted the correct performance of all kinds of religious ritual including sacrifices to the ancestors¹³⁷.

The historical and literary sources of the T’ang period convey the impression that Confucian rituals were central to the life of the state (Cohen et al 1980: 38; Wang Yu-ching 1993a and 1993b) and the T’ang state attempted to continue hallowed Confucian political and ritual practices. In the Confucian worldview, to be Chinese was to be a civilised person¹³⁸, which also meant dressing and behaving in a civilised manner of *li*. As a signifier of cultural identity, clothing was considered important in distinguishing the civilised from the barbarian, (Chinese: hair bounded, right sided garments; non-Chinese: hair unbounded, left sided garments)¹³⁹, the male from the female (trousers and skirts), the superior from the inferior, the proper from the improper (clothing was expected to be appropriate and moderate). *Li* was an instrument of order in a society dedicated to hierarchy, harmony

¹³³ “Symbol” is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestions, or by some accidental or conventional relation); esp. a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition.” (Wechsler 1985: 31, note. 114) See also Glossary.

¹³⁵ The term “*Li*” may be analogous to the *courtoisie* of medieval Europe.

¹³⁶ See Cua 1989: 209-35; Cohen et al 1980: 28, 30, 38, “*Li*” had the sense of the just and benevolent methods by which government should be conducted. Confucius (c. 551-479 BC) universalised “*li*”, making it the code of proper conduct for all men which had significance to the Chinese people, from all walks of life.

¹³⁷ See Creel 1980: 38. During the Chou period (1027-771 BC) and Spring and Autumn period (770-475 BC) “*Li*” had almost exclusively the sense of “sacrifice” or “religious ritual,” and in Spring and Autumn times this term was used to denote a code of aristocratic conduct.

¹³⁸ From high antiquity, the Chinese considered themselves to be the people of the Middle Kingdom (China, “*Zhong guo*”) and distinguished by their civilised arts from the barbarians.

¹³⁹ See *Analects*, hair, for men, was worn long, bound in a topknot and covered with a hat or cap; garments, whether an aristocrat’s long robe or a peasant’s short tunic, were fastened on the right side.

and moderation (Bodde and Morris 1967: 20-21, 43; Cohen et al 1980: 27, 37; McMullen 1988: 116-17, 251; Wang Yu-ching 2000: 33).

The morality of T'ang society was a complex mixture of custom and conviction. The court enforced a kind of sartorial morality. Close attention was paid to which norms in T'ang dress denoted *li* and how the meanings of the symbols (e.g., the Twelve Symbols) were associated with moral values. To people in the T'ang dynasty wearing clothes at the right time and place and with the proper deportment and attitude was *li*. An example has been given in the interpretation of the painting, "The Tribute Bearers" shown in Figure 18; the emperor, the officers and Tibetan envoy all wore appropriate styles to express *li* on that particular occasion.

In T'ang times, the rank-status clothing system was imbued with *li*. It stipulated, among other things, the colours and patterns of T'ang court dress. For example, the emperors, empresses, princes and princesses were given the privilege to wear dragon robes. This system came to distinguish the vocation of different classes in society. The system of "colour-rank" was to assume such importance in Chinese official life that it resulted in the prohibition of certain colours to commoners. Red and purple were colours whose use had been the privilege of high-rank officials in the T'ang court. In daily living, Confucius would "use the correct colours: the superior man did not use a deep purple, or a pure colour, in the ornaments of his dress. Even in his informal dress, he did not wear anything of a red or reddish colour." "There were Five colours which were 'correct': 'azure, yellow, carnation, white, and black'; others, such as red and reddish-blue were liked by women and girls, among which were "intermediate [people]"(*The Four Books*).

3.3.1.2 *T'ien-ming* (The Doctrine of Mandate of Heaven)

Symbolic codes in dress worn for rituals were socio-psychologically associated with the Doctrine of *T'ien-ming* (Mandate of Heaven)¹⁴⁰ which influenced the differences in appearance and which were evident in the symbols on T'ang dress. According to the doctrine of *T'ien-ming*, there was "a mutual interaction between Heaven and man, especially between Heaven and the ruler¹⁴¹." (Wechsler 1985: 240) Its cosmological dimensions can be referred to as the interaction system in ceremonial dress worn by the Chinese imperial ruling classes.

In *Li Ji* written about ritual and the calendar¹⁴², it was said:

On that day, the king assumed the robe with the ascending dragons on it as an emblem of the heavens. He wore the cap with the pendants of jade-pearls, to the number of twelve, which is the number of heaven. He rode in the plain carriage, because of its simplicity. From the flag hung twelve pendants, and on it were the emblazonry of dragons, and the figures of the sun and moon, in imitation of the heavens. Heaven hangs out its brilliant figures, and the sages imitated them. This border sacrifice is the illustration of the way of Heaven¹⁴³. (*Li Ji*)

¹⁴⁰ See Wechsler 1985: 19-20, 240. *T'ien-ming*, as "Mandate of Heaven" or "Heaven's will" is in some contexts understood as "fate" or "destiny".

¹⁴¹ See Wechsler 1985: 12, according to the view expounded by the Duke of Chou [dynasty], Heaven (*t'ien*) selected someone of outstanding virtue and ability and conferred a mandate (*ming*) on him and his linear descendants to rule all under Heaven. The chosen monarch was literally Son of Heaven, *ti'en-tzu*. This theory served to explain to the Chinese the political power of dynastic house.

¹⁴² "All ceremonial usages look at in their great characteristics are the embodiment of (the ideas suggested by) heaven and earth; take their laws from the (changes of the) four seasons; imitate the (operation of the) contracting and developing movements in nature; and are conformed to the feelings of men. It is on this account that they are called the Rules of Propriety." (*Li Ji*, translated by Legge 1885)

¹⁴³ For more details, see *Li Ji*, Book IX. Section II, "The Kiao Theh Sang" or "the Single Victim at the Border Sacrifices".

Under the rules there was an obligation to dress appropriately at all times. In the traditional Chinese world-view, the emperor was not merely the ruler of an earthly state but the sovereign of “All Under Heaven” “ruling the earth on heaven’s behalf.” Through ritual behaviour, the ruler did his part to ensure that appropriate seasonal energy radiated throughout the year and that the sun and moon, the seasons and the weather, and all the rhythms of the natural world kept to their proper cycles (*Li Ji; Han Shu; Steele and Major 1999: 16*). For example, by adopting regalia in a colour that resonated with a particular season such as yellow at the height of summer (*Steele and Major 1999: 16*).

The Twelve Symbols

The origin of The Twelve Symbols can be traced to the time of Shun (2312 BC-2208 BC). The first symbols to appear on ceremonial dress were recorded in the reign of the Emperor Ming Ti (AD 58-AD 75) in Eastern Han dynasty (AD 25-220) (*Shih Chi*). T’ang historians have been the guide to understanding the disciplines of Confucian doctrines in relation to ritual practice and symbols (*Eberhard 1984: 151; Harada 1967: 20; McMullen 1973: 32; Wang Yu-ching 1995; Wechsler 1985: 27*). The main feature of ritual behaviour was the manipulation of powerful symbols (*Wechsler 1985: 7*).

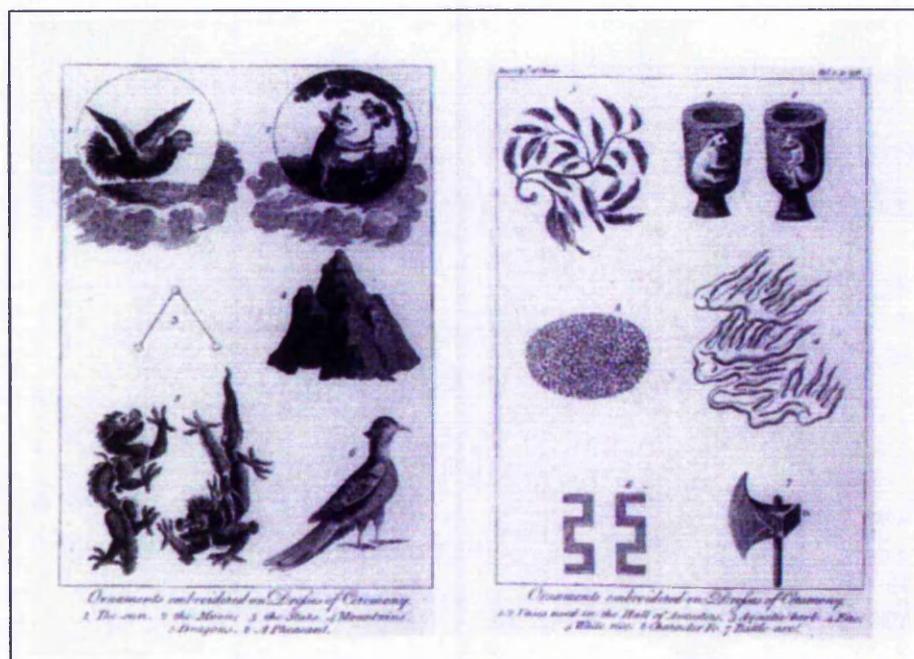


Fig. 47 The Twelve Symbols embroidered in dress.
Source: Wilson 1986: 18-19.

Confucian principles were extended graphically by The Twelve Symbols (*Cammann 1954: 85, 87; Wang Yu-ching 1972, 1993a, 1993b, 2000*). They were sun, moon, constellation, mountains, dragons, pheasants, bronze libation cups, waterweeds, flames, seeds of grain, axe, and *fu*-symbol (a mark of distinction). (See Figure 47) These symbols have been interpreted by the Chinese as the most recognisable signs of their tradition. They conveyed the gratification and expression of sense and feelings (*Bol 1992: 181; Cammann 1952: 85, 87, 89; Li Ze-hou 1994: 51*) and were above all concerned with the political and social conduct of the human hierarchy, supplying for it a comprehensive system of ethical norms (*McMullen 1992: 181,186*). The symbols were handed down as a code of morals, which

included structures on the rank-system in court dress (Eberhard 1986: 151). Evidence that The Twelve Symbols strongly influenced T'ang dress could be found in the *mian-fu* (ritual dress) worn by the emperors. Figure 48 shows portraits that represented emperor Taizong (AD 627-649) in which he was shown wearing *mian-fu* with The Twelve Symbols on it¹⁴⁴.



Fig. 48 The Twelve Symbols worn by T'ang Taizong (627-649).
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 93.

The symbols seem to not only have been representations of the universe and its component elements to create a cosmological quality (Wechsler 1985: 33) but also presented as symbols of the emperor's superior quality¹⁴⁵, thus reflecting a growing trend away from cosmic associations toward earthly power and materialism. Probably they served both purposes at the same time. During the reign of Empress Wu Zetian (AD 684-705), the court presented embroidery with patterns which denoted different position to officials above the third rank, and the princes received robes with symbols such as dragons on them (Cammann 1954: 4; *T'ang Hui-yao*). In later reigns in different dynasties in Chinese history, slight changes were made in the order as well as the kind of the symbols¹⁴⁶. (See Figures 49-60) As shown in Table 6, the symbols illustrated the extent to which the expressive forms were able to carry meanings. For the T'ang wearer, the ultimate meaning might be larger than the component symbols.

¹⁴⁴ According to Cammann (1952: 4), the first reliable reference to pictorial evidence from paintings of the ancient periods such as dragons on robes was from the T'ang dynasty. Portraits were collected in the Palace Museum, Beijing.

¹⁴⁵ See Wechsler 1979: 189, 191, 193. Conventional beliefs of the age that whether the dynasty prospered or declined depended on heaven or its portents. Taizong (r. 626-49) adopted a rationalism that believed that men, rather than heaven, shaped human destiny. His concept of the 'Good government of the Chen-kuan period (*Chen-kuan chih chih*) was to remain potent political symbols for the rest of the T'ang period and throughout Chinese history.

¹⁴⁶ These symbols were used on the emperor's robe in Ch'ing dynasty. See Eberhard 1986: 235-36; Cammann 1952: 87-89 and Dickinson et al 1990: 78-91.



Fig. 49 The Sun. A three-legged cock against a red disc.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 82.



Fig. 50 The Moon. A rabbit in a palace making medicines.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe. Greenish white.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 84.



Fig. 51 The Constellation. The four stars of the bowl of Big Dipper.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe. Red and gold dots.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 85.



Fig. 52 The Rock. The pinnacles of rock emerging from the water motifs around the bottom.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 78.



Fig. 53 The Dragon. The court robes of all but the lowest ranks of official were decorated with the dragon.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 76.

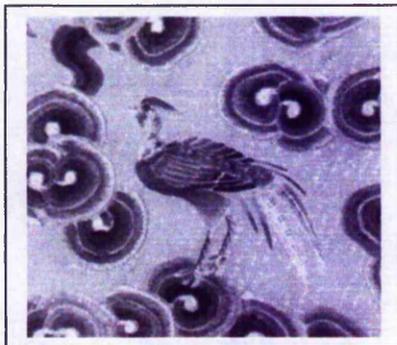


Fig. 54 The Pheasant. As a golden flowery bird, the prototype of the "phoenix".
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 87.

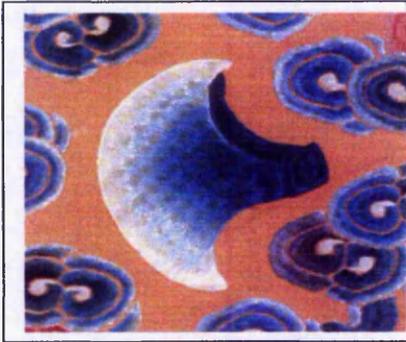


Fig. 55 The Axe-head, called “*fu*”, as a sacrificial weapon.
Ch’ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 89.



Fig. 56 The *Fu* symbol, like two Chinese characters of “self”, capital E’s placed back to back.
Ch’ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 87.

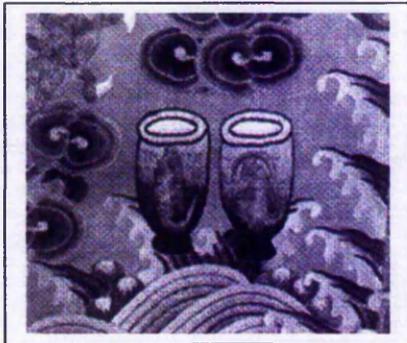


Fig. 57 The Sacrificial cups, with representations of monkeys and tigers on bronze cups.
Ch’ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 90.

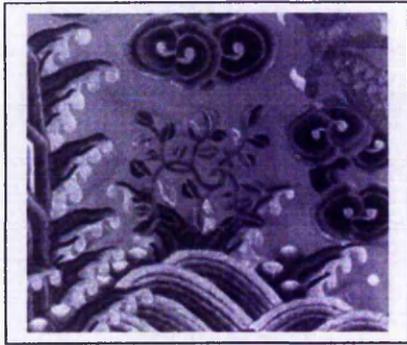


Fig. 58 The Water weed, a number of green, branching from a main stem.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 90.



Fig. 59 The Flames, a cluster of thin, licking flames.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 91.

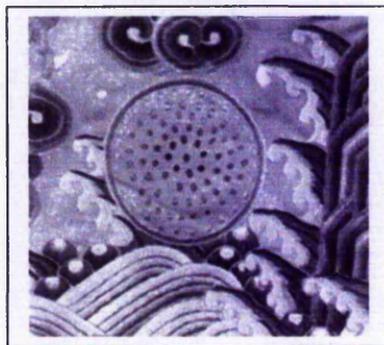


Fig. 60 The Grain. Sixty grains of millet arranged in vertical lines to form a circular pattern.
Ch'ing dynasty. A pattern on a dragon robe.
Source: Dickinson et al 1990: 91.

Table 6 The meanings of The Twelve Symbols

Symbols	Meanings
Sun	Bravery; associated with the metal element, the West
Moon	Changeability
Constellation	Stability
Rock (mountain)	Imperial power
Dragon	Intelligence and morality
Pheasant	“Phoenix”, as a king of birds
Axe-head	Sovereignty; the emperor’s power over the life and death of his subjects
The <i>fu</i> symbol	Discrimination; represented in two colours—one half blue, the other black as it represented the dualistic force of Good and Evil, being the alleged prototype for the yin-yang symbol
Two sacrificial cups	Intelligence and bravery; originally a tiger and a monkey, figured on them
Waterweeds	Flexibility
Flames	Vigour
Grains	Resource

3.3.1.3 Yin-Yang, and *Wu-hsing* theories

Yin and Yang

The provisions of *The T'ang Code* (Johnson 1979a: 14-48 and 1979b: 59-81) attempted to reinforce harmony with the natural world through compliance with theory of Yin-Yang and *Wu-hsing* (or *Wu-xing*) which was associated with *Tao De Jing* (*The Book of Moral*) by Laozi (ca. 399-295 BC)¹⁴⁷. Yin and yang figured in *Shi Jing* (*The Book of Odes*, 8th to 6th century BC) and the *I Ching*¹⁴⁸. The terms “Yin” and “Yang” denoted two natural principles, e.g., one male (yang), the other female (yin). The universe was said to have originated from the intercourse between the two. The course of the development of everything was said to be permeated with the interrelationship of the two. Everything could be classified as either yin or yang (Eberhard 1986: 321-32; Wu Kuang-ming 1989: 238). Yin and yang were the “be all and end all” the cause of life and death. The Chinese equated the earth, or creation with yin and the heaven with yang.

Yin and yang was essentially about harmonising the conflicting forces of the universe into a dynamic balance of spiritual and material elements. To relate the use of yin and yang theory to the T'ang court, the law code represented the yin—the dark side of social control—in contrast with the yang influence of ritual, morality, and education (Johnson 1979a: 14). The unchanging part is called yin and the changing part yang. Their forms were exemplified by the hexagrams of the ancient divination text *I Ching*, and were derived from the visual patterns of the physical universe (Cahill 1960: 12). Chinese philosophers used a circle (○) to represent yang and a solid black dot (●) to represent yin (Jou 1984: 20). Also, yin was represented by a line of two dashes while yang was a continuous line; yin could also be represented as the circle and yang as a square which in turn represented the earth and heaven respectively. Category for the comparison of the characteristics of yin and yang can be referred to Table 7.

¹⁴⁷ For Yin and Yang theory, see Barrett 2005. Also Glossary.

¹⁴⁸ See Fung 1953: 159, in Yang Jung-shih 1991: 11, in the beginning yin-yang and *wu-hsing* were separate concepts, but during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) these two concepts were combined and formed into the School of Yin and Yang by Tsou Yen (305-240 BC).

Table 7 Category for the comparison of the characteristics of yin and yang

Category for comparison	Yang	Yin
Cult	Heaven	Earth
	God	Ghost
	Good	Evil
	Burial ground	Bone of the dead
	Wind (Feng)	Water (<i>Shui</i>)
Philosophy	Confucianism	Toism
	<i>I Ching</i>	<i>Ch'ien</i> () <i>K'un</i> ()
Numeral	Odd numbers	Even numbers
Gender	Male	Female
Thing in nature	Sun	Moon
	Sky	Water
	Mountain	River
	Fire	Water
	Relations in nation direction	Emperor
	Prince	Princess
	East	West
	South	North
	South of a mountain	North of a mountain
	North of a river	South of a river
	Left	Right
	Front	Back
	Upper	Under
Time	Day	Night
	Early	Late
	10 Stems (<i>T'ien Kan</i>)	12 Branches (<i>Ti Chih</i>)
Speed	Quick	Slow
	Hasten	Slacken
Action	Expansive	Contract
	Advance	Recede
	Rise	Sink
	Open	Close
	Exhale	Inhale
	Give	Receive
	Move	Rest
Colour	White	Black
	Red	Black
	Light colour	Dark colour
Shape	Light (<i>Ming</i>)	Dark (<i>An</i>)
	Light (<i>Tan</i>)	Deep (<i>Nung</i>)
Space	Near (<i>Chih</i>)	Far (<i>Yuan</i>)

Source: Yang Jung-shih 1991: 186-88.

T'ang dress embodied cosmological and philosophical disciplines. The distinction of yin and yang elements could be seen from the colour, decorations and tailoring. For instance, the colour of morning sky in terms of Chinese sense of the firmament was black (*xuan*) and the colour of earth was yellow (*xun*). According to *A Concordance to the Zhouli* (Wang Yu-ching 2000: 63-64) the emperor's clothes should be an epitome of the universe, and so on some occasions the emperor should wear the upper garment (*yi*) in black and lower garment (*shang*) in yellow, consisting of the colours of both heaven (*tian*) and earth (*di*). In connection with numbers, odd numbers were yang, and even numbers were yin. In connection with pattern decorations on fabric, convex embroidery was yang and concave was yin. A number of properties and features of clothes could be attributed the yin and yang system. Odd numbers of such things as the decoration of patterns and pieces of fabric could only be used by males and even

numbers by females. One more example can be referred to in *shen-yi* (the profound dress), a kind of Chinese traditional robe. The upper and lower pairs were sewn together at the waistline, representing cosmology and calendar months: the upper half symbolised yang, the heaven; the lower half symbolised yin, a year with twelve months. In total, the front and the back were constructed with twelve pieces of fabric¹⁴⁹. This can be seen in Figure 61.

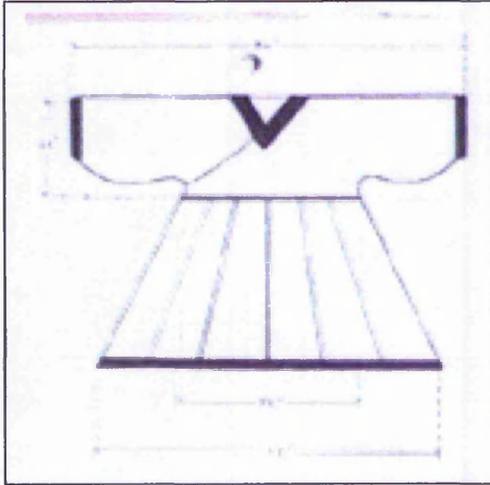


Fig. 61 *Shen yi* (The profound dress).
Han dynasty. Reconstructed drawing by historians.
Source: Zhang Mo-yuan 1959: 44.

***Chi* (spirit resonance)**

As Watson stated, the aesthetics of pictorial T'ang fashion, uniquely qualified by the painters was revealed in the essence of existence—the “truth” of nature (Watson 1995:196). By observing the artefacts, one could see that the clothes depicted by the artists have been inspired by Taoist thought¹⁵⁰. *Chi* was characterised by most of the historical Chinese art critics and aestheticians as “spirit resonance” or “life-movement.” (Willis 1987: 49) The artistes applied the principles of the yin-yang system by depicting the inner spirit of an object. Examples of the intimate relationship between the depiction of clothes in T'ang art and the principles of Taoism can be found on artefacts such as the mural in the tomb of the Princess Yongtai (AD 706)¹⁵¹. In the poetic images T'ang court ladies were depicted with “resonance of spirit” and was a presence a form of vital spirit, joined the sensation of “establishing the idea” (*li-yi*) and “transferring thought” (*chian-xiang*).

Chi underlay traditional Chinese aesthetics and was summarised by *Six Maxims* of Chinese art critic Hsieh He (fl. ca. 500 BC) (or Xie He) recorded in the *Li-tai ming-hua ji* (*Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties*), which contained Chinese artistic principles (Paluden 1994: 18). Based on the art principles, it can be felt in Taoist paintings such as “Musicians at A Religious Festival” (Fig. 62) that the floating of clothes, curvy silhouettes of the body and curving and shaping objects as the body moves were based on the aesthetics of Taoism, that is, floating of *chi*.

¹⁴⁹ See Lau and Chen 1992: 161.

¹⁵⁰ For Taoism, see Barette 2005, and also Glossary.

¹⁵¹ According to Li Ze-hou, the Taoist, stressed a *laissez-faire*, policy of freedom from government control, esp. for private personal explorations, relationship between humanity, and the external world that transcended utility. (1994:51)



Fig. 62 Musicians at a religious festival.
Mid T'ang, Kai-yuan and Tian-pao periods (AD 742-56).
Source: Shen 1988: 276-77.

***Wu-hsing* and the Five Elements**

The growth of the doctrine of the Five Elements, first represented in the third century BC, gave rise to the theory of *Wu-hsing* whose interaction produced the Five Elements. *The Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, a source dating back to about the third century BC, explained how the Five Elements worked (Wechsler 1985: 14). Their interaction can be symbolised as water, fire, metal, wood, earth; these were assigned to directions and hence to the colours and animals that symbolise them:

north to serpent/turtle, called the dark warrior; south to vermilion bird; west to white tiger; east to green dragon. Earth is centre and has no animal but may be represented by the *zong* or the round boss in a square frame at the centre of a bronze mirror. Water is linked with winter and the planet Mercury; fire with Mars and summer; metal with autumn and Venus; wood with Jupiter and spring; earth with Saturn; there is no fifth season. Wood and fire are the rising and mature power of yang; metal and water: the rise and maturity of yin. Earth symbolises a state of equilibrium. (Christie 1996: 40)

These Five Elements furnished what may be called “the building blocks of the universe” for the Chinese. They were discussed in the chapter “Hong Fan”, in *Shih Shi (The Book of History)*: “Water is said to soak and descend; Fire is said to blaze and ascend; Wood is said to be curved or straight; Metal is said to obey and change; Earth is said to take seeds and give crops.” (Eberhard 1986: 93) The theory of the *Wu-hsing* was tied to the theory of portents about the ways in which heaven and man interacted (Eberhard 1986: 93; Wechsler 1985:14)¹⁵². (See Table 8) As reflected in the theories of the yin-yang and *wu-hsing*, ritual became linked to the notion that its performance directly influenced the cosmos (Wechsler 1985: 25-26).

¹⁵² The theory was popular during Qin (221-207 BC) and Western Han times (206 BC-AD 9), propagated most notably by the Western Han scholar, Tsou Yen. His concept of the practice of typing the concept of the royal virtue to the Five Elements was based on the interrelationship of man and nature. The Five Elements' continuing interaction as an eternal cycle can be used to explain the constant fluctuations in the relationships of the triad of heaven, human beings and earth, which constituted the Universe. See also Barrett 2005.

The sun, moon and constellation stood for the Heaven and the mountain represented the Earth. The dragon and pheasant represented nature. The bronze libation cups, the water weed, the flames, and the grain were all symbols of elements in Nature—metal, water, fire and wood, while earth, the fifth of the Five Elements, was represented by the mountain. These would all be embroidered or painted (or woven) in the Five Colours, which corresponded to the Five Elements, the Seasons and the Five Directions, thus adding even more cosmic significance. (*Shu-ching chi-chuan* 1.38b quoted in Cammann 1954: 91)

Table 8 Some of the main correspondence of the Five Elements

Main Correspondence	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Seasons	Spring	Summer	Mid-Summer	Autumn	Winter
Directions	East	South	Centre	West	North
Colours	(Blue)Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Climate	Wind	Heat	Dampness	Dryness	Cold
Stage of Development	Birth	Growth	Transformation	Harvest	Storage
Numbers	8	7	5	9	6
Planets	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Yin-Yang	Lesser <i>Yang</i>	Utmost <i>Yang</i>	Centre	Lesser <i>Yin</i>	Utmost <i>Yin</i>
Grains	Wheat	Beans	Rice	Hemp	Millet
Yin Organs	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidneys
Yang Organs	Call-Bladder	Small-Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
Sense Organs	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
Emotions	Anger	Joy	Pensiveness	Sadness	Fear
Sounds	Shouting	Laughing	Singing	Crying	Groaning

Source: Maciocia 1989: 21.

The Seasons were classified under this scheme as Spring corresponded to Wood, Summer to Fire, Final month of Summer to Earth, Autumn to Metal and Winter to Water. The Five colours under this scheme corresponded with the Five Elements in the following way: blue-wood, red-fire, yellow-earth, white-metal and black-water; and the Five directions were classified as east-wood, south-fire, centre-earth, west-metal and north-water. Through the pivot of the Five Elements, the colours, directions and seasons were all associated: the spring season, the blue colour and the direction east were all of the wood elements, and so on.

There were five heavenly deities known as the Five Emperors (*Wu-ti*) (*Chiu T'ang Shu, Old History of the T'ang; Da T'ang K'ai Yuan Li*). These provided the cosmological and ritual model for the T'ang and set a pattern for state sacrifices (Wechsler 1985: 110-122)¹⁵³. Thus, for example, the "Yueh-ling" Passage ("Monthly Instructions") of *The Book of Rites* portrayed the rulers as performing that ritual behaviour according to the calendar. The rulers were described changing the colour of their dress, performing rituals, and issuing decrees all according to the month and the season, thus signifying the basic unity of Heaven and Earth.

In the final month of summer. . . the Son of Heaven wears yellow clothing. He mounts a carriage drawn by black-maned yellow horses. He wears yellow jade pendants and flies a yellow banner. . . The imperial ladies [file to the] central palace wear[ing] yellow clothing with yellow trim. (Wechsler 1985: 26)

The adoption of a new era-name and the selection of a new element are symbolic acts. According to this view, each of the Five Elements controlled natural and human events during the time of its ascendancy then declined, to be replaced by the next element in the cycle. Every Chinese

dynasty has a governing element that determines its character and institutions (Wechsler 1985: 14), underlining the renewal and regeneration functions of the Chinese accession/installation ceremony (Wechsler 1985: 89). From a group of five elements, each was chosen to symbolise the new dynasty. For example, the powers and colours that were in ascendancy during the dynasties of Hsia were (wood/green) (pre-Shang), Shang (ca. 1550-1027 BC) (metal/white), and Chou (fire/red) (1027-771 BC). The influence of the theory of *Wu-hsing* in *The T'ang Code* was well illustrated by the preference for groups of five (Johnson 1979a: 14). The choosing of a new element was not a vestigial symbol of the ruler's resurrection but the ritual expression of a historical imperative (Wechsler 1985: 89-90, 98).

In order to distinguish the T'ang dynasty from its predecessors, soon after the beginning of the T'ang, the calendar was amended to change the colour of court dress, the code of laws, as well as to establish its own ritual and music, all of which, would refresh the eyes and ears of the people and allow them to perceive its surpassing moral qualities. The announcing an era-name, choosing of a new element (and colour) by the T'ang dynastic founders ritually symbolised this ancient expulsion of noxious forces, earth and yellow were chosen as T'ang dynastic correlative power and colour (Wechsler 1985: 1, 8, 96).

The codes the Five Elements represented can be observed in Chinese ceremonial dresses, such as The Five Season-clothes. The colours on the T'ang dress associated with the Five Elements-had their essential and expressive meanings, representing concrete materials, seasons and directions. They were associated with the five colours, green, red, yellow, white, and black (*Shih Chi*). Imperial seasonal ritual dress was prescribed in the following manner: Spring-the emperor and his ministers should be dressed in blue and do the sacrifices for the Spring God facing the east; summer-red, facing south, for the Summer God; final month of Summer-yellow, facing the centre of mainland, for the Central God; autumn-white, facing west, for the Autumn God; and winter-black, facing north, for the Winter God (Cheng Chung-ying 1989: 120; Wang Yu-ching 2000: 105-06).

The emperor commands the attendants of the women's quarters to dye fabrics in various hues and multi-coloured designs, patterned and ornamented, bluegreen, vermilion, yellow, white, and black. There may be none that are not beautiful and fine. This is to provide new vestments for the ancestral temple: there must be a display of things that are brightly new¹⁵⁴. (Steele and Major 1999: 15-16)

These ideas furnished topics for the scenes which are depicted in the murals in Han tombs down to the T'ang. The description of the ritual dress in *Huainanzi*¹⁵⁵ and the Five Season-clothes worn by empresses in Northern Chou (AD 581-618) (Fig. 63) and Sui (AD 557- 581) dynasties are good examples.

¹⁵⁵ See *A Concordance to the Huai-nan-zi*, Lau and Chen Fong-ching 1992.



Fig. 63 The Five Season-clothes worn by Chinese empresses.
Northern Chou (AD 557-581).
Source: Li Yin-chian 1993: 52.

3.3.2 Social practice and uses of T'ang dress

A description of T'ang dress in historical terms alone cannot explain it as a clothing system. T'ang dress, to be of social use to current contemporary Chinese, must be interpreted and re-conceptualised and re-utilised according to contemporary socially understood rules (Cohen et al 1980: 26; Pearce 1998c: 21; Roche 1994: 5). An examination to the social practice of T'ang dress could be the basis of the study of modern Chinese fashion. According to Charsley, cultural objects¹⁵⁶ tend to "condition their use" and "objects and uses together condition the meanings that may be attached to them." (1992: 132 quoted in Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997: 26) Charsley considered aspects of innovation of fashion in ways which bear out my arguments about the relation between social practices and dress.

It is pertinent to ask the following questions:

- How did the rules of ritual and court dress retain original and how have they been used in the context of court climate?
- How was the dress used to political and social advantage?

Ideas from the record of rites, adapted to changing times, appeared in the essays on dress in successive dynastic histories. The record gives information on from which an idea of how fashion was changing can be glimpsed. The "Treatise on Vehicles and Clothing" in each of the two official histories of the T'ang (*Chiu T'ang Shu* and *Hsin T'ang Shu*) set forth detailed regulations concerning dress appropriate for various occasions: public or private, court or ritual, formal or informal. Social class and official position played an important part in clothing laws (Cahill 1999: 113). In the view of *T'ien-ming* (the Doctrine of Mandate of Heaven), the hierarchical index was such that it's possible to think of dress system as social practice (Steele and Major 1999: 22-23).

The court system of T'ang dress

Clothing regulations were ruled by the court, much of the court dress was strictly regulated by law which ensured that people wore dress appropriate to their social station. Regulations governing Chinese dress had been imposed as long ago as the Chou dynasty (1027-771 BC). The first clothing system regulation was in AD 59. The system continued to be adhered to, in one form or another, into the early twentieth century when the Ch'ing dynasty ended in AD 1911. Under the Sui dynasty, the basic structure of government, the details of the administrations, and the all-important question of the limits of government intervention in dressing had been established. In the fourth year of Chen-kuan (AD 630), rules were made to regulate the colours of robes worn by officials. The ensuing dynasties in the main

inherited these rules, making only some minor changes (Zhou and Gao 1987: 81). The regulations were reintroduced with comparatively minor modifications, and embodied in the complex of codified laws promulgated in AD 624 (Wechsler 1979a: 150-51, 178-79). The three great ritual codes of the dynasty had notionally prescribed the full range of Confucian-sanctioned state rites which also prescribed the dress for state occasions. The first code was completed in AD 637, the second, completed in AD 658, and the third, *The Kaiyuan Ritual Code (Da T'ang Ka Yuan Li)* of AD 732, was revised from the classical histories of the Han period (*The Shi Chi, The Han Shu* and *The Hou Han Shu*)¹⁵⁷. Until AD 737, the codes were regularly up-dated and revised (Wechsler 1979b: 106-07).

Rules for clothing in *Wu-de ling* and *Chen-kuan ling*

According to the *Wu-de ling* (promulgated in AD 624 in Gaozong's reign) and the *Chen-kuan ling* (the reviewed rules for clothing after Chen-kuan era in Taizong reign, AD 627-649), dress both for men and women for different ranks and occasions were regulated. (See Figures 64-68) Each was characterised, however, by differences in style, pattern and colour that made for significant variations within each group. Just as each class had its own function within the T'ang society, each was expected to conform to different norms of clothing behaviour (Harada 1970; Wang Yu-ching 1972).



Fig. 64 *Kun-mian-fu, Mian-fu, Tong-tian-kuan-fu* and *Yuan-yu-kuan fu*.
T'ang dynasty.

1st left: *Kun-mian-fu*, *yi* in black, *shang* in *xiun*, worn by emperors for important ceremonial occasions.

2nd left: *Mian-fu*, *yi* in blue, *shang* in *xiun*, a kind of court dress.

2nd right: *Tong-tian-kuan-fu*, *yi* and *shang* in *gian*, worn by emperors for receiving courtiers' salutation on the day of winter solstice.

1st right: *Yuan-yu-kuan fu*, *yi* in *gian*, *shang* in red, worn by crown princes and royal princes for paying respect to the emperors on the first day of the month.

Source: Li Yin-chian 1993: 42.

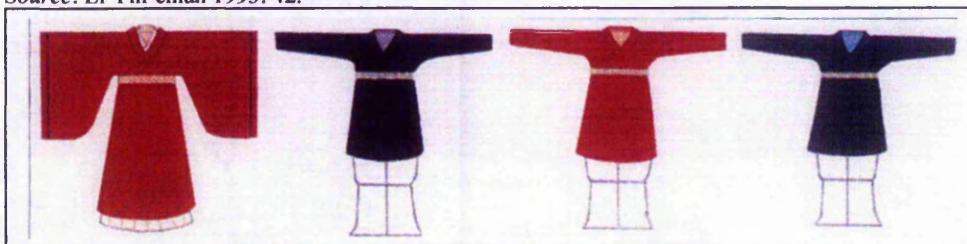


Fig. 65 *Kung-fu, Ping-zhih-xi-fu, Ping-zhih-xi-fu* and *Ping-zhih-xi-fu*.
T'ang dynasty.

1st left: *Kung-fu*: *yi* in *gian*, white skirt, dress worn by crown princes for receiving courtiers' salutation on the fifth day of the month and certain other day.

2nd left: *Ping-zhih-xi-fu*, *xi* in purple, *ku* in white, worn by emperors, crown princes for riding; or worn by military officials on official occasion.

2nd right: *Ping-zhih-xi-fu*, *xi* in garnet, *ku* in white.

1st right: *Ping-zhih-xi-fu*, *xi* in green, *ku* in white, worn by court chiefs at serving meals.

Source: Li Yin-chian 1993: 42.



Fig. 66 *Ping-zhih-xi-fu*, *Wu-sha-mao-fu*, *Hei-chieh-xi-fu* and *Tsang-fu*.

T'ang dynasty.

1st left: *Ping-zhih-xi-fu*, *xi* in blue, *ku* in white, students when being given audience by the emperor.

2nd left: *Wu-sha-mao-fu*, *yi* and *skirt* in white, worn by crown princes.

2nd right: *Hei-chieh-xi-fu*, in white, hem in blue, worn by emperors for visiting imperial mausoleums.

1st right: *Tsang-fu*, robe in yellow also in purple, red, blue, green or white, given to aristocrats and officials for daily use.

Source: Li Yin-chian 1993: 43.

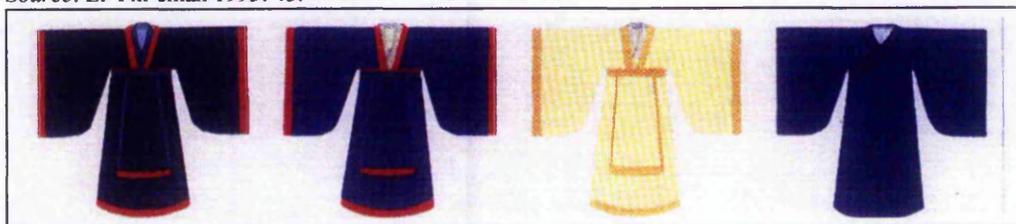


Fig. 67 *Wei-yi*, *Yu-chai*, *Chu-yi* and *Ching-yi*.

T'ang dynasty.

1st left: *Wei-yi*, in dark blue; hem in red, for empresses attending important ceremonial occasions.

2nd left: *Yu-chai*, in blue; hem in red, for crown princesses attending important occasions.

2nd right: *Chu-yi*, in yellow for empresses and princesses attending sericulture.

1st right: *Ching-yi*, in blue, given to court ladies for daily use.

Source: Li Yin-chian 1993: 48.

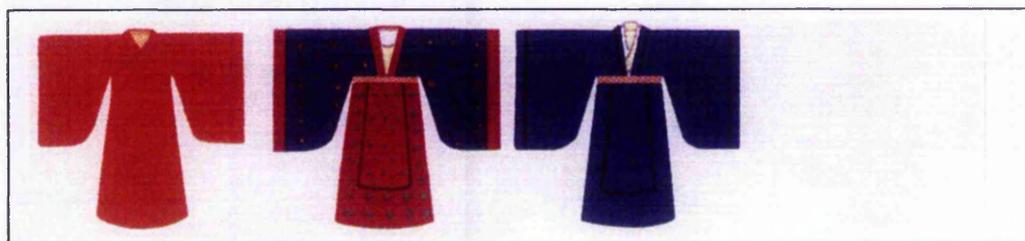


Fig. 68 *Chu-yi*, *Tian-chai-li-yi* and *Hua-chai-li-yi*.

T'ang dynasty.

Left: *Chu-yi*, in red, given to court ladies for daily use.

Middle: *Tian-chai-li-yi*, in mixed-colours, for higher court ladies at ordinary occasions.

Right: *Hua-chai-li-yi*, in blue, given to court ladies at princess' wedding.

Source: Li Yin-chian 1993: 48.

From the above description, it has been identified that T'ang dress was regulated as an indication of the wearer's rank or social status. The rigid clothing systems of ranks had revealed functional, sartorial and decorative differentiation. In Table 9, I have categorised the differentiation shown in T'ang clothing rank-system.

Table 9 Differentiation shown in T'ang clothing rank-system

The wearer's rank or status		Functions	Dress style or colour
Male aristocracy	Emperor	Ceremonial	<i>Kun-mian-fu</i>
	Prince		
	1 st ranked Courtier		
	Ruling class	Occupational	<i>Mian-fu</i>
	Emperor	Occasional	<i>Tung-tian-kuan</i>
	Crown prince and royal prince		<i>Yuan-yu-kuan</i>
	Crown prince		<i>Kung-fu</i>
Emperor, crown prince Military officials	Occasional/ Occupational	<i>Ping-zhih-xi</i>	
Female aristocracy	Empress	Ceremonial	<i>Wei-yi</i>
	Crown princess		<i>Yu-chai</i>
	Empress and princess		<i>Chi-yi</i>
	Higher court ladies		<i>Tien-chai-li-yi</i>
	Lower court ladies	Occasional	<i>Hua-chai-li-yi</i>
Court ladies	<i>Ching-yi, Chu-yi</i>		
Official	1 st to 5 th status ranked officials and their wives	Occupational/ Occasional	Purple, red and crimson
	6 th to 9 th status ranked officials and their wives		Green and blue

The Twelve Symbols as discussed were used on imperial dress, while higher numbers of the quantity of the symbols were used for high officials and lower numbers for lower officials, the number decreasing as the rank of the person decreased (Harada 1967: 19-20; Wang Yu-ching 2000: 239, 322-23). Concerning another connotation, social status was reflected in the style of headdress and garment's shape. The hair arrangements of the aristocrat were more elaborate and wigs were used to emphasise their big size. The large gowns worn by aristocracy had bell-shaped sleeves and were essentially the preserve of the nobility. The garment's shape was round, fulfilling the requirements of the prevalent taste of the aristocracy. All ensembles featured opulent silhouettes, symbolising high status. Tunics which came from the *Hu* culture with shorter and narrow sleeves which were more functional for work, primarily were worn by commoners in Pre-T'ang times. Although the aristocracy in the T'ang adopted tunics as court dress (e.g., the *pu-tou* dress) or formal clothes, the trousers and narrow sleeves still were popular for private use and had a connotation of lower social status.

Clothes helped to secure and maintain status at court and contributed to the ordering of court ritual. There were clothes to be worn at formal settings like the court was different from having to wear special clothes for ceremonies. However, due to the social changes which occurred after the middle of the eighth century, attitudes to what T'ang people should wear changed. It may be that the crisis of the civil war (e.g., the An-lu Shan rebellion) reduced the prestige of the ruling class and allowed some flexibility as to what the masses should wear in the less court-dominated climate.

Formal dress in the dynasty was used to participate in a variety of public observances (e.g., rituals). Ceremonial dress (e.g., *main-fu*) and occupational dress (e.g., *pu-tou*) had a fixed and special valuable social significance, inasmuch as they indicated membership of a group, and was symbolic of the feelings, sentiments and interests that united T'ang wearers. To wear a certain style of ceremonial

or occupational dress was a kind of special privilege. Dress reflected, expressed and affirmed the power of the peculiar structural arrangements of T'ang society and reinforced its social values (McDermott 1999: 22; McMullen 1973: 321-23, note 114; Wang Yu-ching 2000: 18-19; Wechsler 1985: 21-20). Occasional or informal dress in the T'ang dynasty changed fast, reflecting the fashion dynamics.

Ceremonial dress

Rites were not only to be held for the gods or the deceased but also for the ritual wearers. Ceremonial dress, such as *mian-fu*, with large sleeve and wide shape with specified patterns, kept its form all the time, and its whole value depended, to some extent, upon its permanence. It was worn unaltered and was equated with morality by the T'ang high-ranked ruling class. Patterns and colours affirmed status differences, in that ritual wearers adopted special modes of dress that emphasised in an exaggerated way the formal social distinctions between them.

Occupational dress

Occupational dress restricted resources and opportunities. T'ang society consisted of different status layers arranged in a hierarchal order. Each wearer group was expected to play the role assigned by their occupation. Occupational dress in T'ang times normally changed a little with time but sometimes they changed profoundly. For example, *pu-tou*, as it was used at work by officials, changed its right sidedness to a rounded collar and adopted trousers, which were influenced by *Hu* culture. The relations of domination and subordination that governed resources, opportunities and social respect in court dress were officially maintained by T'ang laws-which gave detailed specifications for each official class regulating style, patterns and colours. Throughout the period, the T'ang court attempted to ensure appropriate class differentiations by issuing laws for specified styles.

Occasional/informal dress

Occasional dress changed fast and was used in increasing leisure activities. The nature of the pace of change in T'ang fashion serves as an index of the nature of Chinese fashion. Occasional dress, such as used at banquets and informal dress such as used for riding, changed fast with combinations of both shapes and decorative elements of Chinese and *Hu* styles, reflecting the social dynamics that drove the changes. From images presented in artefacts, it can be seen that T'ang women were relatively free to go out in public for leisure activities. *Hu* trousers were well suited to many out-door activities performed by women, since they facilitated ease of movement. By the eighth century, women were wearing *mi-li* (veils) out of doors to protect their complexions. The large-sleeved, wide gown worn by the aristocratic lady in leisure time, similar in cut and proportion to the court dress, was originally a robe worn by Pre-T'ang aristocracy. However, it had become the elegant attire of high-class ladies by the T'ang period. Two main groups of formal types of T'ang dress have been categorised in Table 10, showing basically when and where the dress was worn and what activities they were worn to perform; each of the three groups is subdivided into three further groups. I have also analysed their characteristics in relation to social practices.

Table 10 Analysis of the function and uses of T'ang dress

Formal type purpose	The dress performed function (When or Where used)	Uses (activity) (The How or For What of its use)
Formal dress	Ceremonial Occupational Occasional	Ritual, wedding Court or office work (or associational) At banquets
Informal dress	Out-door activity Out-doors leisure At home	Riding Relaxation Routine housework Receiving-guests

Conclusion

Artefacts have been shown to closely reflect fashion. They reflected the wealth, vitality, and openness of the T'ang dynasty. Depictions of the styles of garments, hairdos, and make-up also varied with each period. There seems to have been a reciprocal relationship between fashion and the current ideal of feminine beauty. There was a great range of physical types of ideal beauty in T'ang times. In the earlier examples, the feminine ideal was an adolescent slender beauty; by the mid period the archetype changed to a corpulent and mature beauty. In the late T'ang the epitome of beauty was considerably slimmer but still mature and thicker-waisted than those of the opening era. The changes of T'ang people's experiences and sentiments were so captured in the artefacts that suggests:

Dress in general seems then to fulfil a number of social, aesthetic and psychological functions; indeed it knots them together, and can express all simultaneously. This is true of modern as of ancient dress. (Wilson 1987: 11)

The ebullient and inventive styles were also reflections of the material culture of the court. For instance, the An-lu Shan rebellion was a major force for change in the late T'ang period; its dramatic consequences affected scholarship and society, and that in turn effected changes in fashion. Foreign material culture provided the inspiration for the ever-changing fashion of the T'ang (Mahler 1982: 106-07; Paludan 1994: 2, 38-39). The emergence of these changes seemed in some periods sudden rather than evolutionary. For example, in early T'ang, there was an ideal for beauties of youthful slenderness, in striking contrast to the plump and voluptuous in the mid T'ang period. Through viewing the multicultural dimension of the dress, there were confrontations in terms of the cultural exchange: Han versus multi-cultured T'ang, conservatism versus cosmopolitan, Chinese versus *Hu*, Buddhism versus Confucianism and Taoism, and court dress of Han mode versus *Hufu*. Indigenous Chinese ritual dress may have been used to emphasise ideology, court dress signified hierarchy, and *Hufu* might be used to indicate escaping restraints of tradition and fashion, as they reflected the sophistication and wealth of members of the T'ang court. The cosmopolitan lives of the masses, transformed the identity of conservatism from being Chinese to a cosmopolitan style.

It has been established that the traditional Confucian outlook on the cosmos influenced the appearance of T'ang ritual and court dress. The dress aesthetic (e.g., *chi*) was derived from yin-yang theory. The dress associated with moral evaluations (e.g., the doctrine of *t'ien-ming*), and it was concerned etiquette and good manners (the concept of "*li*"). Just as in the Han versus multi-cultured T'ang, Chinese dress in the T'ang was also much influenced by cultures in the West at this time. Some new items of clothing or styles in T'ang were borrowed, copied, or integrated into a new dress

tradition with the remarks: those transforming identities from those which were “Chinese” to those associated with the “*Hu*”. While in the twentieth first century there is a widespread loss of faith in Chinese heritage, norms that conformed to Confucian beliefs circulating in the T’ang society can be retained in modern society and could still be essential for the survival of Chinese clothing culture. This provokes a search for the symbolism and practical dimension in Chinese clothing to apply in modern lives.

Chapter 4: Characteristic design elements of T'ang dress

This chapter focuses on the aesthetic dimension of T'ang dress. I argue that the aesthetic aspects of dress and religious influences on clothing style must have served to express the thought and feeling of the time. Here I interpret the aesthetics of profound clothing forms and the critical ideas that shaped them during the T'ang periods.

The perception of beauty by the T'ang Chinese is intertwined with symbols and meanings -the images created by the T'ang artist gave resonance to the tone of beauty and feeling evoked by the symbols patterned on the dress (e.g., the Twelve Symbols on ritual dress). The meaning of symbols or colour to the wearer is a matter of cultural and historical convention. It seems that the expressive quality of symbols and colours, such as dragon, cloud, lotus and red or purple, and the emotional sensory and auspicious elements satisfied the T'ang wearer's sensibility in mid T'ang era. In late T'ang period artists under the influence of the thought of Taoism and Buddhism pursued simplicity and regarded bright colours as "vulgar ostentation". The symbolic colours not only were used in religious ceremonies, but also exerted an influence on secular life as well. I ask:

- What were the pronounced styles, shapes and fashionable forms of T'ang dress? What are their characteristic peculiarities?

4.1 Symbolic aesthetics

Aesthetics is the philosophy of the perception of the beauty. It is symbolic of human feeling. It is the quality of appeal to the eye and emotional appeal of artefacts through the senses. (Archer 1999: 78)

Behind the flowering of the T'ang clothing aesthetics lay more than hundreds years of stylistic development. The artistic expression of T'ang dress is interpreted to reflect several influences: traditional Chinese art and principles, religions, aristocratic tastes and *Hu* cultures.

4.1.1 *Chi-yun-shen-tung* (the resonating and rhythmic harmony)

According to the leading painter Ku K'a-chih (ca. AD 344-ca. AD 406), the purpose of painting, was "to portray the spirit through the form" (*I-hsing hsieh-shen*). While "descriptive physical likeness" was a necessary means for "transmitting the spirit" (*ch'uan-shen*), the goal of the painter was to capture the spirit form. Chinese aesthetics in paintings, like Chinese philosophy, stressed not only cognition, or imitation but emotional communication, paying less attention to the object itself but more to the rhythm of what the object created. Hsieh He (fl. ca. AD 479-502), the Chinese art critic who turned attention to qualitative judgment of paintings as well as to aesthetic and technical theories, formulated the Six Maxims (principles) for Chinese art criticism. His work, the *Ku hua p'in lu*: (Good painting has six conditions) said:

- The first is "animation through spirit consonance".
 - The second is "structural method in use of the brush".
 - The third is "fidelity to the object in portraying forms".
 - The fourth is "conformity to kind in applying colours".
 - The fifth is "proper planning in placing of elements".
 - The sixth is "transmission (of the experience of the past) in making copies".
- (Translation by Soper quoted in Sickman and Soper 1971: 133)

The principles gave a new momentum to the development of Chinese art, and the dress, in the case of the object of this study, in both forms and content. The first of the Six Maxims mentioned above can be interpreted “breath-resonance-life-motion” (*ch’I-yun-sheng-tung*). Hsieh wrote two kinds of *chi*: “breath of life” of the depiction, and the individual and personal qualities of the creator.

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“With the perceptualisation and sensibility of *chi* acquired by the viewer, it brings an aesthetic awareness and artistic creation.” (Li Ze-hou 1994: 51) The “*chi*”, the essence of spirit or pure being which infused the character of all things, is the creative energy which gives things their character. The word “*yun*” (resonance) refers to the harmonious manner of execution in a work of art (Fong et al 1984: 4). *Yun* in Chinese means accord, resonating elegance; it denotes “a harmony of vibrations”, as well as the correspondence or unity of parts. *Sheng-tung*, in turn, commonly meant life, or simply spirit resonance or life-movement (Willis 1987: 53). In other words, *chi-yun* referred precisely to the Taoist idea of an all-pervading spirit reflected in nature and inherent in form.

The intimate relationship between the clothes and the flow of *chi* can be observed in images on murals and silk paintings. The drapery forms of the robes revealed very clearly the frame beneath the figures, for example, “Musicians at A Mid T’ang Religious Festival” (See Figure 62), demonstrating an excellent expression of *Chi-yun-shen-tung*. The Buddhist influenced shapes of *pi-bo* (shawl) and headdress became recognisable forms-flowing clouds and waves-giving a feeling of elevated airiness. The billowing layers of fabric that surrounded the wearer, undulating folds of silk, produced a flowing aesthetics. Flying scarves and the floating curves of long skirts that hovered in the air, gave a sense of *chi*. This also can be observed in the drapery of the clothes worn by early and mid T’ang ladies.

Linear and multi-layered

Chinese methods of modelling paintings employed linear rhythm to express the spirit of the object and lines to depict the generalised structure of the object. The line of each brush stroke did not require other design elements to create an aesthetic quality for Chinese painting. The line itself already contained and provided a rhythmic or aesthetic quality to the work. An appreciation of expressive possibilities of lines can be found in most of T’ang paintings. The style of expressing qualities with lines was variedly used in the contours of the wearers, facial features, drapery of clothing and decorative details. Multi-level-pleated lining gave T’ang dress a creased, drooped and ribboned outline. The pleats and line of clothes changed according to the draping of the fabrics and motion of the wearer. The actual number of layers varied. The style that developed at T’ang court was a multi-layered combination of garments.

4.1.2 Austere and natural

Buddhist art influenced naturalistic presentation of T’ang dress. “The aesthetic goals are seen in the paintings being treated relatively with individual appearance but also psychological characters.” (Karetzky 1996: 2-3)

Naturalism and idealism

In the images, the artists’ organic and rhythmic treatment of the body form was partly the result of Buddhist art influence (e.g., image shown in Figure 10). The statue of a bodhisattva was one of the

best examples. The torso was almost entirely bare, except for a few ornaments and parts of the drapery. The body was either exposed or shown under a wet, clinging garment, revealing some of the anatomical features. The relaxed, curved movement appeared natural. This Indian influence emphasised the sensuous as a reflection of the spiritual. It helped to bring about a synthesis of the Indian and Chinese approaches in a style that combined naturalism and idealism (Meskill 1973: 436). Other symbolic images such as Buddhist art inspired patterns of lotus, Central Asian inspired patterns of birds, foliage and animals on fabrics of clothing, facial make-up, such as patterns of sun, moon and flowers on women's forehead (*mien-ye*, the facial dots) all depicted the vitality of the seasonal or universal scenes and gave the wearers and viewers an affirmation of pleasure and joy of nature. The mundane beauty at court of early T'ang period was celebrated in the wall paintings. Its aesthetic potentialities and devotional feeling aroused intimate views. (See Figure 69) It emphasised the plain form of colour and fabric, and the natural rhythm of movement. The omnipresence of spatial consciousness gave clothing the flexibility of space that dictated the kinds of pattern and image. The natural shape and breadth were depicted with a natural comfort and joyous freedom, expressing subtle nuances of the aesthetic sensibility.



Fig. 69 Madame Yuen at a Buddhist festival.
Mid T'ang.
Source Shen 1988: 269.

Sombreness and solidity

The appreciation of sombreness was inherited from both Confucianism and Taoism which influenced the use of colour and motifs of fabric. For example, the style of simplicity can be seen in academic or official dress for menswear in T'ang times, i.e. the *pu-tou* worn by the scholars in "Literature Centre" (Fig. 19). The clothes exemplified the Confucian principle of simplicity. The broad and simply tailored expanse of T'ang dress was a spiritual expression, more than the message that the garment itself conveyed.

4.1.3 Mature, sympathetic and luxuriance

The early to mid T'ang period was a time of artistic achievement. In that climate of unrestrained luxury, clothing styles and patterns flourished. In the mid T'ang period, a kind of ceremonious, mature and opulent aesthetics prevailed. The heritage of formality of ceremonial dress sparked a fad for full, flourished-patterned clothes, eventually permeating the aristocratic class. There is evidence that wearing luxurious and extravagant clothes appeared nobler than wearing simpler tailored or

non-jewelled, dull-coloured clothes. The confidently mature shape and plump roundness of the classic court styles reflected the glory and stability of the T'ang court, which could be seen in the opulent silhouette of mid-T'ang women's clothes and style of medallion on clothing fabric.

In the T'ang period, regulations did not allow an active public role for court women. They found the restraints hard to bear and commonly turned to religious pursuits such as rituals in the inner court. McMullen observes that these rituals may have been privately carried out in the palace. They found their personal lives and emotions more fulfilling than their public roles and court rituals which were controlled by official codes (McDemott 1999: 17).



Fig. 70 Madame Wang's portrait.
Mid T'ang, Tian-pao period (AD 742-756).
Dun-huang Cave 103, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Shen 1988: 267.

In T'ang murals, semi-transparent gown sleeves seem to typify the aesthetic of half-hidden glamour, hinted at but not openly displayed. (See Figure 70) Domestic and imported embroidery brocades, abounding patterns, brighter colours and complex tailored clothes were used by the T'ang to decorate and beautify dress. In contrast to their ancestors, T'ang women wore more extravagant clothes. The pictorial and sculptural customs of clothing often copied Buddhist art. The wearing of skin-clinging dress and the erotic emphasis were greater in the T'ang period compared to earlier times.

The form of the dress was inter-linked in space, the silken brocade, floral patterns, floating *pi-bo*, and a luxuriant richness of coloration, which all provoked Chinese aesthetic perception. In Table 11, I present a framework of the aesthetics of T'ang in a context of cultural influences and their effects.

Table 11 A framework of T'ang aesthetics in cultural context

Era	Aesthetics	Effected elements	Influential factors	T'ang wearer's sensibility
Early to Mid T'ang periods	- <i>Chi Yun Shen Tung</i> - Resonating and rhythmic - Harmony - Linearity	- Linear style - <i>Chi</i> and <i>Yun</i>	- Buddhist art - Taoism - Chinese art maxims	- Flowing, linear design is beautiful - Spatial sensation - Harmony in nature
All the T'ang periods	- Austere and nature	- Plain style and comfort material - Floral and foliage	- Naturalism - Idealism	- Spiritual
Mid to late T'ang periods	- Mature - Opulent - Decorative	- Low-cut bodices and translucent jacket - Heavily jewelled ornaments	- Ceremonial customs - Confucianism, <i>li</i> - Rank-system - Court style - Buddhist art - Central Asian style - Hedonism	- Symbolic meanings: dragon: emperor's power; lotus: Buddhist purity; phoenix: empress; red, garnet: prosperity, wealth; purple: nobility; green, blue: academic, the masses; white: economic - Large and round shapes were beautiful - Sexuality was attractive - Lavish was admirable

4.2 Refined clothing style

The style of T'ang dress derived its appeal from its imaginative quality, its philosophical authenticity, through its links with painting, sculpture and figurative art. The court style inherited from the Han era retained its opulent shape with sleeves to the wrist and was favoured by the aristocracy in the mid T'ang period. It contributed to a new interest in large-scale decorative statements often made even more striking by the incorporation of the colours: gold (a symbol of wealth), red (a symbol of auspiciousness) or purple (a symbol of nobility). During the early T'ang era, the court style took the form of narrower sleeves. It was usually tied simply in front, or on the side with hanging ends. (See Figure 71) During the mid T'ang era, the Kai-yuen and Tian-pao reigns, the shape of the gown became wider, the waistline kept the same previous height but the sleeves became broader and longer. (See Figure 72) As the period progressed, the styles could no longer look solely to Han heritage or *Hu* as sources of cultural inspiration. The styles of the court system were such as *Chu-yi*, *Tian-chai-li-yi* and *Hua-chai-li-yi* (See Figure 61) which are delicate head-adornment-ceremonial dresses that the female aristocracy donned to participate in formal occasions such as ceremonies and weddings. The sleeves of court style and the shoes (Fig. 31) worn by the T'ang aristocracy used symbolic and decorative shapes but were not perhaps functional in modern sense; skirts were tight or loose tied on different parts of the body; robes were slashed or bodices moulded. They all appeared as characteristic design elements of fashionable dress. Even the most consciously displays of breasts in the T'ang period were only modestly revealing.

Early-T'ang style, or the Princess Yongtai style

The small-upper garment and feminine high waistline skirt, inherited from the preceding Sui dynasty (AD 589-618). An example can be seen in the mural of the tomb of Princess Yongtai.



Fig. 71 Early T'ang style. Jacket and skirt together with short-sleeved upper garment.
Reconstruction based on unearthed pottery figures and frescoes.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 91.

Certain styles for women were temporarily prevalent in different T'ang periods. The *Hufu* affected the look of T'ang woman's entire outfit, including garments (cut and style), makeup, hair, and accessories such as shoes, jewellery and belt. Some elements of *Hufu* for women were short, fitted jackets worn over long, pleated skirts, or tunics over loose trousers gathered at the ankle. (Fig. 73) Collars were round or crossed, with necklines cut quite low or worn unfastened. Short sleeves, known as "half-sleeves", (also see Figure 71) were popular that were often worn over close-fitting, long-sleeved jacket and underskirts. Tight belts emphasised the waistline. (See Figure 74) These styles and dancing costumes were all fashionable in the T'ang times. (Figure 75)

Kai-yuan and Tian-pao style, or court style

This style was typified with large-sleeved gown, translucent jacket and full skirt, prevalent in Emperor Xuanzong's reign (AD 712-56). (See Figure 72)



Fig. 72 Dress of Kai-yuan and Tian-pao style.
Court style of large-sleeved silk gown with front opening, long skirt and cape.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 94.

Equestrian style, *Hufu*

This style was prevailing in early and mid T'ang and declined around the year of AD 800. (See Figure 73)



Fig. 73 Equestrian style, *Hufu* with turn-down lapels and front opening jacket, striped trousers and leather belt. Reconstruction based on unearthed pottery figurines, stone carving and frescoes. Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 163.

Yuen-he style

This style was prevalent in the period of Yuen-he (AD 806-820). (Figure 74) The silhouette of the clothes was narrower and shorter. Examples can be seen in Figure 23 the painting "A Concert at Court".



Fig. 74 Dress of Yuen-he style, jacket with a shawl, and a long skirt. Reconstruction based on a T'ang painting. Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 92.

Dancing costume style

Dress worn by dancer has long sleeves and fluid skirt hem. (See Figure 75) This can be seen in Figure 24 the dancers.



Fig. 75 Dancing costume.

Reconstruction based on pottery figurines unearthed in Luoyang, Henan Province, China.

Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 96.

Certain styles of headdresses and accessories were temporarily prevalent in different T'ang times. Women's hairstyles included high bun, single knife-shaped bun, double knife-shaped bun, (Fig. 76) half-turned bun and reverse bun, etc. Hair adornment included *bu-yiao*, (Fig. 77) flowery hairpins and combs to beautify the hair. Makeup included willow-eyebrow, *dai-mei* eyebrow (*dai* means black) (Fig. 77) and *mian-ye* (facial dots) (Fig. 76) and so on. Some popular accessories were: (1) The seven-object belt (Fig. 80), originally was the adornment of the *Hu* tribes. It was obligatory wear for Chinese officials. Seven objects were hung on the belt, including a knife and a bag containing bamboo chips for purposes of calculation. The belt remained popular among common women but was without the seven objects. (2) *Wei-mou* (Fig. 78) was a kind of *Hu* hat which was popular in early T'ang times. (3) Gilt gold arm-bracelets which were introduced by *Hu* fashion. (Fig. 79) (4) *Hu* boots made by leather were worn by T'ang officers at court. (Fig. 81) They were originally worn by men and women of the western national minorities (*Huren*).

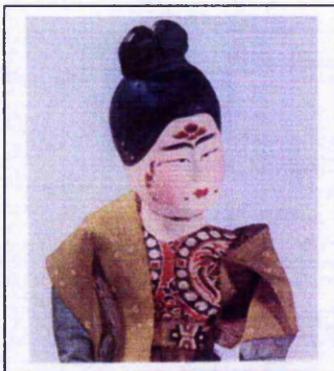


Fig. 76 Double knife-shaped bun and *mian-ye*.

Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 87.



Fig. 77 High bun and *bu-yiao* (hair pins).
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 87.



Fig. 78 *We-mao* (Hu style hat with a veil).
Source: Shen 1988: 144.



Fig. 79 Gilt gold arm-bracelet.
Source: Jin 1988: 6-7.



Fig. 80 Seven-object belt.
Source: Jin 1988: 6-7.



Fig. 81 *Hu* style leather boots.
Source: Jin 1988: 6-7.

4.3 Profound clothing forms

T'ang clothes were cut into rectangles to fit the individual wearer according to length and width of the fabric. To use fabrics economically and adopt conventions, clothes were never cut to fit closely to the body. Clothes were constructed but unfitted, secured by a belt without the aid of other fastenings. They were made using the entire width of a length of fabric with as little waste as possible to allow minimum wastage. These features can be seen in almost all Chinese costumes. Trimming or biding was added at the edges to ensure endurance and for decoration. The collar and sleeves were then added. Some sleeves of gowns were very large; others were shaped, varying from a very wide or narrow armhole to a wide end. The upper garment, *ban-pi* (half-arm jacket) appeared to have been sewn in narrow shape, which made the clothes easier to wear. It had a front opening rather than just a non-opening neck as on the robe. Shorter lengths of fabric formed the sleeves of the narrow jacket, which could be of any width at the end. They look simply constructed and were possible to make without a complex cutting diagram. The fabric proved adaptable to China's extreme climatic and geographical variations: a single, thin, unlined silk could be worn in hot weather in the South and padding with cotton wadding and costumes with several layers robes afforded protection against the cold in the North.

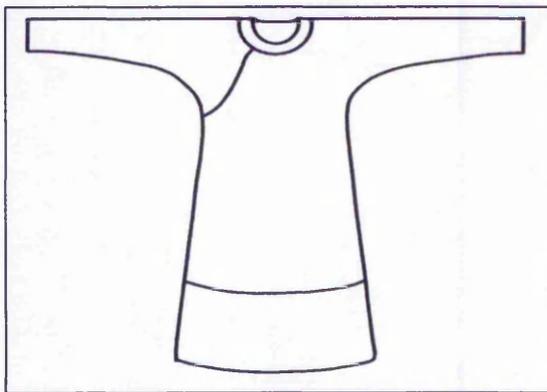


Fig. 82 Illustration of clothing structure of *pu-tou*. T'ang men's dress.
Illustration: author; date: 16th April 2004.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 244.

Some dominant constructions of T'ang dress are analysed as below: (1) *Pu-tou* dress, the round-collared narrow-sleeved robe, was the common dress for men but sometimes women adopted these styles of men's wear. (Fig. 82) (2) Short-sleeved jacket, long skirt and cape were the main clothes items worn by

women in early T'ang times. (Fig. 83) (3) *Hu* jacket was characterised by its turned-down collar, front opening and tight sleeves. (Fig. 84) (4) Large-sleeved gown was prevalent in the mid T'ang period. (Fig. 85) When the influence of *Hufu* declined, women's dress became progressively less loose. Such a characteristic became particularly obvious in mid to late T'ang times.

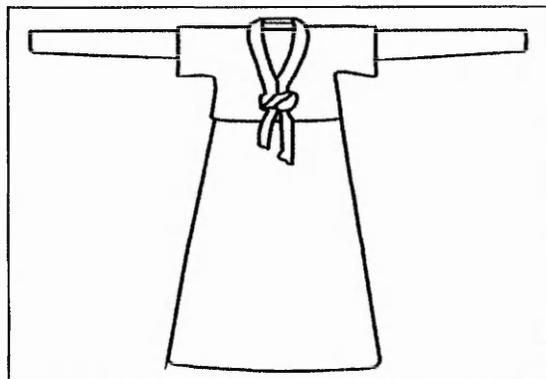


Fig. 83 Illustration of clothing structure of short-sleeved, front-opening jacket and long skirt. Early T'ang style.
Illustration: author; date: 16th April 2004.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 248.

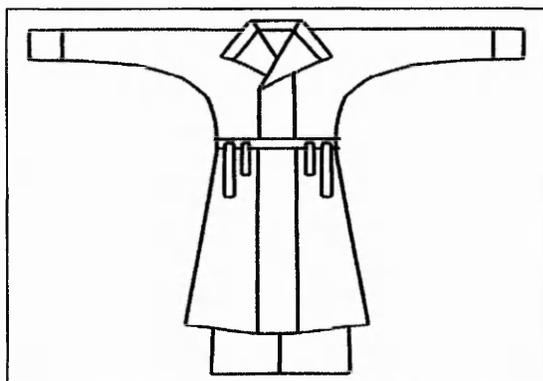


Fig. 84 Illustration of clothing structure of turned-back laped *Hu* style jacket, Early T'ang style.
Illustration: author; date: 16th April 2004.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 248.

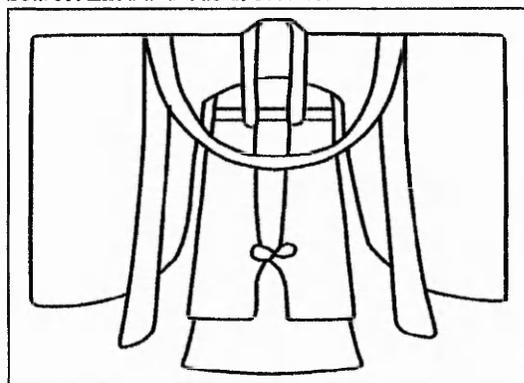


Fig. 85 Illustration of clothing structure of large-sleeved gown (court style). Mid T'ang style.
Illustration: author; date: 16th April 2004.
Source: Zhou and Gao 1987: 249.

4.4 Dominant patterns and colours



Fig. 86 Woven pattern's position on a musician's robe.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 156, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 136.

T'ang geometric patterns did not have a merely formal beauty, for there was content in the abstract form and a concept in what was perceived by the senses. For example, bird designs changed from being realist to impressionist (expression of different movements of birds) to symbolist (Li Ze-hou 1994: 16-17, 22). Geometric patterns, especially of a rhomboid shape, colours of ground red, green and orange were used very often for male's clothes. The "curved grass", also named "T'ang grass" was uniquely used for patterns on clothes. It was composed of peony, lotus and pomegranate, in luxurious colours of stone blue, stone green, sand red, ground red, black and gold. (See Figures 86-104)

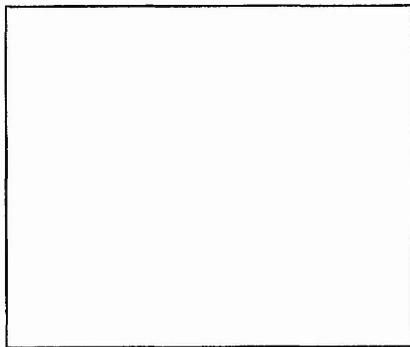


Fig. 87 Purple ground, woven pattern on a musician's robe.
Late T'ang. Dun-huang Cave 156, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 136.

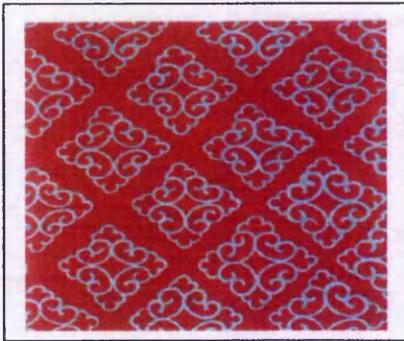


Fig. 88 Orange ground, woven pattern on an attendant clothes.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 156, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 137.

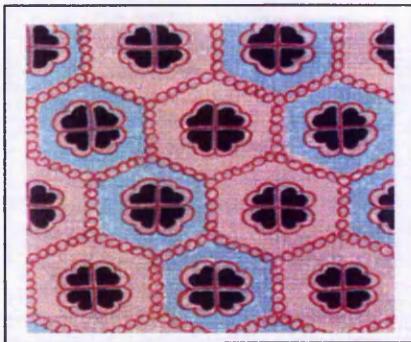


Fig. 89 Green and orange ground, woven pattern on emperor's clothes.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 156, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 137.

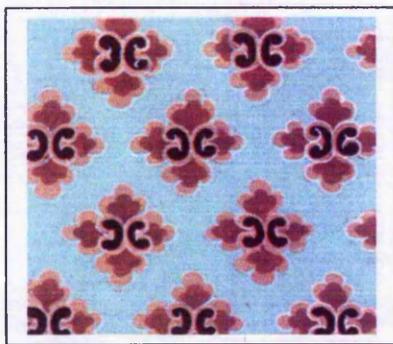


Fig. 90 Green ground, woven pattern on an attendant's clothes.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 156, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na, 1986: 137.

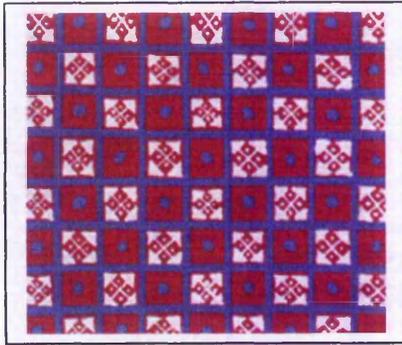


Fig. 91 Pattern of woven silk (*qi*) on a musician's clothes.
Early T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 220, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 52.



Fig. 92 Pattern of woven silk (*qi*) on a Buddhist believer's robe.
Early T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 334, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 61.



Fig. 93 Embroidery pattern's position on Madame Wang's attendant's skirt.
Mid T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 130, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 86.

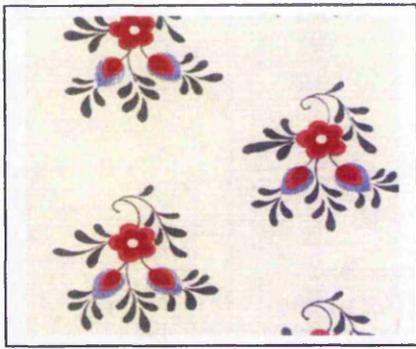


Fig. 94 Embroidery pattern on Madame Wang's attendant's skirt.
Mid T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 130, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 87.

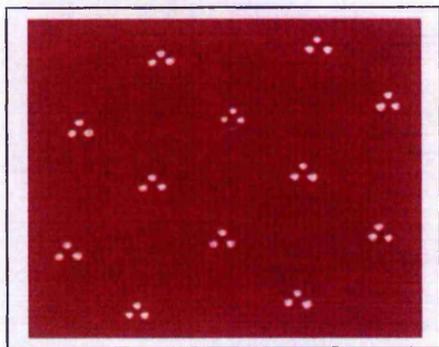


Fig. 95 Printed pattern on upper garment.
Mid T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 217, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 87.



Fig. 96 Gien dyed patterns' position on a female donor's upper garment.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 144., Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 122.

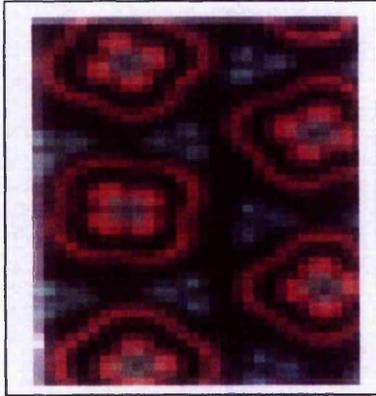


Fig. 97 *Gien* dyed and printed pattern on a female donor's upper garment.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 122.



Fig. 98 *Gien* dyed and printed pattern on a female donor's skirt.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 123.



Fig. 99 pattern position on a female donor's upper garment and waist.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 126.



Fig. 100 Embroidery pattern on a donor's skirt.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 138, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 127.



Fig. 101 Printed pattern on donor's skirt.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 138, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na, 1986: 127.



Fig. 102 Printed pattern position on a donor's sleeves.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 138, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 131.



Fig. 103 Printed pattern on a donor's upper Garment.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 144, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 130.



Fig. 104 Printed pattern on a donor's sleeves.
Late T'ang.
Dun-huang Cave 138, Gansu Province, China.
Source: Chang Sha-na 1986: 130.

Naturally realistic flowers, willows in soft colours of pink, light green and purple were used for female donor's clothes. Court style dress was distinctively characterised by using patterns of phoenix, curved grass and flowers in colours of garnet and red. The most popular colours seen in T'ang dress were: (1) White: It was used for *shen-yi*, the daily clothes for the emperors and the masses. (2) Red and purple: Those conspicuous colours were most desirable in the mid T'ang period for both court dress and daily clothes. (3) Black, dark green, purple and brown: In the late T'ang period, the circumstances of the court had an impact on the T'ang wearer's use of those darker colours. (Li Yin-chian 1993: 117-48; Lin Shu-yuao 1986: 173). (See Figures 105-112)

In summary, the changes in the various patterns and colours together with the emergence of a *Hu* influence, under the combination of indigenous and pervading *Hu* cultures, an international style evolved: a new aesthetics that valued muted, extremely subtle colour harmonies and complex, more naturalistic patterns.

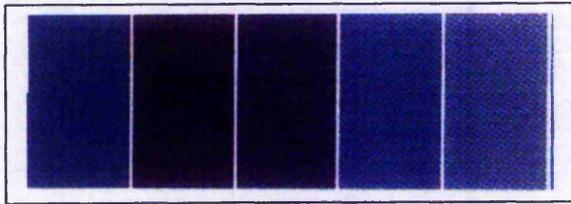


Fig. 105 Blue colour system *ch'in, guan, stone-ch'in, lan, piao*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 145.

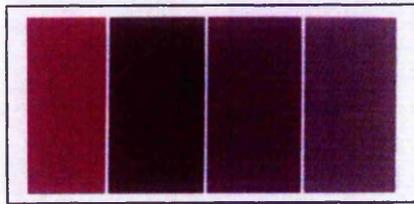


Fig. 106 Purple colour system *tse tse, hei tse, tse, din-xian-tse*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 145.

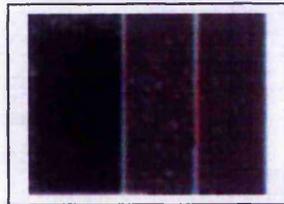


Fig. 107 Black colour system *hei, xian, chao*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 148.

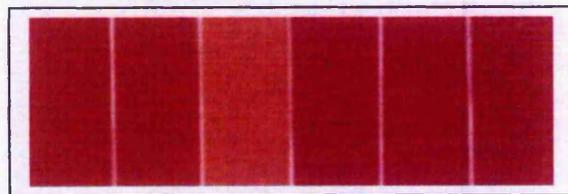


Fig. 108 Red colours system *fei, zu, xian, che-hon, xi-hua, gian*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 146.

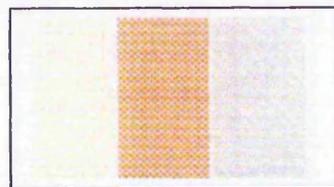


Fig. 109 White colour system *bai, su, yin-bai*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 148.

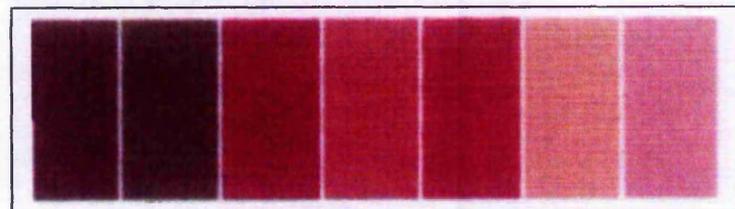


Fig. 110 Light red colour system *gian-tse, gian-se, rose-tse, yin-hon, sua-hon, tao-hon, fen-hon*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 146.

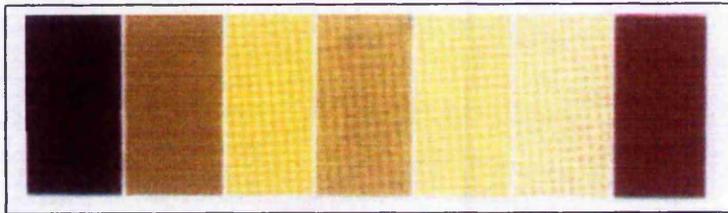


Fig. 111 Yellow colour system *din-xian, suo-hua, tsuo-hua, liu-hua, xian, mi-he, tuo*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 147.

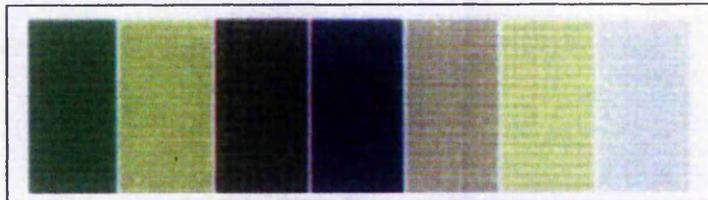


Fig. 112 Green colour system *lu, tsuo-lu, tsei-lu, sar-lu, do-lu, lia-lu, yu*.
Source: Li Yi-chian 1993: 148.

Conclusion

In the course of my study the fashion change (e.g., the T'ang ideal of feminine beauty) and its mechanism in the context of symbolism and social practice of the dress have been outlined. The appearance of the capital style changed with time, with popular styles sometimes completely changing or disappearing after several decades. A trend that lasted for two or three decades was by no means fleeting when thought of in the context of present-day fashion. T'ang dress could be the inspiration for modern contemporary designers and artists.

Clothing styles were transitory and permeated different periods of T'ang society reflected the economical, political and cultural currents. The impetus for change in T'ang fashion derived from geographically-influenced ideas and material items and was continually modified through time, and its complexity reflected its sources in the creativity of Chinese traditions and *Hu* influence. The phenomenon also explains, in Rugh's words:

Dress styles may occupy a place along the continuum between the extremes according to momentary definitions of what is modest or immodest, form-concealing or form-revealing, appropriate or inappropriate, garish or in good taste." (1986: 3 quoted in Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997: 2-3)

The outcome of this chapter which I have pursued largely by intuitive understanding, will be used to progress my interpretation of the parallels of T'ang and contemporary fashion in next chapter.

Part II
Contemporary interpretation

Chapter 5: The modernisation of contemporary Chinese fashion

There is a great need for an investigation of the modernisation of contemporary Chinese fashion¹⁵⁸ that would track and demystify fashions discourses in the West, Mainland China and Chinese societies overseas¹⁵⁹. I try to establish that change is important to the definition and nature of Chinese fashion and this will relate to my concept of the modernisation of T'ang dress.

I try to signal the changes in a chronological sequence and describe them with a thematic account (e.g., Orientalism) and record the confrontations of the tendencies through reading historical records and examining contemporary fashion in the market, in this chapter I try to decipher the dominant historical tendency of Chinese fashion in terms of its process of modernisation and Westernisation in the 20th and early 21st century: the West versus China, pre-modern versus modern, modernist fashion versus post-modernist fashions, and refer to them to build my analysis. This investigation may offer insights into Chinese fashion as a practice based on interactions. It asks:

- To what extent, was the trajectory of change in Chinese fashion influenced by the trajectory of change in Western fashion?
- To what extent were the changes in contemporary Chinese fashion influenced by such factors as politics and gender? How were they connected and what mechanism linked them?
- What impact did Chinese-style fashion have on contemporary Western designers¹⁶⁰?
- What is the appearance of the Chinese-style fashion designed by Chinese designers?

My speculation may be different from the vision of Western expert opinions or commentary. The argument draws on my observations as a Chinese designer and intimate witness of contemporary fashion phenomena.

5.1 Changes in modern Western fashion

5.1.1 Modernism in Western fashion

To define “modernism” and “modern fashion” there will be “ironies, naturally, and contradictions, because that is the complexion of fashion.” (Blau 1999: 33) Western “modernism” developed at the end of the 19th century (Jameson 1984: 53) and evolved with the process of democracy. After the modernist form started in clothing by 1910 (Blau 1999: 181), “modern fashion” manifested itself differently as opposed to pre-modern fashion (Liporelsky 1994: 88). In modern democratic Western societies people always search for change. Fashion is driven by the quest for novelty (Blau 1999: 88-89; Liporelsky 1994: 226; Richardson and Kroeber 1947: 134, 149).

¹⁵⁸ “Contemporary”, in this study refers to the 20th and early 21st centuries.

¹⁵⁹ “Chinese societies” include Mainland China, international cities in the West such as New York, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

¹⁶⁰ “Chinese-style fashion”, in this study refers to fashion which has Chinese elements.



Fig. 113 Hobble skirt by Paul Poiret, illustration by George Lepape. 1912.

Source: Haye 1988: 35.

Western modernism gradually materialised from the work of Western designers such as Paul Poiret (1879-1944) to Jean Patou (1880-1936) and Coco Chanel (Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel, 1883-1971). Modernist forms of these designers’ work were radically simple. Decorations were kept to a minimum. They had ameliorated both the physiological and physical burdens of pre-industrial women. Poiret ushered in the twentieth century woman, outlawed the corset and in his own words: “Freed the breasts and shackled the legs.” (www.designerhistory.com, accessed 25/03/2005) His clothes were revolutionary and modern. He saw that women in the nineteenth century were “architectural elements, like ships’ prows” and after the 1910s when clothes were modernised, the change was made by simplifying the Victorian or Edwardian style¹⁶¹. Poiret then thought that women in modern times resemble “little telegraphy operators.” (*Le Temps Chanel* quoted in Charles-Roux 1979: 211) In 1911 Poiret introduced the hobble skirt, which freed the waist, but confined the ankles. Later he split it in the middle for more freedom of movement. Figure 113 shows Paul Poiret’s hobble skirt that shared the influence of Orientalism with with Art Nouveau.

¹⁶¹ For “Western style periods & dates”, see Appendix VI.

Between 1909 and 1924, Poiret promoted his Oriental designs. With his fashion, Western structure of clothing was modified by the intervention of the East (Laver 1946: 95; Martin and Koda 1994: 12). Poiret always said that his success was due to giving women exactly what they have always wanted, freedom (*History of Poiret* quoted in www.designerhistory.com, accessed: 25/03/2005). Poiret's style changed the corseted look of the Directoire period (ca. AD 1798-1804) and developed into a straight and sinuous silhouette, with an easy and often raised waistline (Steele 1984: 227) which was influential in modern Western fashion. See Figure 114, the *Gazette du bon ton* illustration characteristically shows the 1920s taste for a lustrous, minimalist and highly colourful *Chinoiserie* (Martin and Koda 1994: 27)¹⁶².

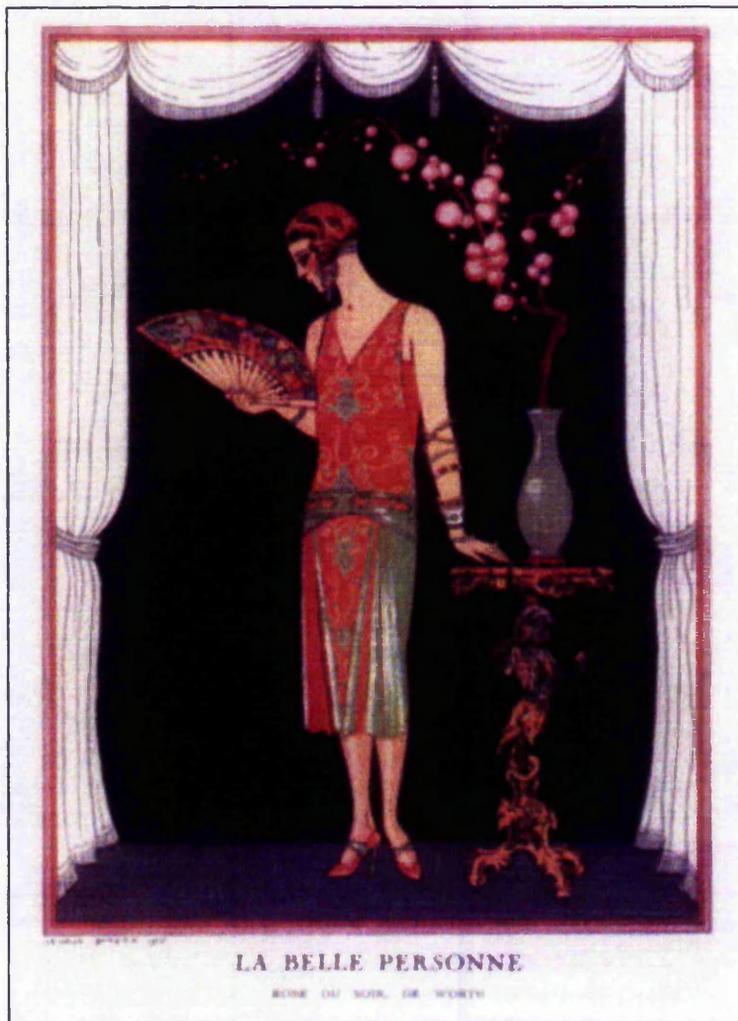


Fig. 114 La Belle Personne, illustration by George Barbier. 1925. Robe da Soir de Worth. *Gaezte da bon ton*. Source: Martin and Koda 1994: 27.

¹⁶² *Chinoiserie*: a style in art reflecting Chinese influence; elaborately decorated and intricately patterned. (www.wordreference.com, accessed 28/02/05)

In the early 1920s, Jean Patou was influenced by Art Deco and Cubism. He created sweaters with geometric motifs and straight pleated skirts. From that point it became chic not to appear richly attired. His inspired work in the sportswear field gave modern fashion another dimension (www.womenshistory.about.com, accessed: 25/03/05). After World War I, Chanel's dresses, simple suits and women's trousers were able to provide clothes to suit post-war Western women. From her first millinery shop, opened in 1912 to the 1920s, Chanel promoted her designs which replaced the corset with comfort and casual elegance (*History of Chanel*, www.designerhistory.com, accessed: 25/03/2005). Chanel said regarding her opinion of "fashion":

Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening.
(Chanel quoted by John Johnson Lewis, www.womenshistory.about.com, accessed: 25/03/05)

Chanel innovated her design for modern Western women by appropriating the cut of the male dress which resulted in a pared-down feminine look that blended gender. Her use of casual menswear materials (e.g., cardigan and jersey) established a functionalist economy. Her simplified elegance characterised the modernist look. Under the impetus of Chanel and Patou, modernist fashion repudiated the strident look of luxury. It was no longer obligatory for the upper classes to dress with ostentation.

After World War II, political and social changes had a significant impact on women's lives and what they wore. The political and social system required women to dress with enhanced femininity. In 1947, sponsored by the French government, Christian Dior (1905-1957) presented his New Look in 1947, introducing the revised corset, as the masculinised feminine uniform (Blau 1999: 45), pinching the waist and flaring the skirt. Dior tried to think what the women of Paris and the rest of the world really wanted. He came to the conclusion that women everywhere were sick and tired of rationing, of doing without, of sacrifice, of shabby clothes made with the minimum of material, of wide shoulders and dresses like uniforms which were affected by World War II. He said to himself:

I have to bring back beauty, feminine clothes, soft rounded shapes, full flowing skirts, nipped-in waists and hemlines below the knee. I will make women feel like flowers again as they did in the 30's, I will call my collection COROLLE or ring of petals. (Christian Dior quoted in www.designerhistory.com, accessed: 25/03/05)

Modern fashion by 1950 had focused on an imitation for both mass-production manufacturing and small-scale dressmaking. High fashion became less inaccessible to the masses. Technological improvements in the garment industry coupled with the emergence of designers and the ready-to-wear (prêt-a-porter) virtually eliminated the foothold that made-to-order previously retained. Whatever differences in quality might characterise ready-to-wear articles, this new age marked another stage in the democratic organisation of fashion since an essentially homogeneous industrial production had been substituted for a heterogeneous system of made-to-order and mass production (Liporelsky 1994: 93).

5.1.2 "Post-modernism" in Western fashion

"Post-modernism" as a culturally specific historical "period" that signifies the pastiche energy of Western society under late capitalism, is a break from the discourse of "modernism" (Jameson 1984: 53-66). The postmodern, as a period-term, the "post-age," is always "now" (Wilson 1991: 111).

“Post-modern” analysis terms explicitly dwell on the state of Western culture highlighting the cultural manifestations (e.g., commodifications) of the most recent stage in the history of its industrial-economic infrastructure. “Postmodernism” tends itself to “evasion and ambiguity” (Grosz et al 1986: 8), rarely defined precisely enough to be more than a synonym for today’s multinationalist capitalist world at large (Arac 1986: x-xii; Blau 1999: 136; Hutcheon 1991: 167). By the 1960s, the earlier hierarchical and unitary configuration of fashion exploded. The label “post-modern” is the modernity of capitalism and a tribute to its technological and material advances (Hutcheon 1991: 167). Fashion therefore may be thought as a synonym for postmodernism. The “postmodern form” is a “style” of representation running, albeit with important differences, across various artistic media (Merquior 1986: 17).

Since the 1960s, there has been an ongoing revolutionary change in the nature of fashion. The institutionalisation of change comes in the West with “a relative disqualification of the past” (Liporelsky 1994: 28). During this time, socialism in Europe was in ascendance, in government or as popular ideology. Postmodernism came to being as a workable liberalism. Modernity by definition implies that life is always subject to change (Blau 1999: 106) and postmodernity signifies change with high variability in fashion. Fashion became complicated by diversity (Blau 1999: 69) as the most obdurate cultural codes were threatened, or undone. The phenomenon of “difference” in modern society has shifted to the realm of fantasy rather than direct confrontation. All the contradictions and paradoxes of popular culture intersect fashion, merging with or hybridising or blurring what is on the canvas of cultural practices. In the West, postmodernist fashion (after the 1960s) is modelled on the system of a large-scale reconfiguration: organisational, social, and cultural transformations that seem to have thoroughly disrupted the earlier structure of the fashion system (from the 1910s to the 1950s). Fashion in postmodern times has changes that can be implicated in conceptions of popular culture, femininity, capitalism and globalisation. It is marked by tendencies such as deconstruction and anti-aestheticism (anti-fashion), escapism, retro, minimalism and mediation by mass media sources. The following are the major tensions in postmodernist fashion in the West:

Escapism and retro

In the late 1960s, two style terms emerged as part of the trend toward “difference”, “ethnic” and “retro” fashions which became increasingly popular in the West as young people looked to the past and far away for inspiration. This period is dominated by audacity, e.g., the miniskirt of the 1960s (Perrot 1994: 23). Postmodernist fashion seems to be plagiaristic, repeating an earlier escape from the past, that of modernism, but it does not seem to have surpassed the structure of repetition while it claims to have broken with the impasse.

The collections of Vivienne Westwood, Jean Paul Gaultier, Alexander McQueen at Givenchy, and John Galliano at Dior in the 1990s have been a return to traditional practice and to a renewed concern for the womanly curves. This required renewed attention to the elements of couture (Blau 1999: 95, 145-46) in which the styles in retro become more like genuine homage to fashions of “the spectacular legacy of fashion’s elitist past,” (Blau 1999: 94) implying that “couture is about escapism.” ([British] *Vogue* April 1995: 129)

Since the middle of the 1990s, retro has come and gone in fashion, re-enforcing the backward emotions that inform nostalgia, which Hollander characterised as the sartorial “truth” to the congenital “falsehoods” of postmodern pastiche (Hollander 1994: xv-xvi). Enchantments of history and elements of irony or parody can be seen in the haunting images of Gaultier’s *mise en scene* in the 1990s (Blau 1999: 34, 94).

Contradiction versus expectation

In the 1980s and 1990s, many designers use sources like kitsch, punk, the flea market, and various historical allusions, including revisionist versions of styles from the 1940s on shirts and sarongs, with throwaway versatility. Commes des Garçons in late 1980s and Largerfeld’s shredded shirt in his 1992 collection for Chanel, Margiela and Lang, Anne Demeulemeester, and Koji Tatsune (Blau 1999: 175-77), all are involved in this process. Nevertheless, what is palpable in appearance, as in the survival of fashions, is a sense of incompleteness (Blau 1999: 34). There are disparities in fabric, deprivations of colour, tearing things apart at the seams, renouncing finish. Postmodernism is meant to challenge expectations, not only regarding the making, the structure and usages of clothing, but even the sensation of putting it on and wearing it.

Minimalist versus pluralism

Some form of Western postmodernism might be described as a kind of Puritanism, which distrusts excess and ornamentation. In the 1970s, a leaner tradition returns, reflecting the simplification, plain geometry, and stricter, corrective, renunciatory logic of modernist form. By the 1990s, Western clothes are becoming contemporary without precluding historical tastes (Blau 1999: 193), through which Gaultier’s unabashed Hasidic Collection is offered to disclaim the present, achieve authenticity and indulge in nostalgia for the timeless (Blau 1999: 193-94).

“Neither post-modern nor minimalist, multicultural nor confessional—they are relentlessly modern, in the best classic sense.” (Hollander 1994: 3) It is a paradox that while postmodernist forms seem to reject nostalgia, designers are still drawing on autobiography, recycling icons of pop culture and more discretionarily taking materials from history and incorporating them in dresses (Blau 1999: 37, 63). The visual images created by the networks of internet commerce, together with the ceaseless images of the mediascape exercise in early twentieth-first century a power over fashion as never before. Designers use the past as a virtual palette of fashion (Blau 1999: 57) and such visual pluralism may be regarded as part of the tyranny of the 20th and early 21st century fashions (Hollander 1978; Blau 1999: 62). In the French fashion scene, designers draw on foreign resources (Blau 1999: 93). For example, the work of John Galiano in the 1990s appears to be an excursion into the glamour and playfulness of the 1960s’ audacity, along with a baseline of the 1970s’ minimalism, with an attitude of sobriety (Blau 1999: 35, 37); and also was a perplexing medley of tastes, with diverse images and attitudes in the spirit of contradiction. The pluralism of the 1990s, entrepreneurial, autodidact, dandyish, and plain smart, can be seen in Largerfeld’s designing simultaneously for Chanel, Chloe, under his own name, and for the furrier Fendi (Blau 1999: 95).

5.2 Contemporary fashion in China

5.2.1 Changes in fashion from 1910s to 1950s

5.2.1.1 *Shizhuang* (modern dress form of clothes)

In China, starting in the early twentieth century, there were attempts to make Chinese dress more suitable to the modern life and standards of modesty. For example, the traditional footwear (“lotus shoes” worn on the bound feet) of ethnic Chinese women that originated during the Five dynasties (AD 907-960) and was worn into the Ch’ing dynasty was abandoned in the 1910s (Steele and Major 1999: 5; Ko 1999: 141-54). *Shizhuang* (modern dress form of clothes) gradually replaced the traditional woman’s clothes in Pre-modern periods which combined a full jacket (*ao*) and pleated skirt (*qun*), with or without loose wide trousers (*ku*) and lotus shoes (worn with bound feet). (See Figure 115) Modern clothes emphasised comfort thereby liberating the Chinese women from uncomfortable clothing, e.g., footbinding attires.



Fig. 115 Chinese woman with bound feet wearing a jacket over matching loose trousers. Ch’ing dynasty. Painting on glass.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 43.

The early Republican period of 1911-24 coincided with the emergence of Chinese women in the public sphere, and thus marked the beginning of thinking about modern women’s fashion in China. There was transience in fashion styles. Chinese people began to modernise their clothes by combining

aspects of eastern and western styles. They began to dress *shizhuang* in a wider range of style. In the 1920s, when Chinese reconfigurations of the terms of fashion led to the outdating of *shimao* (current mode), the term that rose to take its place was *modeng* (modern). “*Modeng*” is the substitution of a borrowed English word for a borrowed French word and like other Chinese words, through which the Chinese attempted to apprehend Western modernity; its translation was found to be problematic. Especially from the point that the transition from the imperial to the modern era required the Chinese to accept a complex and difficult shift in world-view from a Mandate of Heaven (*t’ien-ming*) doctrine¹⁶³, the traditional Chinese worldview of China as the proper realm of the emperor of China, to one “nation-state” (*guojia*, since 1911) among many. Chinese intellectuals struggled with the implications of a new way of looking at China as part of the modern world (Levenson 1958: 132-39; Steele and Major 1999: 35). The shift in world-view may have been connected to the confusion about the changes in Chinese fashion. For example, the introduction of western high-heeled shoes, which gave the visual illusion of smaller women’s feet (wearing lotus shoes with bound feet) and produced a swaying walk which was not an ideal of traditional Chinese women’s dressing behaviour. There was an anti-foot-binding movement in early twentieth century in China. This may be resonant of the phenomenon in the Nationalist Revolution of the 1920s when China was in an unstable state of affairs and the confusion that reigned in the world of Chinese fashion was a reflection of wider cultural and political uncertainties. Tao Ye, a journalist reported in 1912 that:

Chinese are wearing foreign clothes, while foreigners wear Chinese clothes, men are adorned like women and women like men. Prostitutes imitate girl students, and girl students look like prostitutes¹⁶⁴. (Tao Ye, *the Shanghai daily Shenbao*, 1912: 105 quoted in Finnane 1999: 130; Steele and Major 1999: 189)

During the period of the May Fourth Movement between 1916 to the 1920s (Gentzler 1977: 168)¹⁶⁵, debates on the accelerated changes in the social position of women and higher education for women raised the issues of modernisation and Westernisation such as: “What was modern, Chinese, and appropriate in dress?” “What is to be considered suitable? Is it clothing of puritanical simplicity, or unisex clothing for men and women alike, or adoption of western styles which are considered progressive?” (Huang 1999: 133-40; Steele and Major 1999: 4-5) A modern woman was expected by the Chinese to embody the native culture. Materially, “the upsurge of patriotic feeling and the resultant boycotts of Japanese and other foreign goods meant a retreat from Western fashions and a reworking of traditional Chinese style.” (Huang 1999: 134) The movement saw a return to traditional shapes and fabrics: the high mandarin collar, and blouse closures¹⁶⁶, and cloth fastenings instead of foreign buttons, and the use of native fabrics.

¹⁶³ See the present work, section 3.3 in Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁴ See Tao Ye, ‘Minqiu funii de xiuzhuang’ (New fashions among women in the early Republic), in *Lao zhaopian*, p. 105 quoted in Finnane 1999: 130; Steele and Major 1999: 189, n. 20.

¹⁶⁵ Also see Glossary.

¹⁶⁶ The asymmetrical closing from neck to underarm, the style of sidedness of traditional Han mode.



Fig. 116 Sun Yat-sen wearing his own Sun Yat-sen suit. 1920s.

Source: Steele and Major 1999: 130.

In early twentieth century, men in uniform were coming to exemplify the height of fashion. Collars in civilian wear resonate with the high collared uniforms of the recruits to the new style military and police forces. Atop the close-fitting jacket of a Chinese woman, the high collar declared the wearer's sympathy with her times (Finnane 1999: 130). When nationalist revolution and social upheaval in the 1920s led to reforms in military affairs and industrial technology, leaders of China's modernised armed forces introduced military uniforms that evolved into the "Sun Yat-sen suit" which was modelled on military dress. See Figure 116, Dr. Sun, one of the few prominent leaders in twentieth-century China, the "father of the nation" wore a style of his own-the Sun Yat-sen suit. Students in modern schools and universities wore variations on western school uniforms and hybrid Sino-western clothing styles (Steele and Major 1999: 4; Finnane 1999: 119-32). In the late 1920s, fashion was closely connected with politics and gender. The dilemma of how to look was inescapable for young women, and was the main topic of fashion (Huang 1999: 135): "The newspapers described a district where short hair was encouraged," (Lu Xun 1980: 353) which linked to the military uniforms that were introduced during the period of Nationalist Revolution.

5.2.1.2 *Qipao* fashion

In the first half of the twentieth century, a phenomenon helped *qipao* developed in Chinese fashion. There was a long-term *qipao* fashion prevailing in the 1920s to the 1940s. Sino-Westernisation in dress can be seen from the *qipao* style. The evolution of *qipao* was driven by the women of an emerging middle class, who lived in or were susceptible to the effects of life in modernising cities such as Shanghai (the Paris of the East) and Hong Kong (the Pearl of the East) (Finnane 1996: 106, 111; Steele and Major 1999: 48).

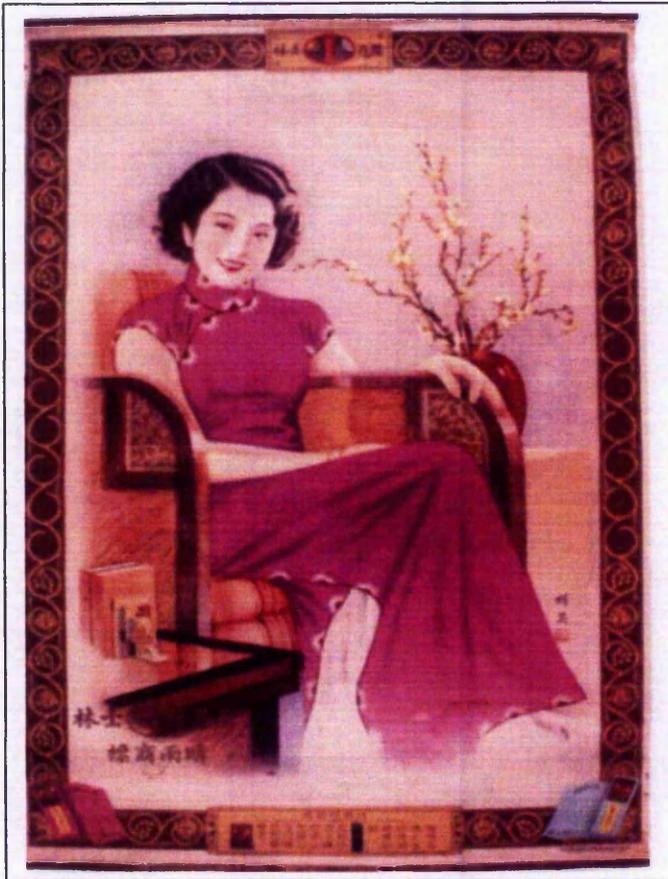


Fig. 117 A woman in *qipao*.
1930s, Chinese calendar poster.
Collection of V. Steele and J. S. Major.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 48.

As the “national dress” of Hong Kong, *qipao* seemed functional and suitable for modern and active women (Clark 1999: 155-66; Steele and Major 1999: 7). The style of *qipao* of the 1910s or earlier was a loose fitting and ankle-length dress. Its hemline rose to mid-calf in the later 1920s and then fell again in the 1930s. In 1930s and 1940s *qipao* did sterling service as China’s national dress for women (Steele and Major 1999: 48). See Figure 117 as above. By that time, western clothing influences such as the bolero jacket had made Chinese dresses increasing revealing. Skirts were cut shorter and constructed more like Western skirts; jackets and trousers were all cut closer to the body (Finnane 1996: 106, 111; Steele and Major 1999: 48). In their often very revealing portrayals of the female body, Western fashion bias for cutting and style which incorporated anomalous elements caused the

qipao to become more fitted and waisted (Clark 1999: 158) and its side slits to expose the legs (Steele and Major 1999: 50). *Qipao* was characterised by different styles of indigenous knotted buttons and loops (*huanu* or “frogs”) which were derived from Chinese knotting craft. Fabric designs and embroidery patterns ranged from traditionally Chinese motifs such as flowers to modern western motifs such as Art Deco design. *Qipao* was often accessorised with western silk stockings, high-heeled shoes, gloves, hats, and purses or a fur stole. The addition of these imported accessories showed knowledge of international fashion trends. The combination acted to reinforce western stereotypes of emphasising physical aspect of feminine beauty (Clark 1999: 157; Steele and Major 1999: 50). Seasonal variations were introduced to the length of the side slits, the height of the collar and fabric designs, creating additional fashion interest (Clark 1999: 158).

5.2.2 Changes in Chinese fashion from the 1960s to the 1990s

In the 1960s, the clothes worn by Chinese fashion leaders such as the woman of style, a socialite, or an entertainer, were marked by a much higher degree of decoration and variation in colour (Huang 1999: 133). Their images were manipulated and disseminated by new media technologies which made it possible to mass-produce calendar posters cheaply (Ng et al 1995). In the widely disseminated magazines, *Zhongguo funü* (*Women of China*) and *Zhongguo Qingnian* (*China Youth*), discussion of dress design temporarily replaced stories in which flashy clothing was treated as both the cause and the symptom of immoral behaviour (Evans 1997: 135-36). The more moralistic line was quick to return during Mao’s ill-starred and famine-inducing Great Leap Forward (1958-61) (Wilson 1999: 177)¹⁶⁷.

The crucial moment for fashion changes in China may have been during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. The aim of the Revolution was to banish the past. During the years of the Revolution, politics affected clothing under communist rule. Communist political leaders Mao Zedong (1893-1976), Zhou Enlai and others competed to display appropriate “proletarian simplicity” in dress. Expression of individuality in dress invited severe social and political repercussions (Steele and Major 1999: 7; Wilson 1999: 167-186). The green and blue army and naval suits sported by Mao Zedong’s teenage fans (See Figure 118) and the dress of the women’s revolutionary army (Finnane 1996: 115-23) displaced the *qipao*. The phenomenon of fashion may be what Simmel termed a “desire for destruction”. (Simmel 1973: 302 quoted in Steele 1991: 40)

¹⁶⁷ Great Leap Forward, 1958–61, Chinese economic plan aimed at revitalizing all sectors of the economy. Initiated by Mao Zedong.



Fig. 118 Uniforms worn by students in the Cultural Revolution.
7th May 1972. Cadres School, Beijing. Photography by J. L. Cohen.
J. L. Cohen and J. A. Cohen 1974: pl. 278.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 57.

Fashion was “a logical product of a process of dress reform which had its origins in new uniforms for the soldiers in the service of the Manchu [Ch’ing] dynasty.” (Finnane 1999: 131) As a socialist style of anti-aesthetic, the Mao suit uniform, identical blue cotton jackets and trousers, became the national style in Mao Zedong’s period. It transformed the people of China into blue-uniformed revolutionaries. When the black crepe, straight lines, upstanding collar, and front buttons of the Mao suit took over the People’s Republic of China, traditional outfits were discarded. Although Mao suit was a uniform, was it no decree promulgated on what the Chinese civilian population should wear at that time. The Mao suit was blue, cut full (Clark 1999: 170), (See Figure 119) conveyed the sense of simplicity (Clark 1999: 171), and was used to emphasise ideological agendas (Wilson 1999: 172). Zeldon remarked: “simplicity as an anti-fashion was a national characteristic, like the artificiality of the French, the snobbishness of the English and the practicality of Americans.” (Zeldon quoted in Steele 1985: 245)



Fig. 119 Chairman Mao together with the people of *Jinggangshan*.
1975, Poster, By Zou Liliang-cai.
Selected New Year Pictures, 1975, *Nianhua xuanji*.
Beijing Renmin menshu chubanshe, 1975.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 168.

Qipao gradually shut out vestimentary possibilities in Mainland China during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution as it was regarded politically as a code of hierarchy which should be discarded. By then it was no longer possible for the *qipao* to evolve further as a dominant form of Chinese fashion in Mainland China. Instead, the cross dressing, and the unisex styles of the 1970s were apparent in Mao suit fashion in China. Its adoption may have implied a femininity willingly disguised by women asserting equality with men. Femininity entails the conception that womens' clothes no longer exploited women's sexuality to please the opposite sex but may be used by women on their own behalf for their own desired look. In the same decade, there was a "return to fashion" in China. Brighter clothes were in fashion in late 1970s which Steele and Major thought "had almost nothing to do with contemporary international fashion." (Steele and Major 1999: 64) In the 1980s, there was an anti-fashion attitude towards "strange" hairstyles and "unhealthy beauty" in China which were seen to promote "unhealthy thoughts." (*Beijing Daily* reported in Wren, *The New York Times*, October 18, 1983: A2 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 66)

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the West-as-foreign was always regarded stylish in China (Ko 1999: 145). Youths were copying western models of fashion. Western fashion was promoted by designers such as by Pierre Cardin who had fashion shows in China displaying his lines that were produced in Chinese factories for export. Modern clothes such as the blue jeans worn by young people were “no more outlandish than those worn by foreign tourists and overseas Chinese.” (*Chinese clothing* 1984: 11 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 67)

5.3 Chinese-style fashion seen in Western designer’s work

Fashion systems can be and have been constructed around other forms of economic or symbolic exchange (Fox-Genovese 1987: 7-30). In this section, I intend to describe the changes in western fashion in relation to Chinese influences by integrating the facts, thus building my analysis. I ask:

- Was there any impact that the Western designers had to express in the appearance of Chinese-style fashion?

5.3.1 Eroticism in Chinese-style fashion in the West

Exotic fashion in the Western system seemed to function to embellish and to invade everyday life. In early decades of the twentieth century, as Steele pointed out, “Orientalism” was in fashion. It introduced the use of brilliant colours and richly textured fabrics, turbans, aigrettes, beads, and tassels (Steele 1985: 227), expressing an appearance of exoticism. The designs of Poiret acknowledged the influence of Chinese sources (Blau 1999: 177, 181). His Chinese “Confucius” evening coat of 1906 provided the prototype for a host of later coat designs which were heavily influenced by Chinese sartorial style. The clothes were decorated with medallions of Chinese embroidery and used Chinese style “frog” fastenings. Poiret’s other famous Chinese-style design was the “Mandchou” tunic which was made in 1921 using gold lame and adorned with the Chinese character *fu*, meaning “to expel” or “oppose” or “brush away.” (Steele and Major 1999: 72) This had an impact in Chinese style fashion in the West.

After Paul Poiret (design work in the 1910s to 1920s), from Callot Soeurs (in the 1920s and 1930s), Yves Saint Laurent (in the 1970s and 1980s) to designers in the 1990s such as Dolce & Gabbana, Byron Lars and John Galliano, the incorporation of Chinese fabrics, styles, and decorative motifs into the Western designs can be described as Orientalism. Despite the presence of decoration, for which they were perhaps best known at the time, Callot Soeurs practiced a disciplined modernism. See Figure 120, the work of Callot Soeurs in the 1920s. Its Chinese gowns they were so fully attuned to the Art Deco environment, was an accommodation to Western techniques of embroidery and decoration (*History of Callot Soeurs*, www.metmuseum.org, accessed: 25/03/05). The dresses with collarless tunic designed by Soeurs employ ornamental motifs on the surface which was similar to those seen in the Chinese export shawls popular in the 1920s (Martin and Koda 1994: 26).

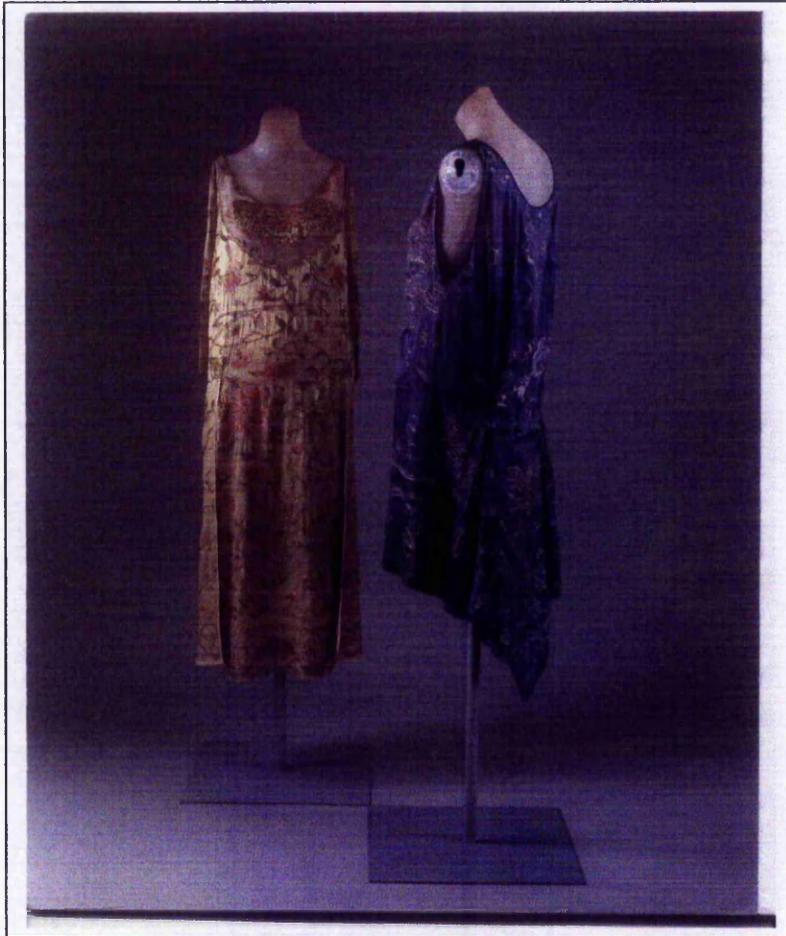


Fig. 120 Two evening dresses by Callot Soeurs.
 ca. 1924. Pale-green silk satin embroidered with silk floss and gold metal-wrapped thread. (Left)
 ca. 1926. Blue silk satin embroidered with silk floss.(Right)
 Source: Martin and Koda 1994: 26.

Vogue in a report on Parisian couture described the work of Yves Saint Laurent in his collection in Fall/Winter 1977/1978: “Splendour. reached its most seductive heights in the ravishing *Chinoiseries*. . .” “The essence of things Chinese at Saint Laurent” included items such as a lame dinner dress with “Mandarin opulence of fabric and colouring and. . . *cheongsan* [*qipao*] simplicity of line.” ([Paris] *Vogue*, October, 1977: 260-65 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 82)

In the 1990s, Orientalism has entered the hyperbolic vocabulary of post-modern design. Western fashion designs seem to have involved the creation of fantasies of Chinese clothing culture. See Figure 121, Dolce & Gabbana’s evening dress motifs coexist with eminently legible Chinese elements. The work of Byron Lars using frog closures suggests the Chinese source and its appropriation into new form (Martin and Koda 1994: 33). Christian Lacroix’s “Maison de thé”, embroidered lace patchwork sheath dress. His collection of Fall/Winter 1992/1993 was a Western designer’s version of *qipao*. See Figure 122.



Fig. 121 Evening ensembles by Dolce & Gabbana and Byron Lars.
Fall/Winter 1992-93. Evening ensemble by Dolce & Gabbana. Brocaded orange silk satin. (Left)
1994. Evening ensemble by Byron Lars. Brocaded red satin, black satin. (Right)
Source: Martin and Koda 1994: 33.



Fig. 122 Embroidered lace patchwork sheath dress by Christian Lacroix.
Fall/Winter 1992/1993.
“Maison de thé” Collection.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 81.

When Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997, Chinese style proliferated in the world market through works such as John Galliano's Pret-a-Porter Collection that had strong Chinese influences. (Fig. 123) Jean Paul Gaultier (1994-5) (Fig. 124) was inspired by Chinese sources.



Fig. 123 Red *qipao* by John Galliano for Christian Dior. Autumn/Winter 1997/1998. "Pret-a-Porter" Collection. Source: Steele and Major 1999: 84.



Fig. 124 Yellow *qipao* by John Galliano for Christian Dior. Autumn/Winter 1997/1998. Pret-a-Porter" Collection Source: Steele and Major 1999: 85.

5.3.2 Minimalism in Chinese-style fashion in the West



Fig. 125 Ulla Lindberg in a fashionable Mao suit.
ca. 1967.

Express Newspapers and Archive Photos.

Source: Steele and Major 1999: 79.

In the 1960s and 1970s, French and American designers were inspired by Chinese style-fashion such as uniform-style tunics and trousers and quilted jackets such as Mao suit. They drew on China for their designs and the “Chinese Look” emerged. Designer Marc Bohan for Dior described the “Chinese Look” as containing

poor Chinese and rich Chinese styles, the designs went from paddy to palace, digging deep into the treasure chest of Imperial China. Resulting high-collared mandarin robes, silk jacquard jackets, sable-lined evening coats of old damask and golden scrolled pyjamas, all done up in posies of colour pirated from the Orient.” *Time*, July 21, 1975: 52 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 79)

The popularity of the “Chinese Look” in the 1970s was partly a result of the growing normalisation of relations between China and the West, especially the United States. “The expectation of change in fashion is, paradoxically, uniform across the nations of the West.” (Blau 1999: 78) An autonomous logic of change re-emerging in fashion can be seen in the Mao suit which became Parisian fashion in line with *Tel quel* politics and unisex. French fashion editors began sporting anti-fashion work uniforms imported from China and *Time* described the latest fashion trend as “Mao à la Mode”. Figure 125 shows that Mao suit was fashionable in the West. Jack Lang, minister of culture once wore a Maoist garment designed by Thierry Mugler at the Assemblée Nationale (Blau 1999: 77). In the 1990s, the Chinese “uniform style” influence on Western fashion still can be perceived. See Figure 126 Donna Karan’s blue “Chinese worker” is a minimalist and modernist Chinese-style outfit.



Fig. 126 Blue “Chinese worker” jacket and pants by Donna Karan.
Spring 1994. Photography by Irving Solero.
The Museum at F.I.T.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 88.

5.4 Chinese-style fashion seen in Chinese designer’s work

In the last decade of twentieth century in the international market such as New York, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia, and particularly in the early twentieth century cities such as Shanghai in Mainland China, have to a large extent joined the world of fashion. Fashion in these cities does not function monolithically. It comes in many varieties, from expensive designer’s clothes to ready-to-wear combined with mainstream Western or international styles. The clothing styles have to a large extent become influenced by globalist fashion, as Western media and styles penetrate all parts of the world through the influence of international standard style of business attires, just as business functions globally. Very few parts of the market remain where Chinese people do not wear items of cheap mass-produced Western clothing. They have adopted Western-style dress for daily wear but will still wear traditional style clothes on special occasions, such as weddings or national ceremonies. Modern Chinese women such as those in a burgeoning young middle class search with increasing sophistication for ways of dressing that are both fashionable and in some sense distinctively Chinese. This encouraged designers in these Chinese societies to develop work which would meet their consumers’ needs. There are different approaches and characteristic styles in designers’ work in different cities. Most of the designers’ work conveys their interest in modernising traditional and thoroughly Chinese concepts. The characteristics reflect their historical and personal background. I investigated Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers in these cities as the following.

5.4.1 Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers in New York

In the international market such as New York, fashion designers of Chinese descent such as Vivienne Tam, Yeohlee Teng, Han Feng, Amy Chan, Anna Sui, Zang Toi, and David Chu have drawn on their own cultural heritage and are increasingly making their presence felt in the western fashion world (Steele and Major 1999: 91). Yeohlee Teng came from Malaysia and studied at the Parsons School of Design, uses strong shapes and high-tech fabrics, creating garments such as stretch velvet *qipao* (Steele and Major 1999: 94). She says:

Clothes have magic. . . Their geometry forms that can lend a wearer power. I'm fascinated by strong shapes. I try to make clothes that have a certain presence-clothes that empower the wearer. (Yeohlee Teng quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 93, n. 20).

Amy Chan designed mini-*qipao* with the traditional fastening replaced by a zipper. She says that she likes the contrast of a traditional Chinese luxury fabric (like brocade) used in a sleek, modern handbag:

Chinese brides change their costume five times [during the wedding], and the traditional Chinese wedding dress is red with a dragon and phoenix. My clothes has a dragon and phoenix, too; I love using the classical brocade in something so modern. (Amy Chan quoted in Szabo 1998: B35; Steele and Major 1999: 94, n. 22)

Han Feng grew up during the Cultural Revolution. She studied painting and sculpture at the Zhenjiang academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, China and then came to New York in 1985. She is known for her creative treatments of fabrics. Vivienne Tam, who studied fashion design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, creates her clothes by drawing on Chinese iconography, such as the goddess Guanyin or Buddhist scriptures to express spiritual values in her work that she sees as a traditionally Chinese philosophy of nature (Steele and Major 1999: 90-91). Figure 127 shows Tam's use of decoration of religious imagery work, Figure 128 shows Tam's utilising traditional Chinese decorative techniques. Like many other Chinese designers, she has made clothes from cloth produced in China, such as a type of oiled cloth produced only in south China (Steele and Major 1999: 90). Anna Sui attended the Parsons School of Design in the early 1970s where she was influenced by New York's Punk Rock scene. She takes a playful approach to her Chinese heritage, mixing ethnic and historical reference with gay abandon (Steele and Major 1999: 94). Figure 129 shows Sui's *qipao* design.



Fig. 127 *Guanyin* dress by Vivienne Tam.
Spring 1997. New York.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 91.



Fig. 128 People's Print nylon quilted coat by Vivienne Tam.
Fall 1998. New York.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 91.

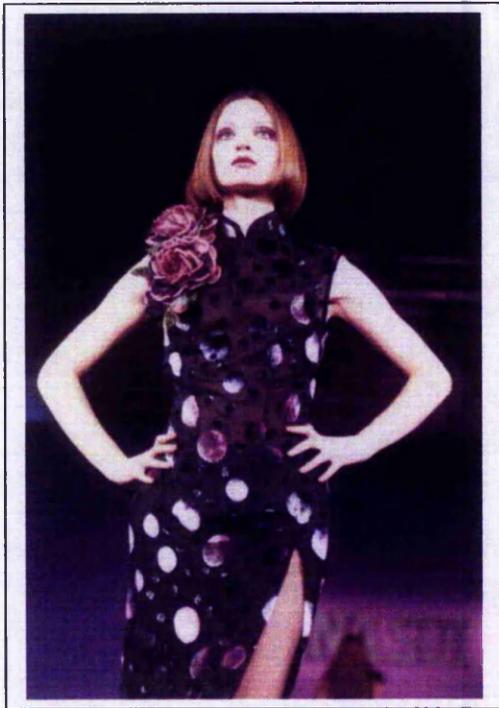


Fig. 129 A *qipao* by Anna Sui.
Spring 1993. New York. Photograph by Raoul Gatchalian.
Source: Steele and Major 1999: 95.

5.4.2 Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers in Hong Kong and Singapore

Regions like Hong Kong and Singapore are modernising very quickly. Hong Kong designers' aesthetic impulses are derived from web pages, video games, jobs in the new high-tech industry, and their clothing¹⁶⁸. They are attuned to objects, megabytes, virtual reality, morphing and Ultra 3-D (Bullis 2000: 165). Designer William Chan describes his design resource:

I watch what is happening on the street, in the clubs, the soft geometries, and hard truths of life everywhere, the psychology of everyday living and enjoying. (William Chan quoted in Bullis 2000: 153)

The shift in style of Hong Kong designers' work appeared not in a subtle way such as manipulating the length of hemlines but in fit and colour. Their works have been deeply influenced by Western dressmaking tradition as Hong Kong was ruled by English government between 1841 and 1997 and had a century and a half of Western orientation. The designers' work is westernised. The preoccupation is with cut and finish. For example, Pacino Wan uses more sophisticated fabrics but less natural fabrics like cotton. He says it is due to his consumers living in a more western-modernised life style:

In Hong Kong, people have little time. They don't like cottons because cottons are a lot of upkeep, ironing and so on. (Pacino Wan quoted in Bullis 2000: 176)

¹⁶⁸ Hong Kong designers: William Chan, Bonita Cheung, Lu Lu Cheung, Ika, Peter Lau, Walter Ma, William Tang, Rowena U, Pacino Wan, Benny Yeung and Kevin Yeung. Singapore designers: Allan Chai, Celia Loe, Esther Tay, Peter Teo and Tan Young.

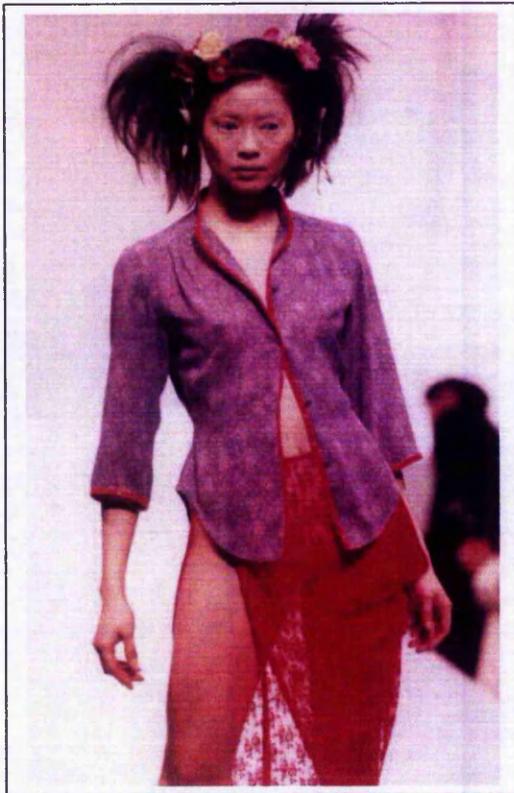


Fig. 130 Evening dress by Peter Lau.
Late 1990's. Hong Kong.
Source: Bullis 2000: 164.

Liu Yu-lian who graduated from London Saint Martin College, says: "I like Ming-style furniture [Ming dynasty] very much, and I will be affected with Song Hui Zong [emperor] slim golden body." Peter Lau ran a company to produce mass-market clothes for America. The clothes used a lot of strong primary colours and patterns. He tries to find new themes for his designs in every season, for example, a new fabric or colour combination. See Figure 130, his design conveys the sexy and exotic image, suggesting an Orientalist attitude. He describes his design:

By 1994, I had expanded my collection to include Chinese motifs and structures while retaining the feminine, sexy, exposed look. I added an urban-tribe look in the form of collage clothes – the blanket-stitch in over-the-shoulder cuts, the traditional *cheongsam* [*qipao*] presented in modern ways. (Peter Lau quoted in Bullis 2000: 166)

As people in Singapore undergo economic and cultural complexification, the designers' sense for clothing simplifies. The details for garments by the designers lessen and appear with greater simplicity¹⁶⁹. See Figure 131, Esther Tay's design bears a minimalist sense and subtlety. Like many other Singapore designers, he derives rich resources in Southern-East Asia such as traditional fabrics produced by new technologies, he says:

We take more interest in native colours, prints, fabrics, and everyday details. . . I believe the ethnic look will make a strong comeback. (Esther Tay quoted in Bullis 2000: 62)

¹⁶⁹ Singapore designers: Allan Chai, Celia Loe, Esther Tay, Peter Teo and Tan Young.

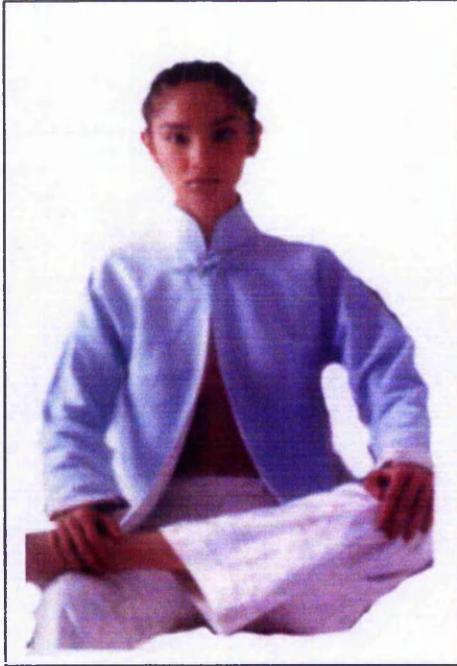


Fig. 131 A jacket and trousers by Esther Tay.
Late 1990's. Singapore.
Source: Bullis 2000: 65.

5.4.3 Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers in Malaysia



Fig. 132 *Qipao* by Bill Keith
Late 1990s. Malaysia.
Source: Bullis 2000: 82.

There is a significant Chinese minority population in Malaysia. The country's natural environment, bird-flecked flower-splashed forests, gives the designer a sensibility for vivid colour and patterns¹⁷⁰. Designer of Chinese decent Bill Keith, writes:

¹⁷⁰ Malaysia designers: Bill Keith, Leung Thong Ping and Carven Ong.

My collections are rather traditional, . . . in terms of depicting the country's [Malaysia] many cultures, values, tradition and norms. I want to enhance their richness through the quality of the materials I use. I take a look at a swatch and ask what I can do with it; the identity of the fabric plays an important part. The swatch is already communicating whether it's Malay or Chinese or Indian. (Bill Keith quoted in Bullis 2000: 82).

See Figure 132, Bill Keith uses traditional look fabrics for a *qipao*.

5.4.4 Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers in Taiwan

In Taiwan, there is a feeling that Chinese culture is being lost to Westernisation. One of the facets of Taiwan design can be characterised as serene modern simplicity. Perhaps it has been influenced by the Japanese minimalist style. Taiwanese culture has been strongly affected by Japanisation (Japanese territory period 1895-1945 in the island). On the other hand, Taiwan has been joined world trade and enjoyed the economical growth in the last decades. Consumers' consumption capabilities and cultural recognitions encouraged Taiwan designers to create Chinese-style clothes. From the work by Chen Jamei, Chen Shiatzy, Sophie Hong, Lee Kuann-I and Lo, Hung-chih, there are subtle quotations from the motifs and shapes of historical costumes. See Figures 133 and 134, Lee Kuann-I explains his preferences for

clean style, subdued colours, and cutting that is rounded and soft. Fabrics like silk and organza, silk/cotton blends, even wool, soft, firm, warm, as close to natural as possible. (Lee Kuann-I quoted in Bullis 2000: 149)



Fig. 133 Evening dress by Lee Kuann-I. Late 1990's. Taiwan.
Source: Bullis 2000: 147.



Fig. 134 Day dress by Lee Kuann-I.
Late 1990's. Taiwan.
Source: Bullis 2000: 146.

Designer Lo Hung-chih the author who graduated from a master studies at Textile and Clothing Department of Fu Jen University, uses rich details and stimulations of the designs in historical costumes. She tried to describe Chinese women's delicate modesty and femininity. (See Figures 135 and 136) In recent years she has become more attentive to create serene line and shape. She currently created a fashion collection inspired by T'ang dress for her PhD completed in England. (See Chapter 9)



Fig. 135 Evening dress by Lo Hung-chih.
Late 1990s.
Source: Collection of Lo Hung-chih.

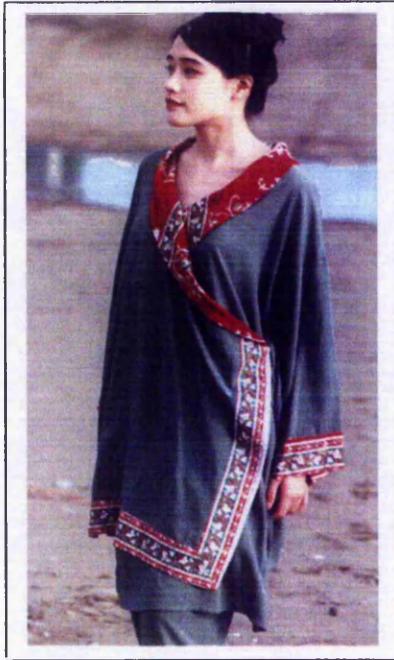


Fig. 136 Day dress by Lo Hung-chih.
Late 1990s. Taiwan.
Source: Collection of Lo Hung-chih.

5.4.5 Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers in China

In the early 21st century cities in China such as Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, designers work trends of Chinese-style fashion (www.china-pictorial.com, accessed: 23/03/05). There is a Chinese arts-and-crafts feel to the designers' work, with a preference for natural fabrics, in particular silk, which the designer commonly treats in a special way. For example, Liang Zi used Guangdong silk for her design (collection Tangy, shown at China Fashion Week in 2001, www.tangyfashion.com, accessed: 20/03/05; www.wgsn-edu.com, accessed: 14/01/05). According to Liang Zi, natural fabrics were widely accepted by her consumers:

Fabric is the starting point for most of my design work. It gives me ideas. I'm already sketching in my mind. From the very beginning, I've generally preferred natural fabrics, only using synthetics for linings, etc. . . . We have a very strong following in cities where there are cultural traditions and well-educated people. (Liang Zi quoted by Roger Tredre, www.wgsn-edu.com, accessed: 14/01/05)

In Paris on October 13, 2001, Chinese-style fashion was highlighted by a fashion show with a group showing of six Chinese designers' work¹⁷¹ (China Fashion Week 2001, www.wgsn-edu.com, accessed: 14/01/05). The Chinese elements of those designers' work might be summed up as a preference for using natural fabrics and adopting traditional Chinese crafts of decoration. Their garments look unstructured and have a layered look. These trends still continue in 2005 and are characterised by designers such as Zin Sui, Jen Hong-lian and Liang Zi (China Fashion Week 2005; www.chinasspp.com, accessed: 23/03/05). See Figures 137 and 138, Liang Zi's garments have a floating look.

¹⁷¹ They are Wang Hong-ying, Liang Zi, Gu Yi, Luo Zheng, Wu Xue-kai and Fang Ying.



Fig. 137 Blue dress by Liang Zi.
Spring 2005. China.
Source: www.chinasspp.com.



Fig. 138 A dress with a scarf by Liang Zi.
Spring 2005. China.
Source: www.chinasspp.com.

Wang Xin-yuan, a senior designer in China who graduated from the Art Department of Suzhou Silk Technical Academy, writes of his design concept and his view on Chinese-style fashion in the market:

I want to build up the confidence in Chinese clothes trade. . . I think: will China have its products or will the market be divided when entering WTO? [the World Trade Organisation] Compared with foreign fashion trade, we still have distance that isn't impassable. All that we need is time but not long." (Wang Xin-yuan quoted in *Vital life*, www.han-yuan.com, accessed: 26/03/05)

Some designers have a more modern approach to using fabrics and colour. For example, Wu Hai-yan writes:

As to Chinese elements, there can always be dragons and phoenixes nor black, white or grey-the humdrum colours. So I use contrastive colour to design the clothes to create all-new atmosphere. (Wu Hai-yan quoted in *Vital life*, www.han-yuan.com, accessed: 26/03/05)

Shi Xi-yu who gained a master degree at the Royal Art Academy, England, uses Chinese elements with a more creative attitude:

Now we do not need traditional simulation but absolute and creative designs. For example, the hand-embroidery can be the product that makes use of new material and special processes. I designed a large skirt with a stool at its back so that people can sit down anywhere they like. (Shi Xi-yu quoted in *Vital life*, www.han-yuan.com, accessed: 26/03/05)

Now that China is part of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Western designer labels are flooding the country. Western designers are keen to open stores in China and strike manufacturing and licensing deals. Donald Potard, president of Jean Aaul Gaultier, told *Journal du Textile*: "This is definitely the moment to invest in the country." (*Fashion China, in Paris debut Paris 15/10/2003* quoted in www.wgsn-edu.com, accessed: 22/02/2005) What do designers in China feel about Western products launching into China market? The Chinese designers think that Western products are different from theirs: "Whether in style or in price terms, they are not competing in the same way." (Liang Zi quoted in Roger Tredre, www.wgsn-edu.com, accessed: 14/01/05)

Conclusion

In this chapter I have defined the modernisation of contemporary Chinese fashion. The analysis of "Chinese fashion" may inevitably be judged through personal speculation or under historical circumstances and by subjectivity to one's cultural gaze within normative tastes that are not aiming to crystallise any firm and fixed answer to all questions. Although the process may not be lacking in a certain ambiguity, Chinese fashion is not unified as a system that can be understood solely in the light of the Western fashion process. The point warrants reiteration: Chinese clothing system has its own stylistic and modernised conventions which have distant interactions with Western systems.

My discussion of the modernisation of Chinese fashion has been based on an examination of the history of Chinese fashion and I have analysed how the modernisation of Chinese fashion is linked both to ideas of modernity and to processes of modernisation in Western fashion. The Westernisation of Chinese fashion can be equal to the T'ang people's desire for anything foreign, from *Hu* ("the Barbarian") to "The West". Foreign influence from Poiret in the 1910s to 1920s, to Western fascination with "Chinese Look" in the 1970s and Galiano's postmodern Orientalism in the 1990s created a desire for "The Orient" or "The Chinese". Chinese desire for things from the West and the Western fascination with Chinese ideas and themes combined to have an effect on changes in fashion.

The modernisation of Chinese fashion is a consequence of China's creation of her own modern identity.

After a discussion of the historical evolution of contemporary Chinese fashion, I concluded that the emergence of a new system did not break totally in continuity with the past or signify a historical rift. I argued that there is a spectacular multiplicity in Chinese fashion today, i.e. the *qipao* fashion constantly has changed and has served as the vector of incipient/new styles in modern Chinese fashion. Hence, it conforms to the modernist view of fashion as a desire for constant change.

The modernisation of Chinese fashion can be seen in the abandonment of footbinding and adoption of high heel shoes. The invention and popularity of the *qipao* as modern and Chinese from the 1910s to 1950s in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas, was a return to a native ideal in China and desire for democracy toward modernity. The social significance of dress in China can be seen from the popularity of Sun Yat-sen suit and Mao suit in fashion. The interrogation of modernist fashion underwent a paradigm change by thoroughly restructuring both the production and the circulation of objects and culture (foreign influence: the West was influenced by the Orientalism, and the Chinese fashion was westernised).

"Modern" to Chinese women perhaps also meant, for example, both in Shanghai since the 1990s and in democratic societies in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, a kind of ostentation which results in 'flashy' fashion typified by people wearing mixed styles—local made clothes may be worn with items of Western designer branded goods—like Rolex watch, Versace shirt and Louis Vuitton handbag. This style can be similar to the way Chinese women were wearing *Hufu* in T'ang or in the first half of the twentieth century such as *qipao* outfit with the tiny pigskin heels or bare bound feet clad in sheer silk stocking (Ko 1999: 146).

However, *qipao* survived in regions such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and among overseas Chinese communities throughout the world. During the wars in China *qipao* was promoted in calendars posters and films in which models and actors donned *qipao* styles (Clark 1999). In present days, the *qipao* appears in films and is still used as a signifier of "Chineseness". Examples of this include Chang Mei Yu in the film "The Mood for Love" (2000) directed by Wang Ka Wai. The circulation of these images contributed to the acceptance of the *qipao* as the typical "Chinese dress" overseas (Clark 1999: 157).

Modern fashion markets now react so quickly to changes in fashion that such trends are quickly copied in the wider market. Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan have become increasingly international, so has their fashion. With increasing financial and consumption capabilities leading a greater confidence in their own culture, the people of China may be no longer willing to just copy Western models and want to build their self image and individuality in dress. In the future, contemporary Chinese fashion in China may also become multicultural as it was in the T'ang. My investigation of Chinese-style fashion created by Chinese designers concluded that Chinese designers use more subtle lines and decorative techniques, which is different from the Western approach of treating Chinese elements as exotic. They apply traditional techniques such as embroidery and beading, which have historically been associated with Chinese women's artistic work. They treat textiles in a more traditional way, for example, using silk that is produced in certain places in China. Overseas

Chinese designers used to get their fabrics from European mills, buying at the Paris shows. Now they are using more and more fabrics produced in China which affect the look of their work.

Work by Chinese designers, particularly in China, affirms their strong geographical sensibility. Their way of designing seems to have a more intuitively instinct approach. They commonly use elements of *qipao* such as Mandarin collars. They adopt traditional techniques such as embroidery and fringing for surface decoration. Natural fabrics are preferred. Their clothes are often layered, look unstructured and floating, use simple shapes and require relatively little tailoring. Their use of fabrics bears more local sensibilities such as locally preferred colours or motifs. Strong colours are also used, such as lacquer reds and black.

The work of Chinese designers overseas is influenced very much by international media; have some local tastes have been lost to a western or global influence. The reference to the East-West mix can be seen, in particular, in Hong Kong designers' work. For example, Peter Lau's design seems devoted to *Neo-chinoserie*, which is typically a version influenced by Western exoticism. Ready-to-wear collections by international Chinese designers are global without much individualism and cultural traits. The designs either look very similar to each other and most of them very ordinary because ordinariness keeps manufacturing costs low which is one of the characters of globalised products, or very Western which could not be recognised as Chinese originality.

Most of the designers, for example, work by Vivienne Tam, have effected some minor changes to past styles and used traditional crafts. Arguably the use of traditional crafts such as embroidery or beading achieves a renewed taste for ornamentation and colour. But merely transplanting traditional motifs to modern outfits does not eschew most forms of traditional surface decoration. It is my view that the "return to tradition" should not be merely a conservative restoration, nor a motion of history repeating itself. Rather, what "modernisation" of Chinese-style fashion should mean is that the Chinese fashion continues to reinvent itself by incorporating and rejecting new elements; the very idea of the native itself is a modern invention which can be related to my arguments about modernisation of Chinese-style fashion. I argued for more fundamental approaches such as structural innovation for Chinese costume should be encouraged. Further, the source for the derivation is limited in Ch'ing costume which can be explored to other periods of Chinese clothing history.

Information in this investigation of Chinese-style fashion also shows that Chinese consumers usually get ideas about what to wear from magazines without fully developing their own sensibilities. Journalism gives very little criticism of the designer's work and doesn't identify the designer's motives, way of designing and the social needs of the consumers. Reflectively, the incorporation of elements of either traditional costume or foreign clothing culture by Western designers like Poiret did not entail the disruption of contemporary habits and principles but it emancipated western women from conventional restraints. This process of modernist change in Western fashion has led me to enquire whether it is possible to revive and modernise traditional Chinese costume for the 21st century to suggest a substitute or replacement for the Westernised or Orientalised contemporary Chinese-style fashion. For this I will elaborate my arguments in the next chapters.

Chapter 6: Interpretation of the parallels between T'ang and contemporary fashions

There are different ways of interpreting “fashion”. In this research I examine the broad spectrum of socio-cultural perspectives through which the Chinese perceive fashion. Fashion is the subtle and shifting expression of every age. It would be impossible to expect contemporary social mores to conform exactly to that of the T'ang period. In order to discover the threads of continuity between T'ang fashion and contemporary Chinese fashion, I am going to investigate the following questions:

- What have been the determinants of the changes in T'ang fashion?—Have they been driven by cultural exchanges with the West, i.e. Has the cause of changes in T'ang fashion been external? or by the T'ang wearer's sentiments and aspirations in each epoch?
- Have societal variables like social, economic, cultural conditions and psychological factors had an impact on the values and attitudes to clothing of the T'ang people?
- What did the T'ang people seek to accomplish through the clothes they wore? Class distinction, individualism or affiliation?

Our interpretations of “contemporary fashion” are bound to be strongly influenced by values and ideas of our era. My examination of T'ang and contemporary Chinese fashion seeks to find out:

- Whether there are historical connections or resonance in what the modern Chinese feel about clothes and whether there is a possible basis for such connections to generate new demands by modern fashion consumers.

In approaching the study of T'ang and contemporary fashions, I assume that the mentalities of people in both periods could be distinctly Chinese in some ways despite temporal differences. I believe that contemporary efforts in fashion design to draw on the resources of T'ang dress for inspiration would be greatly impoverished without first paying careful attention to eliciting possible parallels between T'ang and modern fashions. The aim of studying this topic is to apply to my own design. I would argue that modernising features of T'ang fashion should not be neglected. To identify what might appeal to contemporary Chinese consumers within the design heritage of T'ang fashion, I first try to identify possible parallels between the T'ang and modern fashion. I am going to attempt this by focusing on the following issues:

- Whether there is any homogeneity in respect of Chinese heritage and western influences on contemporary fashion.
- Whether there are any similarities in taste, look or social values of the two eras.
- Whether both eras share common patterns of variations in class distinctions, production techniques and clothing styles—is there any variation in class distinctions, production and clothing styles?

6.1 Determinants of the dynamism of T'ang fashion

6.1.1 Determinants of T'ang fashion

Cultural exchanges

The T'ang was an age in which the Chinese life became remarkably more metropolitan and in which changes and advances in culture were manifested in Chinese fashion in a hitherto unprecedented manner. The dynamism of T'ang fashion seems to have resulted from an overall increase in the rise in living standards and the convergence of people with diverse cultural backgrounds in Chinese cities. An improvement of production methods such as in weaving and dyeing, contributed to changes in T'ang fashion. India-Buddhist naturalism, hedonism and idealism, attires of Central Asia fashion from the Silk Road, constantly stimulated change. The T'ang people, especially those in Chang'An, the capital of the T'ang empire, had become metropolitan fashion followers. They were characterised by confidence, curiosity and a desire for novelty, qualities which had important influences on the nature of the fashion of the period. In that heady atmosphere, people with surplus wealth and leisure time could select what they wanted: they could patronise products derived from indigenous Chinese culture or those with origins in non-Chinese cultures. There was a desire for differentiation (Simmel 1971: 302). The forms of T'ang dress in different periods fluctuated according to the prevailing demands of the followers of fashion.

T'ang wearer's sentiments and aspirations of the time

In my examination of the dynamism of T'ang fashion and its determinants, I focus on not only the dress that the Chinese wore, but also on the analysis of the social reasons, the psychological and philosophical reasons underlying their choice of clothing. I assume that trends in fashion were closely related to the sentiments and aspirations of the consumers of the time.

It can be seen, by observing artefacts, that an aristocratic minority pursued refined aesthetic ideals such as ceremonies, banquets, dresses and elegant pastimes. The atmosphere of T'ang life shown in the images reflected the T'ang wearer's sensibilities, e.g., the pursuit of ideal of beauty through the appropriate combining of occasion, classical allusion, rank, and personal sentiment. T'ang women became aware of and accepted *Hu* clothing culture, learning new ways of dressing and choosing what dress suited different occasions. New fashions were in accordance with certain ideals current at the time T'ang culture became popular (Beaton 1989: 332, 337; Flugel 1930: 153). T'ang fashion absorbed influences from exotic outsiders or the popular culture of the lower classes (e.g., using *pi-bo* [shawl]), transformed it, and created a commodity. Mechanisms of borrowing were basic to T'ang fashion. The hunger of fashion for new material to exploit, especially from western culture that was highly regarded fostered the conditions that allowed T'ang wearers to break the hierarchy of class, e.g., break of the rank-colour system, the commoners used the forbidden colour of red which had been privileged for the use by the high-ranked in T'ang), and the traditional strict codes of gender restriction (e.g., liberation from body-concealing).

6.1.2 Dynamism of the changes

Impetus for the change in T'ang fashion derived on one hand, from the influence of political and religious authorities, and on the other, from ideas and material items influenced by *Hu* clothing culture. It seems obvious that the changes corresponded to the subtle and hidden network of forces that

operated within the society (Perry and Smith 1976b). There was external determinism: social, political, economic, cultural and psychological factors all played their part. These factors all impacted on the T'ang people's values and attitudes to clothing and shifted the dynamics behind T'ang fashion.

Political and social forces

During much of T'ang times, China was ruled simultaneously by T'ang founders (Taizong and Kongzong) who came from non-Chinese regions (*Hu*). (Twitchett 1979: 4-5, 9) The rulers, who were of *Hu* roots, were eager to support Hufication. The *Hu* aristocracy set up a stable state on the traditional Chinese model (Twitchett 1976: 2). They attempted to associate themselves with their predecessors and gained the dynastic power both by military achievement and virtue of their superior morality for the goals of ruling the dynasty to achieve long life (Wechsler 1985: 94-97). Part of the strategy of Hufication was the repeated inter-marriage with Chinese clans, to produce a new semi-barbarian aristocracy which partook of much of the *Hu* life-style and eventually emerged to reunify China. Political changes and developments during the "post-An-lu Shan period" of the late eighth and early ninth centuries played a crucial impact on almost every aspect of T'ang social, economic and life, all of which are forces that influenced fashion (Twitchett 1985: 205). The decentralisation of power after the An-lu Shan rising did not only have deep effects upon the political system and the pattern of administration but it also accelerated complex economic and social changes that had already begun during the conditions of peace and prosperity of Sui and early T'ang (Pulleyblank 1976: 61-89; Twitchett 1979: 22). There can be no doubt that these also had a considerable influence on fashion.

The fact that it was mostly the members of the powerful official class and wealthy aristocracy that could afford to wear luxurious clothes and to change styles constantly was of consequence to fashion. Throughout most of the T'ang periods, it was almost only the emperors, aristocracy and their households that were able to afford to keep up with the changes in fashion. The authorities became fashion leaders and were influential in driving changes in fashion. There were substantial restrictions on what the masses could afford and what was available to them. Efforts to comply with or circumvent the T'ang regulations, rank-system or sumptuary laws contributed to further change in T'ang fashion and the introduction of new styles and decorations. For example, the red and purple colours which used to be reserved for high-ranking classes came to be the colours most favoured by the lower classes. In the late T'ang times, after more than one century of internal stability, the rebellion of An-lu Shan in AD 755 nearly brought the dynasty to its knees; it may be that the crisis of the An-lu Shan rebellion reduced the prestige of the emperor and aristocrats, and allowed more open attitude of what previously had been officially forbidden. The fact that the dynastic house had lost its prestigious status maybe associated with the societal phenomenon, the corresponding loosening of the monopoly of the upper classes on the resources of fashion. In the less court-dominated climate of the post-rebellion period, the masses' seemed to have escaped from many of the restrictions placed on them. In the late T'ang period, the inner-war affected the economy; the clothes were no longer opulent because of the restricted usage of clothing fabric by sumptuary laws. The appearance of clothes was less associated with luxury and the newly empowered masses limited their supply. Aesthetics of fashion can be seen to have responded to political conditions and regulations.

Under the influence of social transformations, T'ang dress was adopted, adapted, and modified in a process of Hufication. Over time, the T'ang Chinese inevitably adjusted the social meanings attached to different clothes, including markers of the wearer's social standing. With the widespread acceptance of *Hufu*, the concept of the clothing system changed. A greater understanding of that intense and abiding interest of can be gained from an examination of the relationship between dress and society in the T'ang era. For example, early T'ang equestriennes wore *mi-li* (veiling), originally part of the riding kit of Turkish nomadic men and women. *Mi-li* seems to protect the head from wind and dust, but gave T'ang female wearers freedom in physical activities without charges of immodesty. Socially constructed ideas about beauty manifested themselves through the ways in which the T'ang people created their fashion. It seems that during the T'ang times the fashion scene blurred geographical boundaries, broke Confucian-oriented principles, enabling greater immodesty and temporal mobility and had a kind of "metropolitan" view. Distinctions in clothing (Flugel 1930: 31) such as hierarchy and sex were abolished. Fashions from the western regions of China became signs of freedom from rituals and social constraints.

Economic factors

The use of T'ang dress was partly influenced by economic factors. The economic structure of society affected the various uses of colours and fabrics, and the aesthetics that determined the evolution of T'ang fashion. For example, the long period of wars before the preceding Sui era (AD 580-618) led to aesthetics that were influenced by a religiously austere concept and by a preference for slender shape. In the early T'ang period, the aesthetic was more inward looking and spiritually slender, young-looking beauty was preferred (e.g., beauties shown on the mural in the tomb of Princess Yongtai). In the mid T'ang period, under economic circumstances propitious to the desire for ostentation and display, the courts steadily developed their powers and opulent form and extravagant decoration became popular. By the late T'ang era, due to the decline of the court, the complex process of shifting, continuous changes had faded.

Cultural factors

It seems that ideology caused changes in T'ang women's appearance and in their lives, reflecting changes in the position of women in society. Fashion changed in response to previous and competing styles. Court dress had undergone minor changes under compulsion, (Steele 1985: 247) and this factor made for wider changes. Style or motifs are expressions of cultural values; a collective consciousness or ethos existed in T'ang fashion (Ribeiro 1995: 12). In the context of the Chinese society, style was also an essential element of a cultural aesthetics and consisted of the cultural expression which presented a collective ethos. For example, traditionally the Chinese were assumed expected to wear clothes for decency and not for show. Self-expression was thought to be inappropriate and the Chinese were discouraged from dressing luxuriously. But in the T'ang era, wealth was a matter of pride and a means of obtaining power and respect. Rich people sought to distinguish themselves by wearing extravagant and flashy clothes. Court ladies were depicted in paintings not only as wearing brightly coloured and heavily embroidered clothes but also in a style of the very finest embellishment. Hedonism, materialism and conspicuous consumption inevitably led to competition at all levels of T'ang society. The demonstration of wealth and status in the T'ang period changed the traditional

Chinese ideas of clothing. Despite the Confucian disciplines, T'ang people flaunted their wealth through clothing. This individual essence may have been exaggerated and interpreted as showing off or it might have functioned as an instrumental agent for the expression of cultural values and self-definition. The tastes in T'ang fashion, features like heavily jewelled ornaments and decorative patterns, do seem to have been influenced by traditional court style and have been changed by the impact of *Hu* clothing culture into various styles. Imbued by the notion that T'ang fashion should adopt new style of *Hu* male's attire, T'ang Chinese women chose to signal their freedom from its rules of T'ang by getting rid of garments that emphasised their morality, and choosing to wear clothes such as low-cut neckline bodices and adopting masculine dress, notably trousers. Foreign styles appealed to T'ang wearers and allowed them to bypass strict codes of gender and class that were attached to traditional Chinese clothes (Cahill 1999: 112). I show an initial analysis of the determinants of the dynamism in T'ang fashion in Table 12.

Table 12 Determinants of the dynamism in T'ang fashion

Sources of T'ang fashion	Dynamism of the changes
Cultural exchanges: Assimilation and Hufication Fascination with non-Chinese cultures Exotic elements of clothing form and aesthetics Wearer's Sentiments and aspirations Wealth and leisure time Fashion-consciousness Refined aesthetic ideals Mechanism of borrowing Exploitation of western culture Break of the traditional strict codes	Political and social forces: Privilege and affordability of luxury Rank-system and sumptuary laws Social transformation Adjusted societal expectations Change of clothing system: Equestrian Blur of geographical boundary Economical factors Economic structure affected aesthetics and use Shifts of cultural values Favour of auspicious motifs and extravagancy From conservatism to artificially extravagant guise

6.2 Comparison of T'ang and contemporary fashions

It is certainly possible to identify some commonality and trends in both T'ang and modern Chinese fashions. Both of the two fashions can be characterised by heterogeneity—that is composed of various cultural components and by prolific changes: T'ang was associated with multiculturalism (Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islamism, etc.), cosmopolitanism, and Hufication (ancient Westernisation). Hufication was like present-day Westernisation. Contemporary fashion can be implicated in conceptions of modern Westernisation (modernism and postmodernism: Orientalism, democratic, femininity, unisex, anti-fashion, globalisation, mediascape, escapism, couture, popular culture, subculture, and cross borders).

My analysis of the interrelations between the most important aspects of T'ang fashion and contemporary Chinese fashion will be developed through a focus on patterns of consistency and variations in Chinese culture and fashion; this would reveal strands of homogeneity between T'ang and contemporary fashions. I consider:

- What traditional cultural values have persisted into modern Chinese society? Have the tastes of Chinese clothes wearers' become significantly different or are the discrepancies in contemporary fashion tastes only minor?
- What T'ang era aspirations and sensations remain resonant in contemporary twentieth and twenty-first century Chinese fashion and what has changed?

The major characteristics of fashion that have been identified in these societies both belong to the two different eras: the dynamism of the changes in fashion, the élitist expression of Chinese culture in terms of clothing attitudes toward daily practice, beauty criteria, trends of look and tastes as well as productions and class distinction. These can all be applied in elaborating new design principles for contemporary Chinese fashion.

6.2.1 Cultural homogeneity of T'ang and Westernised eras

Some traditional cultural values that manifest in present Chinese society seem to go back as far as the T'ang era. Cultural factors affected how the Chinese evaluated their appearances, their subsequent feelings of social power and how they thought about clothing. There is a degree of traditional and cultural homogeneity and the resonance of sentiments and aspirations between the people in the two eras. For example, the Confucian principle of *li*, which among other things required strong dress signals to emphasise morality and modesty, was crystallised into a social custom and profoundly obeyed as a norm of clothing in Chinese society.

The age-old love of traditional topics in beauty-poetry, calligraphy, music, dance, and paintings are still adhered to by today's Chinese people. Traditional Chinese cooking, martial arts, medicine, and even political attitudes all penetrate the lives of the Chinese and are more of a pervasive attitude than a specific subject matter (Wu 1989: 239). The cosmological thought yin-yang and the Five Elements of Taoist thought still play an important role in Chinese life; the concept of Fung-Shui that is applied in modern architecture and divination also demonstrates the resilience of ancient Chinese philosophies and worldviews. To the Chinese, "beauty is something poetic, which is yin-yang constitutive involvement (Wu 1989: 238). Even today, the Chinese still judge what is beautiful by the criterion of the Six Maxims of Hsieh He (such as the concept of *Chi-yun-sheng-tung* analysed in Chapter 4). An object is deemed beautiful only when it looks alive; the posture and outline of an art work must convey the inner nature of that which is portrayed. Clothes are deemed to be beautiful if they convey an accent of *chi*-the natural rhythm of movement, the omnipresence of spatial consciousness of clothing. *Chi* (energy) and *yun* (resonating elegance), as artistic spiritual elements of Chinese clothing aesthetics, still can be perceived and sensed by the modern Chinese wearer.

As the period progressed, some clothes styles could no longer be identified with Han or T'ang heritage or even look exclusively to them as sources of cultural tradition or inspiration. The court style inherited from the Han to the T'ang era retained its luxurious clothing styles, large-scale shape and decorative, auspicious and ostentatious motifs (e.g., dragon), bright colours (e.g., colour red). The look of authenticity abounded. A kind of symbolic and ceremonial aesthetics is still favoured by the modern Chinese. Nowadays, political power is not so much reflected in clothes, but clothes increasingly symbolise privilege and élitism and the national dress, e.g. *qipao*, has maintained the fiction of the superiority of traditional forms.

The Chinese were and are keenly aware of much of the symbolism that operated in their society. For example, symbolic codes of *li* in dress have been socio-psychologically associated with moral values. The embroidery and patterns on ritual dresses were derived from the secular world (beliefs for daily practice, Confucianism) rather than originating in religion and were hence easily transmitted across generations. For example, usage of the symbols for decoration in modern lives is still present in contemporary Chinese fashion. Their value, moreover, has been largely subjective, filling a deep emotional, sensory, and aesthetic need in Chinese mind.

Homogeneity in Westernisation, cross-borders and commodification

The dynamics of multicultural T'ang fashion is in some ways to those of the dominant cultural phenomenon of today's global village (Steele and Major 1999: 104-05, 112). The convergence of different clothing traditions in China (fashion dynamics, the desire for changes) fed into the development of T'ang dress, and the growth in multiculturalism during the T'ang times made its adoption possible by diverse peoples. I have established that both T'ang and contemporary Chinese society were greatly subject to foreign influences in similar ways. T'ang culture was diversified by *Hu* influences, in a way which parallels western influence on culture in modern Chinese societies. In both periods, a new awareness of the sense of place, a consciousness of the "feel" of distant regions, of the variety of environment and human life, brought to Chinese fashion a new aesthetic and form (the T'ang Huficated style and the modern Westernised style). Peace, prosperity, the wearers as members of a new class, and the flowering of creative activities all influenced new, lively expressions of fashion. Exotic elements were welcomed and incorporated into T'ang life. The conventional court style and *Hufu* then diversified and changed to various forms, which fulfilled the needs of fashion-conscious aristocracy, performers, and the masses at T'ang times. In current Chinese societies, fashion is seen to be influenced by Europeanisation, Americanisation and Japanisation. The Chinese in the 21st century have opportunities of learning at first hand the latest changes of fashion in the international fashion centres through mediascape. The ancient Chinese (the T'ang) fascination with the Western fashion culture is similar to the twentieth century Western (Euro-American) fascination with Oriental fashion culture. It seems that the fashion followers in the two periods "cannot have enough to satisfy their desires" with indigenous products (Winterburn 1914 in Baines 1981: 171) and the exotic products and foreign lands seem to have captivated their imagination.

Prior to the T'ang, the barbarians were considered unfit for Confucian society. But the Chinese, both during the T'ang era and in contemporary societies, have generally had no ethnocentric views on foreign cultures apart from the late T'ang period (the movement of "Neo-Confucianism"), the May Fourth Movement (1916-the 1920s), and the decades of the 1970s and the 1980s in China (the debate on "Westernisation" and "Modernisation").

Given these dynamics of evolution, there would have been a direct relationship between the social ranking of the fashion "innovators" and the degree of difference that T'ang people have to bridge to achieve "innovation by incorporation". The process of T'ang adoption of *Hu* clothing culture was underlined by a belief that was similar to that which lays behind the current contemporary globalisation of postmodernist fashion, i.e. a belief that "every human being is a citizen of the planet" (Legrand-Rossi et al 1998: 189-93 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 70-71).

Hufication, Westernisation and Orientalisation

According to Roche, "Fashion can affect the most traditional of societies and the most fixed of customs." (1994: 42) This truism is reflected in the way the T'ang and contemporary Chinese, and the West in modern times, have eagerly embraced the systems of other cultures (the T'ang: "Hufication", the modern Chinese: "Westernisation", the modern West: "Orientalisation").

Despite strict regulations of dress outlined in official histories, and what was expected in society, foreign styles entered T'ang China and became part of mainstream fashion. Western clothes profoundly altered Chinese fashion in the T'ang period and also do so in modern times. Wearing foreign clothes may have escaped the restrictions of the rules (e.g., that in *The Record of Rites*) and may have been done specially to evade the ritualisation and constrictions of every day life. Fashions from the western regions in T'ang times may have become signs of freedom from ritual and social constraint (Cahill 1999: 114). In modern times also, "couture is about escapism," ([British] *Vogue* April 1995: 129) leavening its fantasy for the moment with a deflationary sign. Postmodernist fashions seem to be plagiaristic, repeating the escape that modernism represented.

Hufu influence was exotic to clothing culture in T'ang China; like today, people desired to dress in beautiful clothes and were attracted by exotic commodities (Cahill 1999: 112). Following this process of assimilation and Hufication, the T'ang Chinese explored the aesthetic and formal possibilities of wearing different styles of clothes. Such adaptability of fashion activity to emulate the more fascinating cross-boundary civilisations is similar to today's world fashion of globalism (Eicher and Sumberg 1995: 295-306) and postmodernist "commodifications" with its industrial-economic circuit (Wilson 1991: 111).

In the first decades of the modern West (in the 1910s and 1920s) there was something of the exoticism that came with Bakst, Benois, the Russian ballet and Chinese mandarin robes which contributed to the revolutionising of clothes in the West, with comparable bravura (Blau 1999: 119, 237), as could be seen in Paul Poiret's design. His work was thought sexy and feminine. His modernist style seems to search for an ideal of modern woman's beauty. In postmodernist forms, playfulness or conspicuous irony is found in Chinese style clothing designed by Western designers. See Figure 139, fashion editor Alexander reported the "king of multi-cultural excess" Galliano brought his version of a Peking Opera to the Dior catwalk: "Calliano's spring/summer haute couture collection was a gaudy festival of fashion, martial arts and acrobatics. . . .Even by Galliano's standards, the extravagance of the show was unrivalled. But unless you are planning to turn your own life into grand opera, you may have a problem finding the right occasion for such clothes." (Hilary Alexander, *The Daily Telegraph*, January 21, 2003) The designer's work shows new Orientalised Chinese-style clothing that mixes up different elements, with presumptuous flesh, exhibiting an irony about the sexuality of Orientalism (Blau 1999: 193). Brampton described one of the scenes in Galliano's fashion shows as "lyricism" (1996), i.e. staging a particular historical moment not by producing costume drama but by exaggerating or distorting the period pieces to give it some degree of visual intensity or even brilliance, or the style of plundering history (McRobbie 2000: 259).

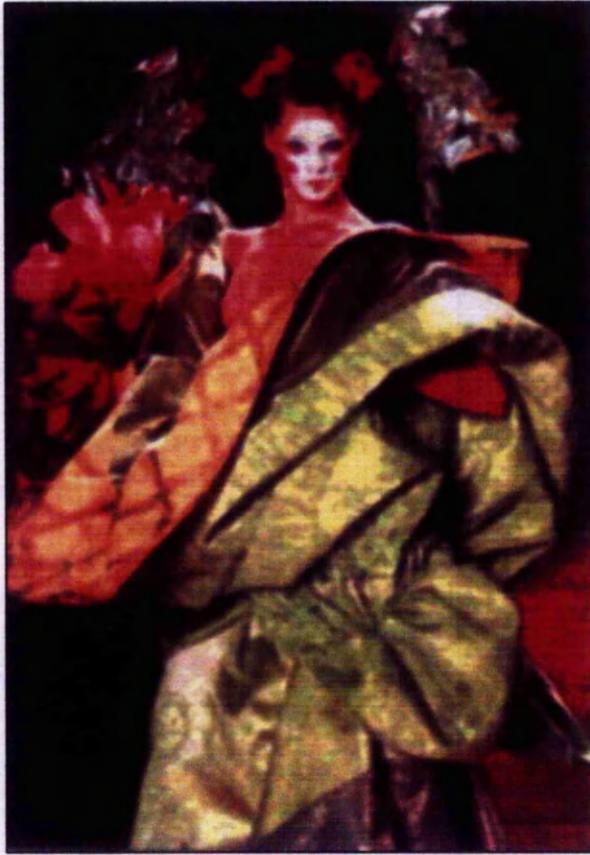


Fig. 139 “the Opera Coat”, by John Galliano.
 Spring/Summer 2003. “Dior diva: a flowing over-sized opera coat of brocade and silk”.
 Paris Haute Couture Show. Auteuil Racecourse. Photography by Stephen Lock.
 Source: *The Daily Telegraph*. 21, January 2003: 9.

Modern fashion has an industrial logic of mass production of seasonal collections, replete with fashion shows with live models used for advertising purposes. But the concept of fashion cycle which led to the development of fashion was in fact not alien to T’ang China (Ko 1999: 145). There were countless changes in fashion in Chang’An T’ang period, as well as post-T’ang-era Nanking in the Song dynasty (AD 960-1279), “the fashion cycle of female dress in Nanking shifted as short as two to three years.” (Ko 1997: 8) Like its modern counterpart, T’ang fashion absorbed the popular culture of the lower classes, transformed it, and created a commodity. “In that heady atmosphere, people with surplus wealth and leisure time could select what they wanted from different cultures served up to them. Many aspects of the cosmopolitan culture in the T’ang era are much like modern fashion that is characterised as the global village.” (Cahill 1999: 112)

6.2.2 Consistency in social value, style and taste

Fashion becomes the law because the entire culture holds the new sacred and consecrates the dignity of the present—not only in technology, art and knowledge but in many other aspects of life, which represents what has been reordered according to people’s values. The individuality of modernist fashion is closely connected to social factors. In modernist fashion, there was causal relation of social factors in terms of individuality. As fashion evolves, it is shaped by new attitudes towards clothing

deriving from a diversity of values, traditional as well as controversial. For example, the T'ang fascination with the West and the modern West fascination with the Orient are both derived from "the desire to belong to another culture," (Winterburn 1914 in Baines 1981: 171) as a physical exploration of, or fantasy about, an exotic territory might also reflect an experimentation with a different identity which also breed an openness to different values.

The T'ang and postmodernist fashions were characterised by the legitimising of well-being and material pleasures. Hedonistic values seemed to orient the Chinese toward the existential present, to "get the most out of life." Women in both of the two periods seem to dedicate themselves to the goals of individual and personal satisfaction (Liporelsky 1994: 229). In T'ang times, women could freely remarry (Benn 2002) and contemporary women are free to fulfil their sexual desires in a guilt free way. Fashions in the two periods exacerbated fads and the search for "individual salvation in the new, presenting novelties as stimulations and sensations apt to produce a rich and accomplished life." (Liporelsky 1994: 229)

The individual and social meanings of fashion have changed along with the tastes and behaviours of Chinese women. In T'ang times, the aristocracy underlined their position with a conspicuous display of finery. To some extent, these tastes and values underwent a certain vulgarisation when filtered down through a great number of people who also sought to "capture" for themselves the fame and wealth which modern fashion represented (Beaton 1989: 332; Kennedy 1990; Paludan 1994: 43). This basic system of status symbol dressing, however, has survived absolutely intact and flourishes strongly today as it did in the T'ang times. The bourgeois in modern West and the élites in China may be more conscious about their appearance. They were more conservative than the aristocrats of earlier times (as regards wearing conspicuously opulent clothes). Fashion has become more democratic. A "democratic" change is one that embraces fashion for everyone. Style is differentiated in the quality of clothes marked by material and cut. Corresponding to the changes in the modern social environment of Chinese society, fashion is no longer so strongly committed to class, but it is still committed to time. It is no longer entirely for the aristocracy or the wealthy. But modern Chinese women demonstrate an excess of spending on dress to make a statement of being able to be fashionable which is similar to the T'ang aristocratic display of wealth by wearing luxurious clothes. Today's sartorial status symbols do not lie in the area of ritual dress but their functions are exactly the same—to show off wealth, position in society and social sophistication. Some styles are preferred by the élites. Social ambition is as much as driving force now as it ever was.

There was an ever-increasing socialisation of T'ang women: their greater participation in social life and greater sense of social values. Modern Chinese women in China adopted the appearance of their male counterparts by wearing Mao's suit in the 1960s. Since the 1980s, with Western influence, Chinese women in democratic society (e.g., Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan) started to wear work suits in order to be perceived as professional and competent (Sischy 1998). A new look of gender equality is implied, which has a parallel in the adoption of *Hu* male style equestrian outfit by T'ang women for the purpose of getting more freedom of activity (Ribeiro 1995: 168). In both the T'ang and current Chinese society, sex differences in look are less apparent than those in other periods of Chinese history. Moreover, both fashions seem to reflect cultural paradox,

the fashions came from outside. Wearing trousers of *Hufu* style had freed the T'ang women from their traditional skirt outfit. It is *qipao* which has freed the modern Chinese women from their trousers and restricting dress at the beginning of the twentieth century. The western trend for wearing trousers should contribute to this "liberation of Hong Kong women from their *qipao*." (Clark 1999: 161)

6.2.3 Variation in production, beauty criteria, and class distinction

Dress revealed the rank and status of the wearer (Ribeiro 1995: 15). T'ang fashion was regarded to have been committed strongly to class distinctions. Fashionable dress was largely for the high-ranked and the wealthy. The splendour of T'ang court life showed a place of constant competition for status and prestige, which was particularly dependent on the standard of magnificence (Liporelsky 1994: 4) and was a decisive factor in the blossoming of T'ang fashion. In the T'ang case, items of clothing in general maintained as functional clothing by force of public opinion and the weight of ritual. The ceremonial and official clothing were an index of rank status as obvious examples. Sumptuary laws were designed to prevent moral decay through changes in fashion (Blau 1999: 78) but were challenged by the behaviours of an increasing merchant population and more condensed commercial activities.

The trajectory of modern fashion has been associated with the institutionalisation or standardisation and hyper-regulation of modern life. In current Chinese society, the old order in which hierarchy ordained by lineage as an important determinant of individual status is being replaced by a modern class society in which status is mainly defined by wealth. Through the pursuit of fashion, people in the postmodern era become even more complex selves, though this complexity differs radically from the interior, soulful selfhood of the past (Richard Sennett in Liporelsky 1994: ix).

The quest for the ideal of beauty, taste and novelty and gratuitous aesthetic play was what characterised the T'ang society in the process of extricating itself from the obsession with prestige of the past (Liporelsky 1994: 41). Along with hedonistic culture, the emergence of "youth culture" has been an essential element in the stylistic evolution of ready-to-wear in modern and postmodern fashions. The designer label and the quality of materials in which the clothes are made have become the markers of class difference in fashion. The "look" of fashion itself cuts across classes, but the quality of the clothes may still be diffused with class (Blau 1999: 141). Apart from social influences on fashion, such as class distinctions, there was a quest for novelty both in the T'ang and contemporary societies.

Production

T'ang fashion seems to be centred on a bureaucratic form of production that served the royal houses. The heterogeneity of dress styles in which the display of ostentation marked social differences was characteristic of the aristocratic order. In the West, fashion in pre-industrial times functioned as a massive exclusionary system. Haute couture was a luxury enterprise (Liporelsky 1994: 82). "Conspicuous consumption as a social norm was synonymous with the aristocratic order, it was a necessary imperative for the insistent representation of social hierarchy." (Liporelsky 1994: 45) At the beginning of the twentieth century, a fashion that is "homogeneous" in tendency, based precisely on a rejection of the principle of lofty, majestic expiation of hierarchy developed. Practicality took second place to convention in T'ang fashion. The modern democratic society is characterised by a pursuit of

an aesthetic of new style of purity, restraint and comfort (Liporelsky 1994: 60). There appears an opposition between the hierarchically heterogeneous, small-number, high-quality luxurious creation (the T'ang and the Pre-industrial fashions) and industrial mass production and haute couture (modern fashion).

Modern fashion is created by professional designers and is driven by a bureaucratic production process which is internationalised and democratised. In modern times haute couture is still a luxury industry. Everything becomes artifice and illusion in the service of capitalist profit and the dominant classes (Liporelsky 1994: 133). Modern western fashion is dominated by consumerism (Blau 1999: 183). So is fashion in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and overseas elsewhere, and significantly in China since the 1980s when the economy started to open along market principles. Along with the aestheticisation of industrial fashion, ready-to-wear and the label as a broadened manifestation of individualist, democratic dynamics, modern fashion is characterised by conspicuous consumption and strategies of class distinction. Democratisation signifies a lessening of the markers of social distance.

Class distinction

The modern fashion system does not eliminate signs of social rank but it attenuates them by promoting values that stress more personal attributes (Liporelsky 1994: 61). With widespread democratisation, unfashionableness has become less clear—fashion is no longer exclusive for the high-ranked. The good quality of modern clothes is indicated by refined shape, cut and designer's label. Haute couture fashion has blended conformity with individualism (Liporelsky 1994: 127-28) as a means of self-expression and self-enhancement. New signs, more subtle and more nuanced, particularly in the realm of designer's labels, shapes, and fabrics continue to mark social distinctions and social excellence (Liporelsky 1994: 61). The clothing style produced by mass-production is uniformed or equalised.

Modern forms reflect the open prospects for an eclecticism of dress, across the levelling ground of consumer culture. Women's attitude has changed; there are more leisure activities and professions for women. Fashion's new configuration is open, decompartmentalised, blurring borders, homogeneous and durable (Liporelsky 1994: 119). Modern fashion is no longer completely determined by class and it parallels the new diversity of behaviour, which signifies a new openness, corresponding to behavioural release and other freedoms. The fads and preferences of fashion suggest that fashion systems interact and compete in the production of appropriate dress (Craik 1993: 3). The mass production of fashionably styled clothes has made use of fashion for the majority in the global fashion. Modern fashion manifests itself in complex tailoring, variations in cut and strongly defined shapes, self-conscious borrowings and reciprocal visual relations with parts of the body. And practicality takes major place.

Variations in attitudes about what is beautiful, may be learned from different cultures, or may amount to a resolute revision of standards (Blau 1999; 223). History has its preferences; standards of beauty change. Beauty criteria may be influenced by cultural attitudes toward the body, sexuality, and concept of masculinity and femininity. The criteria of beauty and attitudes toward clothing are subject to historical change. As Blau has commented, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but so is ideology,

and that's not merely true of those with conventional taste." (Blau 1999; 223) Conceptions of beauty differ through time. The popular and traditional ideal of feminine physical beauty and the fashionable ideal of dress had different expressions in the two periods. There seems to be a contradiction between T'ang and the present-day fashions-young and mature, feminine and masculine, modest and immodest. T'ang fashion may have caused controversy at the time, which illustrates a shift to the opposite extreme.

The fashions are to some degree ever-changing confrontations between traditional and new ideas: Chinese and West, hierarchy and democracy, homogeneity and heterogeneity. A comparison is illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13 A comparison of T'ang and contemporary fashion

Comparison of (dis/similarities)	T'ang fashion (7 th -9 th century)	Phenomena in common	20 th and early 21 st centuries
Homogeneity in Chinese traditions and Westernisation	Hufication Metropolitan and multi-cultured	Confucian principle Symbolic codes and cosmological thoughts Body sensation of chi Availability of multiculturalism Evolution of the use of dress Diversification of the form of dress Greater sense of social values	Europeanisation, Americanisation, Japanisation International and globalisation, cross-boundary, femininity, mediascape, escapism, couture, popular culture
Consistency in Social value and Taste	Court style as "fixed" and conventional Hufu as "modish" Distinction and symbolism From sub-obedience to increasing socialisation Social functional, obeying the li Hierarchical	New look of gender equality Blurred sex differences Maturity or youthful look	Chinese style as "fixed", long lasting Western dress as "modish" Commercialism, functionalist and practicality Intensive feminism Self-expression, self-enhancement Democratic & Informality
Inconsistency in Clothing Style and Taste	Opulent look Decorative, symbolic pattern Disproportionate, unfocused Over-burdened visual form Over decorative, over make-up \\ Restful, or look cumbersome		Slender, boy-like or sports look Simplicity Proportionate, focused Simplicity Lack of decorative element, plain Rigid, or easy to wear

Variations in Class marks	Fashion committed strongly to class For the high ranked and the wealthy	Fashion committed to time	Less strongly committed to class Status is mainly defined by wealth Class distinction is marked by cut and quality of material
Production	Bureaucratic production Aristocratic order Artisan, court/private organisation Handmade in small numbers Social functionalist		Homogeneous in styles marking social differences Modern democratic Commodification Artisan, court/private organisation Labelled designers' work or mass-production Individualism, consumerism Reasonable consideration of ends and means New technology
Clothing styles	Adherence to tradition, Hu style Aristocratic principle of conspicuous consumption Visible sumptuousness Wide shape for the superior, fitted shape for the inferior Pattern and colour embodied symbolism Unfitting, simpler tailoring	Less conservative, much more body-revealing or accentuation of body forms than those of other Chinese dynasties	The new criteria of slenderness, youth, sex appeal, convenience, and discretion. Simplicity, practicality, personal attributes Loose shape for casual, fitted for aesthetic or functional use Decoration for aesthetic purpose Complex tailoring shape-dominated and defined

Conclusion

After an initial comparison in which the different stages in the history of both T'ang and contemporary fashions were examined, it is argued that the emergence of a new system does not break totally with the past or signify a historical rift. In T'ang there was a strong ideology (Confucian and Daoist thoughts) and religious beliefs (Buddhism) which had a great impact on fashion. In the 20th and early 21st centuries, in the capitalised and hybrid world "there are no stable identities but only powerful markers that broadcast the illusion of essentialised identities." (Ko 1999: 152) The historical record and literature on how "modernist" forms evolved in Chinese fashion suggest that the emergence of the new look in fashion in China was related to the social life, behaviour and values of the Chinese people. China looked to her past as the detested Other (Ko 1999: 146). There was a rejection of authority, hierarchy and tradition. "Building on the prevailing mood of promoting native industries, it created a critical space for the simultaneous rejection of the modern West and the old China." (Ko 1999: 152) Both the T'ang and the postmodern conditions may be seen as constant changes. Influences from the past have not been abolished, but they have been neutralised, now that fashion is subject to the unchallenged requirement of individual and personal satisfaction (Liporelsky 1994: 229).

My hypothesis of the homogeneity in respect of Chinese heritage and contemporary Chinese fashion argues for a broader cultural perspective than is offered solely by historical resources. There is a "relative homogeneity" of fashion between the two periods-the desire for change and novelty, which illustrate the causes of fashion, and the complexity of beauty criteria, tastes and style, whether

consistent or inconsistent. An increasing freedom in sexual appearance and individual sensibilities is found in the two fashions. China's hierarchical system marked class distinction. In modern times the democratisation of fashion tries to understand the consumer-driven market.

I have been making a comparison relating consistent and various concepts of beauty criteria, clothing attitude, and production and class distinctions. The phenomenon of Chinese fashion can be related to a far wider range of perspective that was undertaken. Some factors remained difficult to determine but it is still probable that many other generic cultural and historical influences do affect the changes of Chinese fashion. As a means of social self-assertion, dressing in the fashion of the day becomes possible for an increasingly broad social spectrum. Both of the two fashions seem multi-cultural (T'ang: cosmopolitan population; modern Chinese societies multi-cultural media and commodity) and both societies have an advanced, more prosperous living standard. The similarities are Confucian-oriented cultural and social traditions, a new freedom of women's activities and self-consciousness in both periods. Contemporary fashion has dynamics of modern life styles and values which has been linked to the change in status of the nobility, the rise of industrial dressmaking and mass communications.

Both of the two fashions are manifestations of cultural exchanges. In the twentieth century, the logic of mimetic modernity means that China builds its modern identity on the imaging of the Others (the Euro-American Westernisation), which has a parallel in the T'ang people's desire for anything foreign from "the Barbarian." "The West" as the Others was and is desirable. In 1910-20s Poiret's Orientalism, the "Chinese Look" and Galliano's Shanghai collection in the 1990's are the West's desirable "The Orient" as the Others.

In the T'ang there was a highly hierarchical society which reinforced social class. In the last decades of the twentieth century, China has experienced a phenomenal economic growth and gradual relaxation of life style, which has made an enormous difference in the Chinese fashion scene (Steele and Major 1999: 67). Chinese style fashion is still popular which can be seen in the widely circulated ancient-costumed Chinese historical drama in television programs or Chinese films, e.g., "The T'ang Empress Wu Zetian" has in the last years attracted a large overseas audience as well as mainland Chinese. The Ch'ing dynasty costume worn by "The Last Emperor" (1987) acted by Ying Ruo Cheng and Li Hanxiang, directed by the Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci was impressive which has given rise to the western interest in Chinese costume. The Chinese martial art films such as "Crouching Tiger and Hidden Dragon" (U.S.A. 2002) directed by Lee Ann and "House of Flying Daggers" (China 2003) directed by Zhang Yi-mou, starring Andy Lau, Takeshi Kaneshiro and Zhang Zi-yi were even circulated all over the world and the costume impressed both the Chinese and Western audiences. These phenomena underlay the modern recognition and interest in Chinese traditional dress. Nowadays society in China has become more fluid and less hierarchical, in some sense more democratic; After the Culture Revolution, Mao's suit and Unisex outfits were fashion and influenced the west fashion concepts of minimalism and the anti-fashion movement. With her growth of market power China may become multicultural in the 21st century as it had in the T'ang dynasty. With the increasing financial and consumption capabilities, people in China may not be content with

copying western models but want to build up their self images and individuality in wearing their clothes.

There remains one line that I should discuss. Chinese style clothing is beset by doubts about the validity of its modern functionality, that its market is so completely related to the West. The consummate age of fashion has been giving priority to Western standards. A frivolous universe of objects and the media have led inexorably to new taste and values for modern Western fashion which is probably not exactly what the modern Chinese wearer wants. A spectacular multiplicity in Chinese fashion today demonstrates the desire for change. It indicates that not every Chinese wearer wants to wear western style clothes, for many of them prize the distinction offered by wearing their own style of dress in order to communicate their cultural identity. Yet the sentiments of postmodernist Chinese form by designers seem ill defined, without research into the meanings behind their images. Designs are possibly gleaned from unidentified sources. These revisionist "historical costumes" seem to be based on aberrant ideas, "merely something with a slashed sleeve and a ruff." (Blau 1999: 192) Designers who increasingly perceive themselves as "artists," frequently ransacking the past for Chinese costume details (Steele 1985: 154), are not good for modern Chinese fashion. The direction for change in the new century for Chinese fashion design will need a new dimension. I take my view that although the T'ang was a major turning point in Chinese clothing history it marked a transition between ancient traditions and modern. The same is true of the 21st century Chinese fashion. I will establish my conception of modernisation of Chinese clothing in the following chapter.

Part III

Fashion design practice

Chapter 7: Design concept for modernised T'ang dress

In the preceding chapter, I have tried to confine some issues that exemplify the phenomenon of contemporary domain of fashion. I have explained how changes in modernist and postmodernist fashion relate to Chinese fashion. I have taken into account:

- Whether a historical understanding of Chinese fashion would demonstrate the contradictions or broad parallelisms that exist in the phenomena of the modern and postmodern periods.

I have identified some questions that I consider germane to contemporary Chinese fashion:

- Whether modern and postmodern forms by the designers capture the historical essence of Chinese fashion.
- To what degrees functional and aesthetical concerns have been reflected in the modern and post-modernist periods of Chinese fashion?

I am also inclined to show how contemporary Chinese fashion is influenced by Western fashions and issues of Chinese design practices with my questions:

- Are postmodern designers able to appropriate elements of traditional Chinese designs and incorporate them into contemporary Chinese fashion?
- Will 21st-century design or the work of individual designers be able to decode traditional Chinese fashion?
- Whether there are heterogeneous characteristics in ends and means that may be attributed to Chinese and western fashion design practice.

In the development of my design concept, I first try to establish the premise that there is a tension between the theoretical and practical approaches to Chinese fashion design. I need to point out the differences between the two approaches and the problems and challenges of the relationship between them. These are

- The methodological problem of Chinese fashion design in relation to the academic and practical approaches, and
- The conflict between the cultural form and function of the 21st-century contemporary Chinese fashion and movements towards Westernisation.

Shaping my vision of the potential modernity of T'ang dress involves confronting certain debates. First, there are complex ambiguities in discriminating between Chinese and Western fashion systems and determining how to evolve a new mode based on both T'ang traditions and modernistic principles. My strategy seeks to confront the issues in a domain of contested principles and values. Such an attempt to modernise T'ang dress is arguably open to criticism on two counts: the dichotomies of modernisation versus Westernisation and Orientalism, and cultural aesthetics versus functionalism.

7.1 Tensions between academic and practical approaches to Chinese fashion design

My discussion of Chinese fashion engages arguments about scholarship on fashion. But I hope to go beyond explanations of fashion that have been based on hegemonic western views, amongst which “postmodernist” Euro-American value judgments stand out. This seems to me constrictive. Clearly identifiable biases in the historical treatment of fashion have persisted in the postmodern era (Blau 1999: 25-26). With the acceleration of postmodernity, the importance of the varied nature and location of fashion would seem to be weakened by globalisation. Consequently there are ironies and paradoxes, or perhaps, “contradictions”, “contradistinctions” and “extremities” in both academic and practical approaches to fashion design. These approaches are replete with tensions: too practical (detached from cultural elements) or too theoretical (without regard to market/consumer tastes), or as for reasons of utility (function as all-purpose) or aesthetics (non-functional), modernist ideology (construction) or postmodernist evanescence (deconstruction), and Western (democratic and capitalist globalism) or Chinese (traditional values).

Fashion studies seem to have had little to say about the development of the design process. Instead, the focus has been on description of the imaginary or postmodernist marketing strategy. There is very little engaged criticism or outright disagreement between the practical and theoretical. Fashion design appeared to be a conflict-free zone, both in academic terms and in the wider world of journalistic commentary. Fashion journalism and perhaps even more, the Euro-centred, self-contained academic description of fashion, however, may blind us to the general import and real content of fashion. It is taken for granted that fashion represents novelty, some thus regard “old fashions” as “intrinsically ugly” (Veblen 1979: 178) and old costumes as “unattractive.” I would argue that traditional dress can be an inspiration and can represent refinement, elegance and beauty (Liporelsky 1994: 44-45). I try to debate the paradoxical issues in terms of the modernity of Chinese fashion and argue for the value of the aspects of traditional Chinese fashion neglected particularly by Chinese designers themselves.

I will point out the tensions between the academic and practical approaches to Chinese fashion. In the process of the examination of the issues of its modernity, I advanced a number of questions which relate to:

- Whether the outcome of the historical studies used by the practitioners is useful.
- Whether the design resource provided by academic research for practice is sufficient.
- Whether the conventional design methods and modernist or postmodernist theories applied to Chinese fashion are appropriate and effective.

7.1.1 Critical boundary between Chinese historical studies and modern approaches to fashion practice

Fashion is especially explicit in its relationship to history. As Koda has noted, no era is without a consciousness of the past (Koda 2003: 11). History can be one of the mirrors that allow us to see and shape our cultural and historical destiny. The significance of historical material for the modern designer is reflected in the design resource based on histories and their interpretations. It is important to discover whether these interpretations use historical materials from the standpoint of a modernist

mind¹⁷². Fashion is not simply an aesthetic phenomenon. Fashion design is not a decorative novelty merely using visual resources of the past. Nor can one regard cultural or historical studies of fashion as a simple manifestation of a devoted scholar's passion.

There is a need to balance the critical boundary between Chinese historical studies and modern approaches to fashion practice. Fashion studies is a work of sociological demystification (McRobbie 2000: 26). Historians who have specialised in the clothing of China, particularly those imbued with the concept of social progress, have made many discoveries that shed light on the abstract values of clothes which are often helpful in describing what happened in ancient periods. Research by anthropologists and historians into Chinese history has drawn attention to an abundance of detailed monographs on the trades and commerce founded on classics and archaeological finds associated with historical originality of Chinese costume¹⁷³. Both functional and political perspectives are evident in the existing research. Scholarly research into Chinese fashion has been concentrated on the first half of the twentieth century, as far back as ancient China, which I have explained in the foregoing chapters. In the T'ang dynasty, the impact of scholarship on practical fields lay in not only the annotation of the classics but the practical use of the knowledge and technology rather than in the area of theoretical speculation. McMullen submits, "Likewise the great majority in the scholarly [T'ang] community, though always apt to adduce canonical sanction in redrafting rituals, supported the idea of evolution¹⁷⁴." As the T'ang scholars and modern Sinologists have made clear, Chinese dress was a cultural phenomenon with a moral dimension. Cultural beliefs strongly manifested in the regulation of court dress and what the masses should wear. This was one of the strong drivers of the development of fashion in ancient China. But now Chinese scholarship seems to have much less influence in the market in contrast to Western fashion¹⁷⁵.

In the twentieth century, because of modern and postmodernist fashions' relationship to the international fashion circuit, which produces a lot of fashion product freebies to promote it, Western fashion journalism seems to be playing a great role in shaping the culture industry (McRobbie 2000: 261). Western principles seem to have been one of the major drivers in the development of contemporary western fashion.

Some fashion designers may think that traditional historical inquiry is not much concerned with the social context in which fashion evolves and that the function of fashion has been ignored by historians. Historical investigations do not attempt to understand what the description of history means at an effective level in relation to the functions of contemporary fashion. If this appears to be critical of the boundary between historical studies and fashion practice, few professionals in the

¹⁷² See Eicher and Sumberg, 'World fashion, ethnic, and national dress', in Eicher 1995: 299; awareness of change is a necessary condition for fashion to exist; the retrospective view of the historian does not produce fashion.

¹⁷³ See Part I in this volume.

¹⁷⁴ See McMullen 1987: n. 89.

¹⁷⁵ Aristotle's theory of art as imitation provides a basis for classifications of art forms. He attributed the origin of art to the human affinity for imitation. For example, the most recognisable aspect of a shoe is its resemblance to the form of the human foot. In this way, a shoe or even a piece of a garment could be seen as an imitation of the human body. For the clearer expression of the Aristotle's influence on Western fashion design, see Koda 2003; the designers' works suggest that Western fashion design would have still met the criterion in Aristotle's definition of art.

fashion field would deny that the outcome of the research that is used by practitioners is usually not very effective. Many become preoccupied with prejudiced views that historical understanding will not produce fashion and that scholarly study may produce no more than antiquarianism.

As Blau remarked, "the designers with impacted historical consciousness seem only aware of the evanescence but not ideology for fashion." (Blau 1999: 136) Koda also points out: "The fashion designers who would aspire to an academic understanding of the historical forms usually quote questionable sources." (Koda 2003: 16) The sources of Chinese designers are from their heritage but most of the collections are not specific in place or historical period. Few fashion designers have more than a cursory knowledge of both the history of western dress and their own sartorial history (Steel and Major 1999: 70). As Finnane pointed out, the description of the dress worn by Gong Li in the film "Shanghai Trial" in an article in *Beijing Scene* was confusing: "When Gong Li vamps on screen in the Qing [Ch'ing] dynasty court dress with slit skirt and Mandarin collar known as a cheongsam [*qipao*], it will no doubt fuel a revival in this sexy silk garment, popular in China at the turn of the century." (*Beijing Scene*, June 1-14 1995: 2) which showed "a sense of dislocation from history and . . . a desire to be reconnected with it." (Finnane 1996: 125-26) On the other hand, Western designers dislocate and invert the Chinese visuals and patterns that they get from the media. This illustrates the difficulties they have to perceive social phenomena in history that has profoundly shaped changes in fashion (Blau 1999: 136).

7.1.2 Limited historical resource research for Chinese fashion design

Chinese fashion design gives the impression that it lacks the direction and richness of historical resource. The historical source upon which the modern Chinese designer draws is rather insufficient. By contrast, Western designers appear more conscious of their place in fashion history, and more knowledgeable about the historical sources of style. Publications and artefacts in museums provide a source of ideas from which designers could draw inspirations. The arrangement of many Western museums was based on the principle of division by material, and the system of all books on Chinese art written in English had hitherto followed this principle (Ashton and Gray 1985: 5). Thus, western artists or designers working in the cloth trade have had a limited opportunity to seriously study Chinese people's habits or mode of dress and have simply used the various scenes in pictures as springboards for their imagination and as a means of enriching their repertoire of ornamental devices (Jarry 1981: 48). Although, in recent decades, Chinese source materials are available and some of them have been explicated by modern scholarship, whatever discipline they work on, dresses are, generally speaking, concerned with political purpose which is not expected to be useful for designing contemporary Chinese fashion.

There are two further concerns that need addressing. The first concerns the need for more serious debate about the function of Chinese clothing. It has been the case that a dress is viewed in terms of what it was constructed for and what function it performs or accomplishes, that is its instrumental qualities. This object-focused tendency reflects a western focus on functionality which tends to emphasise what is functional for daily life, or what is accomplished in the social and political realms by its performance. Modern western fashion is dominated by the development of industry, in which fashion is subdued by functionality. Western fashion design seems to focus primarily on the

physical part of the dress such as cut and make, disregarding the philosophical concerns which Chinese costume mainly emphasises. Chinese costume has often been studied in merely material terms as pure objects. This tendency allows insufficient sources to provide an understanding of the meanings and contexts of the dress's references in immaterial aspects, e.g., symbolism—dresses are viewed as psychological and social entities. Designers thus derive from the research mostly a variety of visual but not literary sources of Chinese clothing, dealing with facets of superficiality whose spiritual aspect normally has tended to be neglected. This results in a lack of a true understanding of Chinese clothing culture and little possibility is given to the evocation of historical antiquity by designers who attempt to derive design resource from history or costumes, e.g., those collected in the British Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum. Many elements of Ch'ing costume are coded but the designers' works appear limited and superficial and miss the broader realm of thousands of years of Chinese tradition.

The second concern is the inevitable tendency to view a dress in terms of what it says or means, that is, its expressive qualities. There has been a general tendency to suppose that the predominantly court-centred political narratives, concerned above all to explore the exercise of power and the functioning of governmental institutions, influenced the use of dress in ancient China¹⁷⁶. Yet aside from the various works by some remarkable Sinologists (McMullen 1987, 1988; Wright and Twitchett 1973; Wechsler 1985), and fashion historians (Wilson 1986, 1999; Shen 1986; Steele and Major 1999; Wu Min 1992), there is not as much literature in either Chinese or Western languages on subjects on Chinese clothing as one might hope. Although a few works have been done, they are either mainly focused on social institutions. There appear some difficulties in interpreting the materials for a stimulative element for fashion design because those ancient records almost contain no physical description of the dresses to know how they were worn, giving not much resource relevant to fashion design. The canonical books as well as the dynastic codes and treatises have struck many Western Sinologists as boring pieces of exotica irrelevant to a modern understanding of Chinese clothing history. They have also been encumbered by the difficulty of determining the authenticity of Chinese dress. Since many Chinese scholars share this view, the study of Chinese clothing is reserved for *chinoiserie*. Chinese fashion design may need inputs from literary and artistic sources as much as from social history. Furthermore, Chinese costume history may have been examined in detail in terms of costume types, yet in the broader sense such as cultural influence, it has been neglected and not subjected to reasonably rigorous analysis and taken for granted and this has constituted a hurdle to identifying certain characteristics which Chinese dress was believed to possess during the periods of ancient China. Many of the sources on which the understanding of Chinese clothing is based are therefore themselves deficient for fashion design. Costume history prior to the Ch'ing dynasty has received little scholarly attention over the last decade. Collections of Chinese costume in many western museums were obtained during imperial times. Inevitably most of the western research work on Chinese dress therefore is focused mainly on the range of the Ch'ing

¹⁷⁶ See Wright and Twitchett 1973: 38.

dynasty. Designers working in the Chinese tradition find that the resource provided by those collections has been limited to a very few readily identifiable types of dress.

7.1.3 Deficient fashion theory and inappropriate design method in Chinese fashion

In the preceding chapter, it was pointed out that postmodernist fashion is pivoted around the concept of “newness” or “nowness” (Fox-Genovese 1987: 11). Consequently, fashion is deemed to have no inherent meaning beyond serving as a means to an end (postmodernist explanation as a trivial or ephemeral phenomenon), namely, the eternal perpetuation of the system of newness that depends on the desire to acquire new modes (Craik 1993: 6). Other codes of clothing behaviour are relegated to the realm of costume which, as a ‘pre-civilised’ behaviour, is characterised in opposition to fashion, traditional and unchanging (Craik 1993: 4). Thus Chinese dress in this theory is regarded as “obsolescent.” I would agree with Craik’s argument that treating fashion as a marker of a recognised civilisation (Simmel 1973: 176), with all of its attendant attributes is the reason why Chinese fashion has been regarded as sub-culture excluded from the repertoires of West modern fashion. Western fashion has for centuries taken it for granted that fashion originated and flourished in Western Europe and nowhere else. In this sense, western scholarship on fashion has excluded Chinese fashion from the realm of modernist and postmodernist fashion. I would argue that Chinese fashion may not be necessarily defined within the boundaries of Western theory of modernism or postmodernism. The works of Chinese fashion designers may relate neither to the haute couture world of the European fashion houses nor to the fashion end of the high street in the western market. It is simply not an expression of subcultures of western fashion.

We may agree that in the Western industrial era and the twentieth century the modern West has made progress in the fashion revolution but there were innumerable earlier Chinese fashions much before the emergence of European fashion. As study shows, in the seventh to ninth centuries China had approached an epoch of fashion in the T’ang era. It would be wrong to claim that in ancient Chinese societies people were making no efforts to achieve individual aesthetic pursuits or there were no manifestations of changes of fashion.

As explicated in an earlier chapter, the codes of T’ang ritual dress did change over time under the new regulations of clothing. Dress actually affected the psychology and lives of the T’ang wearers which in turn influenced fashion. The style of T’ang court dress adopted *Hu* forms. This underlines the fact that even the fixed formal norms (e.g., court style) were directly influenced by popular fashion (Craik 1993: 2). Fashion may depend on what people know and how they feel within a system that is historically and socially provided (Blau 1999: 69). For instance, from the ninth century, the end of T’ang to the early of twentieth century, footbinding was fashionable, to “Chinese eyes, women’s clothing for the genteel class looked strange worn with natural feet.” (Finnane 1996: 107-08) Apparently the concept of unchanging Chinese fashion is clearly mistaken.

Specialists in fashion design have developed a terminology and are devoted to design theories based on a variety of methodologies of culture, psychology, economics and literature. Certain discrepancies between the theory and practice are perhaps inevitable. A purely academic approach to fashion design condemns the design theorists to remain on the surface of the manifest discourse, without acknowledging practice in the market. Reliance on the academic theoretical slant

often leads to simplistic explanations that leave practicing professionals dissatisfied. Moreover, rather than academic training, design professionals would often argue for practical expertise or experience. Academic training is not necessarily a best way for a practicing designer to improve his or her work¹⁷⁷. The field of practice often is sceptical about whether market designers could create their products better if they become involved in more theoretical activity. In turn, there is a lack of more elevated practices in Chinese costume and conventions of dressmaking. Rather than reporting the catwalk and marketing activities, contemporary journalist debates seem to lack the discussion of the design process and non-marketing value of the prominent modern designers' work. How are fashion critics, experts or design methodologists going to shed useful light on the subject when they are forming a subdiscipline with the avowed intent of separating themselves from practice, attempting to address their criticism to evaluating fashion products?

.....My argument assumes that sartorial rules changed by the emergence of the properties of "tradition", "multiculturalism" and "cosmopolitanism"; these naturally and inevitably transformed the Tang Chinese social identities which lay behind the dress codes (e.g., Confucianism versus Buddhism, and Chinese versus Barbarian). Fashion in contemporary Chinese society has been guided for a century by a predominance of globalised European tastes, leading Chinese fashion to lose some of its cultural identity. The tendency to westernise Chinese clothing has grown even stronger in recent decades. Graham-Brown remarks, "it was also the case that women who wore 'modern' clothes had automatically become 'just like Western women'. . . Although style of dress had considerable importance as an indicator both of people's self-image and of their aspirations, it did not necessarily translate simply into a desire to be 'westernised.'" (Graham-Brown 1988: 132 quoted in Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997: 30)

Chinese fashion design confronts an unwarranted polarity between the practical and the academic. Most fashion projects (e.g., marketing, cultural studies) have been carried out by specialists in academia but they have not been adequately informed by developments in the practical field. The academic specialists adequately have not familiarised themselves with the market. Most of the scholarship are explained in terms of an often over simplified cultural cause about the phenomenon of Chinese fashion when it should be much more complex than it is explained. Journalism may explain the fashion scene with an overly edited view of fashion as the demystification of fashion needs to address a multi-fibered phenomenon (Blau 1999: 15). Contemporary journalism can't avoid the fashion press practices of making "fashion stories" with different fashion moments, periods or epochs (McRobbie 2000: 257-58) and the various intermediary processes have come to create the creator (Bourdieu 1993). Journalism seems to wield its power arbitrarily and draw up a fixed agenda about what should be happening in Chinese fashion (McRobbie 2000: 261).

The confrontation of the practical and academic approaches suggests that a neglect of market realities when formulating a design theory would lead to a practice that offers nothing more than a Utopia which is at best of slight value and at worst misleading. It seems that arbitrary boundaries are often imposed on conventional methods by specialists and experts which are expected to be

¹⁷⁷ See *The Designer 2000 Study* in no. 703 MSC/DES Pickup Programme, 1986.

compatible with the practice. My opinion is that not many findings on fashion by academics and press who have relied on theoretical perspectives seem to be particularly relevant. Although there is some agreement over the usefulness of speculative academic advice or fashion speculations for fashion practice, one could expect such advice to be more useful.

There are some relevant theoretical judgments of fashion design but advances have been very uneven. Specialists' findings have been applied to the market as a whole or even to the elucidation of the history of the culture only recently. A modernist or postmodernist analysis of Chinese fashion in terms of language and communication introduces the risk of imposing a linguistic model onto a discussion of a phenomenon only partially comprehended by linguistic means. This modern conception of "theory-focused" scholarly analysis attempts to explain how socio-cultural factors influenced the shifting tastes and styles of fashion but there appears to be a lack of a sense of Chinese perspective, which Westerners find perplexing. This results in an obliqueness of view in Western vocabulary, or even astigmatism or blurred vision of Chinese fashion. Western commentators or theorists seem preoccupied with describing Chinese fashions as "Others" (sub-culture or non-European fashion) with the postmodernist context which may be seemingly made-developed, assertive, and somehow unconvincing. Orientalism, described by Said (1978: 38-42), entails that Chinese fashion is seen as "Others" and defined by Western theorists insisting on the relevance of Western values and vocabularies (McRobbie 2000: 257). These theorists may protest that they did not speculate about an overall understanding of the Chinese phenomenon in social, cultural and historical contexts, especially as regards the specification of the dress that meets modern demands. This is part of the reason why historical investigations fail to receive much attention. Theoretical analyses are regarded as irrelevant by many contemporary practicing designers.

As a mode of modernity, design can be as concerned with the stimulation of our daily life as with tangible production of clothes, and with the intellectual explanation of its fabrication, as with its meanings. How the historical resource is approached, and with what attitude, still constitutes the central problems regarding the modernisation of Chinese fashion design. Moreover, it is possible to detect a lack of confidence in how Chinese fashion designers have positioned themselves and placed their work in the hierarchy of Euro-centred culture. This is especially true of market-driven Westernisation in the 21st century. One would suggest that good Chinese fashion design can be based on the broader relationship between clothing and cultural identity so the wearer could have a feeling of cultural belonging, to a degree which has never been approached in Chinese fashion by Western designers. At present, there seems to be little by way of fashion modernisation on a fundamentally Chinese cultural basis. Chinese designers, working on clothing culture and access to their own ways of expression (language), should have more potential to render their work more "Chinese" in its concerns. The designers would be more interesting for scholarly analysis and could design with scholarly analysis in mind.

The conventional methods of design-by-drawing or design-by-picking up some immediate visual images may be too simple and effortless for the growing complexity of the modern demands of Chinese wearers. The designer would find it easier only to refer to some image evocative of the past. But, it will be difficult to relate to images without historical associations and to understand the

meanings that underlie the codes of the clothes. Visual images in a deficient historical design source will give only a limited sense of the reality of the quality, atmosphere, and appearance of the dress.

I think that the stereotypes of functionalism and technology of clothing production offer merely a narrowed perspective on the practice of fashion design. "Clothing is neither simply functional nor symbolic in the conventional sense." (Craik 1993: 4) Fashion does not function solely as an instrument of social classification with no aesthetic aim. The relation of bodies to clothes is one of the significant aspects how Chinese wearer feels about dress and is far deeper than the equation of postmodernist fashion with the superficial products of "consumer culture." A genuinely historical perspective and cultural gaze should be directed towards the history of Chinese fashion which could explore the common world of Chinese mind and spirit in which communication can be facilitated and enriched by the constant availability of tradition. The designed garment therefore could have a wealth of associations, in which we could assume--thanks to the common heritage that the Chinese designer and the Chinese wearer share--an appropriate range of responses not only to specific allusions to the history, e.g., the T'ang past, but also possibly to a wider spectrum of more intangible modern aesthetic stimuli. It maybe expected that the web of historical allusions and references finds its expression in terms of Chinese dress's formal complexity. Chinese fashion design application can offer an additional element of communication in order to attenuate the strong influence and superficiality of Western fashion cultures. It allows for more originality as opposed to superficiality.

7.2 Chinese identity against Westernisation and Orientalism

The conventional way of designing Chinese style clothing seems to rely mostly on the citation of historical elements by reassembling their subjects in approximations, or overlaying decorative patterns or colours. This design method can be seen in many works by modern and postmodern designers. For instance, in Orientalist forms designers have taken objects from visual images and integrated them into symbols of exoticism.

Likewise, many of the works by the Chinese designers were stripped of any obvious connections to history and tradition (*New York Times* Sept. 2004, Sec. *Fashion and Style* in Steele and Major 1999: 69). Hence, this approach, putting new wine into old bottles, has commonly been followed by both Chinese and Western designers. It could be justified only if we were sure that the old conception of designing was appropriate in all of its essentials. I would argue that the design works by postmodernist designers are derived from physical objects without attempting much inventive or interpretative reconstruction or absorbing much of the Chinese wearers' social aspirations, e.g., their feelings and ideas about beauty, individualism, class distinctions, etc. I am criticising the conventional design method for its failure to differentiate between the tangible and the intangible elements for design principles. Because of the Western tendency to view clothes primarily as an imitation of the human body, the creativity and social implications imbued in Chinese clothing traditions are not considered in Western fashion design methodology which lacks refined ideals about the Chinese wearers' ideas of abstract meanings.

To identify contemporary issues in Chinese fashion I discuss: (1) modernisation versus Westernisation, (2) delicate modesty of the Chinese women versus prejudicial sexuality of

Orientalism (3) symbolism versus utilitarianism, and (4) originality of T'ang culture versus sameness of globalism. This debate relates to

- Whether the "modernisation" of T'ang dress should be regarded as equivalent to "Westernisation", and
- How we can adopt cultural aesthetics for new T'ang forms without conflict with modern functionalism.

7.2.1 Modernisation versus Westernisation

Clothing is predisposed to tell us something of our conventions and inventions, our inhibitions and ambitions. (Martin and Koda 1995: 12)

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were arguments against the "Westernisation" of Chinese clothing and debates about the abandonment of rigid uniformity of dress in China (Steele and Major 1999: 65). An article in *Fashion*, 'Appropriate clothing is beautiful' claimed that "clothing should be suitable for one's age, personality, figure, and occupation", and was critical about "young women decked out in clothing that is neither western nor Chinese." "For Chinese, the most liberating thing is to use things that are really Chinese." (Yue Hua 1981) The clothing of "New China" should be based on "the special characteristics of Eastern peoples" and it should have "the ability to reflect the spirit of socialism." (Li Long 1981) Bai Chong-li (1983: 10-11) remarked that Chinese fashion designers should "advance down the road to a Chinese-style modern fashion revolution," rather than simply looking back to the past with its "beautiful and colourful clothing culture." (Steele and Major 1999: 66) In the 1990s, Chu argued that the more the Chinese know about their collective history, the better they would become in creating fashion:

So what else gets conveniently left out when fashion designers appropriate the look of another culture into the Look-of-the-Moment? . . . Extracting only aesthetic elements, or the cultural code, from other countries creates a mysticism about foreign regions without a true understanding of the culture itself. . . We buy into the fantasy and whatever exists behind the glossy exterior is lost in the translation. (Chu 1998: 10-11)

The strong Western influence on Chinese clothing suggests that Chinese and Western designers have been mostly interested in the wholesale transposition of Western forms. The insufficiency and the inscrutability of the Chinese historical resource contributed to Western designers' failure to fully comprehend Chinese clothing culture. The historical quality of Chinese clothing has been ignored and as a result the modern Westernisation of Chinese clothing has broken the connection of Chinese fashion with its past.

As Koda pointed out:

Western fashion designers have employed to infuse their work with historical resource, much of the referencing had a skin-deep, boldly graphic quality. . .-immediately recognisable with familiar allusions, ironic and knowing playfulness, and unapologetic and unflinching superficiality. (Koda 2003: 11)

It is probably true that Chinese designers have been influenced in one way or another by the mediascape in which western global fashion systems are located. Their way of designing in some ways is completely subservient to western method. They seek to imitate the method and vision of style and refinement of Western fashion, without conforming much to the indigenous taste or technique of China's own heritage which, in my view, seem more suitable for the local climate and

conditions of Chinese societies. Ironically, they seek to be modern by following the western tendency to stereotype Chinese fashion. Modern Chinese designers regarded clothes which clung tightly to or exposed the body as Western aesthetics and an expression of the sensibility of the West and proceeded to design clothes guided by techniques to which sexual allurements are central.

The stereotyping owes much to neo-imperialistic appropriation, namely the wanton integration of elements such as Mandarin collars, knotted buttons and loops (*huaniu* or “frogs”), low cut bodices and side deep-splits on dress into twentieth-century fashionable western garments, which tends to be heavily slanted towards bodily exposure and sexualisation. A study of Chinese visual images in media or tourism publications, and museum collections would reveal that Western designers seem to design Chinese-style clothes based on Western sentiments. John Galliano’s work in the 1990s is representative of this tendency.

This type of “plundering” of cultures for a “postmodernist fashion look” is a common activity, which may be suitable for the media-dominated global market. Yet those commercial fashion products only make superficial contact with facets of the Chinese historical resource, without engaging with the historical aesthetics and values of Chinese clothing itself. Chinese fashion design is stripped of any obvious connections to its historical roots and is devoid of any of its spiritual symbolism. It becomes more concerned about Western obsessions than it is about Chinese identity.

My contention is that Chinese fashion has been misinterpreted and abused in some way by modern designers. The sensibility that has been presented by those designers, in my view, is too shallow from a historical viewpoint to be of much value in contemporary fashion. The “west-modernist” interpretation misses the adaptations of forms and neglects to understand the complexities that are inherent in Chinese tradition, which makes Western-modernisation an inappropriate field for further development of Chinese fashion.

7.2.2 Delicate modesty of Chinese women versus sexuality of Orientalism

Orientalism, the West’s fascination with and assimilation of the ideas and styles of the East, which was a phenomenon partly created by overwhelming imperial power since the mid-nineteenth century, has made an impact on Chinese fashion and design in recent decades¹⁷⁸.

Stevens and Wada clearly demonstrate the influence of Orientalism on Chinese style¹⁷⁹. I have discussed the Orientalist form of Chinese fashion in a preceding chapter. Western appropriations of Chinese culture have an impact on Chinese clothing design which is represented in western postmodernist designers’ work. Now I will discuss its influence on Chinese culture and fashion. According to Martin and Koda

The imagining of China was always more fanciful than real. . . We know of Western *Chinoiserie*, *Japonisme*, and *Turquerie* as recurring phenomena of the decorative arts and culture. Of the many objects in transaction between East and West, textiles and apparel have been among the most prominent. . . The option in dress afforded by the East is charged with enchantment, with a seeming sweetness and seduction that allows the East’s presence to stem innocuous. (Martin and Koda 1995: 10, 19)

Orientalism emphasised stereotypical attributes of Chinese women’s sexuality, neglecting the codes of modesty inherent in Chinese traditional clothing cultures. Philippe de Montebello pointed out that

¹⁷⁸ See Preface in Whittick 1971: 163. Also Mackenzie 1995.

¹⁷⁹ See Glossary.

Orientalism, the historical term used to describe the West's fascination with and assimilation of the ideas and styles of the East, is richly represented in the collections of the Metropolitan. (Martin and Koda 1995)

As defined in an earlier chapter, fashion is the domain of change, desire and novelty. It acquires positive meaning as the spectacle of the modern. Yet "in the twentieth century fashion was widely presumed to be a Western import, which made it at once appealing and objectionable." (Ko 1999: 145) Orientalism continued to be popular throughout the twentieth century. It was the process through which western designers drew inspiration from *chinoiserie* by engaging in neo-imperialistic appropriations. There was a mental association between the exotic and the erotic, the "Oriental" was regarded as "exotic wonderful and dangerous," (Steele 1985: 233) and this led to an increased emphasis on the desirability of a kind of mysterious sensuality, a quality that was perceived in the dangerously attractive Chinese woman to the Westerners (Steele 1985: 237).

The ebullient and inventive *Chinoiserie* of earlier times now became a deliberate and self-conscious use of Chinese materials and symbols. Floral medallions might not be taken in the West to be direct symbols of China, but they were surely locatable to the constraint and gravity characteristic of China¹⁸⁰. . . Even the British East India Company's monopoly in the China trade had ceased in 1834. China's independence was a particular advantage and a possible colonial posting did not mitigate the exoticism. . . China always had to be reckoned with, if not as an equal, at least as a free party and an alternative. . . The peculiar trait of China among Orientalisms to be more equitable—inasmuch as it was never conquered and colonised—has promoted the role of China in the twentieth century. Often affiliated with the avant-garde, China was the Orientalism that most readily became a part of European hybrid culture, its obsessiveness and ardour often encompassing many Eastern traits under the rubric of China. (Martin and Koda 1995: 17-18)

Clearly the discourse surrounding Chinese fashion in the western press is problematic. The stereotyping of Chinese style clothing conforms to the practice of Orientalism. There were innumerable references to racist tropes such as "the mysterious Orient" and "inscrutable" Asians. Peasant-style jackets were invariably referred to as "coolie jacket," and there were even jocular references to looking like "a cool coolie". The notion of "political correctness" had not yet achieved wide currency. Many people were still insensitive to casual, unthinking racial slurs. The "rich Chinese" or "Mandarin look" was said to reflect "the luxurious side of old China." (Steele 1993 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 78) *Qipao* projected an image of Chinese women as "exotic and desirable consumables." (Clark 1999: 157) Modern Chinese fashion has assimilated Eurocentric concepts and images of the Oriental woman as perceived by the Westerners' eyes in Colonial days, or in Helen Tiffin's words, "informed by the imperial vision." ('Post-Colonialism': 172 quoted in Hutcheon 1991: 168).

The problem of adopting the prejudicial method of fashion design is, I argue, that it seems not to have promoted any comprehension or appreciation of the modest beauty of a Chinese woman: subtle chastity and delicate femininity. Although fashion designers were dutifully devoted to using some elements in the design, e.g., the symbols of dragon, they contributed precious little that was new to the old, nor did they appear to have come by any sound solutions to a new method of fashion

¹⁸⁰ See Martin and Koda, 1995: 17-18. As Said (1978) has shown convincingly, Charles Dickens's *Great Expectation* (1861) is a novel about the English relationship to the exotic. Even if it is read as an allegory of colonial acceptance—complicated by Australia's dual identity as British penal institution and as exotic land—the nineteenth-century paradox between nativism embraced and colonial peoples held at arm's length is evident.

design. The inevitable consequence of this is the threat posed to the survival of the most important traditional cultural forms of Chinese women's dress. Lastly, not many designers who have relied on such Orientalist perspectives have completely or satisfactorily created Chinese fashion. Yet, because contemporary Chinese consumers are so used to the Western designs, the demand is lacking for clothing designs based on traditional Chinese criteria of aesthetics and forgotten heritage.

7.2.3 Chinese symbolism versus modern utilitarianism

Fashion is inseparably linked to the aesthetic requirement that things of the distant past continue to hold charm that we admire (Liporelsky 1994: 44). Dress in general seems to fulfil a number of social, aesthetic and psychological functions. This is as true of modern as of ancient dress (Wilson 1987: 11). I believe the T'ang dress can be modernised on the basis of its own forms and values through a process which selectively incorporates new elements, rather than on the basis of an uncritical obsession with the Western fashion system.

Today, the two conditions which a dress must fulfil are to function as an item of clothing and provide aesthetic pleasure. The Western system of a political (democratic) or functional (utilitarian) regime may not satisfactorily fulfil the Chinese wearer's potential cultural and aesthetic needs. The question arises: do these conditions embrace the totality of the functions of Chinese fashion design? Clearly, Chinese fashion design method has not advanced Chinese technology of production or identified the functions of Chinese dress which fulfils the wearers' needs because of the deep Western influences on it. For example, the development of a contemporary style that is relevant to the psychic needs of the Chinese. Some traditional forms may intensify the awareness of the Chinese of their culture and contribute to the modernity of their life style¹⁸¹. In my view, Chinese costume is disconnected from the flavours, realities and aspirations of contemporary life because of its reliance on the principle of functionality that governs Western fashion. Functionalism at one level is seen as an attempt to emphasise practicability. But dress should not be concerned with merely its practicality but with human drives and emotions. Design considerations of function should go beyond utilitarian or functional calculations-like the clothes for work, uniforms, emphasising the function, easy maintenance, cost effectiveness, democracy, homogeneity in production and marketing both for the wearer and producer. These considerations should also pay attention to non-instrumental or non-utilitarian qualities although such qualities may contradict instrumental ones¹⁸². As analysed in an earlier chapter, twentieth century industry has led to mass-production. A factor which contributed to the evolution of modern fashion has been the economic and socio-demographic changes which saw many more people go into the workforce and the professions, accompanied by a trend towards greater uniformity and the adaptability of apparels to multiple quotidian purposes and seasons. The works of modern American designers show vividly that the second half of the twentieth century is an age of functionalism which results in a tendency to design garments to emphasise its functional use. For example, starting in 1985, Donna Karan offered professional women a wardrobe that could be adapted to form a "personal uniform." Her approach to clothes is based on two principles: flexibility

¹⁸¹ See Fiore et al 1996: 102.

¹⁸² See Berleant 1970; Berlyne 1974; Holbrook 1987; Bell-Villada 1986; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Hirschman 1983 in Fiore et al 1996: 30-31.

and practicality¹⁸³. Her designs follow the tradition of American sportswear in that the clothes facilitate everyday life (Golbin 2001: 86, 88).

Donna Karan commented:

I had a mission to take ties off of men. And why can't a woman go out in a T-Shirt? The bodysuit that I did is basically a T-shirt. It was about giving women back their bodies and giving them back the comfort of their bodies. (Donna Karan quoted in Siscby 1998: 16)

There is a conflict between "aesthetics" and "functionality." For function a single all-purpose recipe is made available for no exploitation of different tastes. My contention is that those designers might slide to an extreme where only the all-important functionality of work or casual dress dominates fashion. This rigid utilitarianism would most likely be transposed to Chinese designing which would lead to even greater loss of traditional cultural aesthetics in Chinese fashion practice. The preoccupation with functionality often results in uniformed clothes such as T-Shirt and suits which are uninteresting, aesthetically unappealing and lacking in charm. I am of the view that the introduction of the symbolic element of culture is also fundamental. The cultural elements of clothing need to be preserved and enhanced as the essential spiritual values of civilisation. To stimulate such an outcome in Chinese fashion design, the balance between these extremes of functionality and cultural relevance must be carefully adjusted.

A simplified description of the eternal conditions of Chinese style clothing will not resolve the problem of approaches to its design. At this point it may be useful to recapitulate my earlier discussion regarding the aesthetic elements of T'ang dress. To the T'ang Chinese aesthetic meaning was the symbolic counterpart of spiritual reality and continues to constitute the inspiration and drive of the Chinese mind and spirit (Willis 1987: 158). This definition will permit speculation on the modern Western fashion system, which has somewhat displaced this spirit with entirely functional forms. How are we to balance the external validity of the functional use of Chinese clothing and its intrinsic values? This question may not be answered satisfactorily without first being clear about the fundamental natures of the dress systems of China and the West. It is essential to an understanding of how considerations, whether aesthetics or utility, feed into the design principle and the work of designers. It is also the key to understanding the relationship between theory and practice. Firstly, we need to recognise that the conflict is fundamental. I try to characterise, at the practical level, the two systems as different approaches of "dress form" and "dressing practice". Such characterisation of their origins may allow one to judge more clearly the causes of the conflict between the systems.

Understanding traditional Chinese thoughts in relation to their attitude to costume would help the designer to become consciously aware that the costume is dedicated to become the expression of the inner spirit instead of physical verisimilitude. Traditional Chinese costume had, however, evolved into a fuller garment long before Han times. Han style has a type of bell-shaped sleeve, as was illustrated in an earlier chapter. One of the features of Chinese costume is the layers of loose fitting, lined robes that created a wide, rhythmic shape. The shape and cut of the Chinese garment is different from that of modern Western clothes. The style of court dress was associated with size-breadth. The bulk created by

¹⁸³ Donna Karan's line initially consisted of seven items—bodysuit, skirt, jacket, pants, blouse, sweater, and coat—made from fabrics suitable for both winter and summer wear. Karan's trade-mark colour is black, which she uses as a background colour, thereby giving women the greatest possible freedom to select accessories.

the width added a vital sense of dignity. By contrast, Western speculation that "there exists a connection between costume and physical unattractiveness" (Steele 1985: 155) implies that modern western design tends to characterise clothing as a façade, particularly its physical aspect. This has an impact on the modern Westernisation of Chinese clothing.

The emphasis on the body's shape as the basis for the construction of clothes has been a major influence on the evolution of Western fashion design. Modern western clothing emphasises the creation of a height of eight to nine heads in length body, which is regarded as an ideal proportion for a human figure. By contrast, unlike the Westerners, the Chinese tried to apprehend the principles of nature through graphic means. At some point, the Chinese acquired a preference for integrating colours and patterns as decoration for clothing. Some of them were inspired by the Chinese beliefs (e.g., Confucianism imbued in The Twelve Symbols), or religious (e.g., harmonious five colours combination of Buddhist philosophy), and daily lives (e.g., floral patterns) which achieved spiritual associations with Chinese lives.

The fifth-century scholar, Yen Yen-chih (AD 384-456), defined painting ("*hua*") as "representing nature's forms." (*t'u-hsing*) (Fong et al 1984: 2) Traditionally, in China, a painting and its viewer merged into one. As Bachhofer has pointed out, Chinese paintings are given a unity by the constant change of the viewpoint of the spectator, so that wherever he looks he seems to be opposite to that particular part of the picture (Ashton and Gray 1985: 114). Regarding the imagination of the Chinese who perceives a painting, Lin Yu-tang, in his *Chinese theory of art* explains how Chinese view paintings without a fixed privileged perspective:

A mountain looks this way close by, another way a few miles away, and yet another way from a distance of a dozen miles. Its shape changes at every step. . . Its aspect changes from every angle, as many times as the point of view. . . It looks this way in spring and summer, another way in autumn and winter. . . another. . . at sunset. . . Thus. . . a mountain contains in itself. . . a hundred mountains. (quoted in Wu 1989: 246)

The painting constantly invites the viewer to go everywhere in the painting, to penetrate everywhere into the presented and the hidden. "All Chinese artworks, the same as the clothing, pulsate with 'rhythmic breath,' . . . the Chinese rhythm is flowing, growing, responding to the wind." (Wu 1989: 246) This symbolic relationship inevitably evoked sensations in the Chinese people. This principle of Chinese art can be extended to the relationship between the clothes and the wearer. Chinese costumes were imbued with meanings that fulfilled the wearer's psychological need. T'ang costume as discussed in a preceding chapter was characterised by an increasing facility in painting figures with distinctions between station, occasion and mood, as can be seen in the mural in the tomb of Princess Yongtai. The overwhelming concern was the proper articulation of the costumes and attributes of the wearers.

In the West the process of art creation is reversed, the Western rhythm is centred, plastic, sensuous, organically poised. Such a difference in emphasis may explain the difference of approach and of topics in the aesthetics of fashion design. Western design practice seems to be a way of explicating physical beauty. Clothing design is an assemblage of clothes items to shape an ideal body shape. Clothes parts such as the collar, lapels, sleeves, shoulders, bodices, waists and trouser legs are generally cut, sewn and/or fastened.

Instead of assembling different shapes of cut pieces, the Chinese way of constructing a garment is to integrate uncut fabric seamed together to make a whole garment. This construction technique used straight uncut widths of cloth to construct a garment which is economical in production. But this does not mean that the Chinese dress has no structure.

If we were to summarise the characteristics of Chinese and Western fashions and their design, there may appear contrasts of the characteristics that attributed to Chinese and western approaches in terms of design method and ends. We would probably characterise the traditional Chinese and Western approaches to costume design as respectively analogous to the space on silk for ink paintings in Chinese eyes and the sculptor's armature in Westerner's eyes. Embroidery and patterns may provide Chinese with a more satisfying sensory and aesthetic experience. I analyse these characteristics in Table 14.

Table 14 Characteristics that attributed to Chinese and Western fashion design

Conceptions	Design ends	Design method
Chinese fashion design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Symbolism - Flattened shape - Broad, flat straight-edged expanse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analogical firing the imagination - Combination of colour and pattern - Ideological sensitivity - Linearity - Vertical seams
Western fashion design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practicality - Three-dimensional shape - Form-accentuating or fastening devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logical - Imitation of human body's shape - Assemblage of cut pieces - Horizontal or diagonal seams

7.2.4 Cultural traits versus globalist formality

The phenomenon of cultural change on a global scale in the twentieth century is captured by Appadurai's (1991) concept of a global ethnoscape where human beings move quickly and easily from one part of the globe to another. . . the media portray people wearing what has been commonly called western dress, especially when the media sources emanate from western countries (Eicher and Sumberg 1995: 295).

The most recent development in fashion has been influenced by a world-system or idea of Western-dominated globalisation. Exotic fashions are said to "reflect an experimentation with a different identity, whether from the desire to belong to another culture, or from a belief that every human being is a citizen of the planet." (Legrand-Rossi et al 1998: 189-93 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 70-71) The dominance of the category of time (history in Eurocentric formulations) (Griffith 1991: 159) may lead to a concern with the ideological falsity of universal values and manifestations (physical and spiritual, external and internal) (Griffith 1991: 155). This may offer a chance to fulfil the Western desire for change but is in fact an exploitation of a Western fantasy of an exotic territory. This globalism takes a Western project and transforms it into a concern which lays claim to being wider, more pervasive and less "sub-cultural" to see Eastern cultures as "Others". We should be concerned at the degree to which globalists have seemed to be at odds with the social, capitalist or political aim of the Western projects (Griffith 1991: 154), and the degree to which they treat sub-cultural sources (e.g., those of Chinese). It is argued that, rather than adopting a globalised

version of fashion, the Chinese should have their own technology, art, politics, social and ideals for fashion design that is based on their own specific criteria and have their own autonomy. [Note from Jim: I have not changed any wording in this passage. Only a wrong line break was removed.]

Modernist fashion has promoted the achievement of democracy by homogenising the desire for changes in fashion. Fashion in a globalist sense translates into a uniformity of desire (Sennett in Liporelsky 1994: ix). Globalisation is to become more tolerant of the Other's live styles and uniform individual appearance. People would have mutual indifference and there would be no barriers of taste. In seeking to gain informality, modernist fashion tends to achieve inclusivity over exclusivity. Paradoxically, however, the advertising and other mass-media mechanisms make people living in different international cities (e.g., London, New York, and Tokyo) "form a belief that every human being is a citizen of the planet." (Legrand-Rossi et al 1998: 189-93 quoted in Steele and Major 1999: 70-71) They look the same in their appearance. The sense of distinction of uniqueness of individuals might be lost: our eyes would no longer be the most exacting of the senses (Steele and Major 1999: 70). However, as observed in the globalised market, clothes seemed to have ceased to be a means of expressing individuality in modern times. The world of fashion is economically increasingly unified and there appears a discourse of sameness which emphasises the convergence/similarities between various cultures rather than their divergence/differences/diversity¹⁸⁴.

There is an observable fashion tendency today towards a cosmopolitan type of dress. This is partly due to increased facilities of travel and vastly enhanced technological capacity to exchange information for communication¹⁸⁵. For example, jeans and T-Shirts become widely circulated¹⁸⁶. Yet, it could be a way of depriving different cultures of their local characteristics and ideas of aesthetic creativity. My speculation is that this sameness or uniformity had simply displaced the uniqueness of the realm of Chinese culture into the world system. We should agree that fashion is a process involving change, from the introduction of a variation of a cultural form to its acceptance, discarding, and replacement by another cultural form. Cultural form identifies the affiliations and emotions of the wearer's root through dress. Design exists as a feature of cultural life whilst culture provides the source for designing. I believe that the global world fashionable style differs from the novelty and originality of T'ang aesthetic virtues. I argue that "national" sartorial expression may offer a source for creativities and may alternatively reflect cultural identity. The current tendency of globalisation has tended to despise and denigrate Chinese cultural traits. It negates Chinese psychological needs and leads to an emphasis on practicality that may leave the Chinese wearer dissatisfied with what they wear for individual expressions in clothing.

On the other hand, most modern designers are content to describe their work either as mere styling, for instance, the notions of stereotyped sexuality. Yet few recognise that the appearance and expressive quality of a garment of a cultural form could be critically important not only as a marketing device in the global fashion system but in the substantive contribution that design could

¹⁸⁴ See Turner 1994: 95, 103.

¹⁸⁵ The anthropologist Ernest Grawley commented the fashion tendency when he used the latter term in 1912 in an essay on dress.

¹⁸⁶ See Eicher and Sumberg 1995: 298, 300.

make to daily living¹⁸⁷. This is not to suggest that there was no successful commodity form of postmodernist Chinese fashion, for example, the ready-to-wear Chinese style fashion promoted by the American Chinese designer Vivienne Tam. I would argue that some of the designers' methods focused mostly on surface decoration and rather than reconstructing the garments based on Chinese traditions the designers make minor changes in the silhouette and lines of the traditional shape to achieve a sense of tradition. This can be seen in some of Chinese designers' work that I gave examples in the previous chapter.

John Galliano's work in the 1990s mixes decorative elements of Chinese garment objects on the runways, giving a sense of playfulness. The usage of the superficial decoration for "a renewed taste for ornamentation and colour" (Steele and Major 1999: 70) is to repeat the Poiret's Orientising concept that uses subculture elements (Turkish, Japanese and Chinese, etc.) to fulfil the Westerner's desire for an exotic fantasy. This phenomenon is apparently one of the manifestations of "banal and frivolous" power of marketing in an age of global capitalism (Legrand-Rossi et al 1998: 187). It should be apparent that modernisation of Chinese clothing should not be regarded as an issue simply of nationalist or enculturalisationist and globalisationist debate. The debate is not merely a Chinese self in the 21st century obliged to search for the confidence or traditional values in terms of clothing. What the Chinese wearer expects may not be satisfied by being merely a product of Western exotic fashion in the frame of globalisation.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I suggest conceptions that point to a constructive outcome to the above debate.

- Fashion studies must be brought back into the marketplace.
- Chinese fashion design must be brought back into culture.
- Modernisation is not equivalent to Westernisation.
- Chinese design should be concerned with both intrinsic quality and eternal cultural appeal of Chinese clothing.
- The balance between the aspirations and sentiments of the T'ang and contemporary fashions would resolve the form and criteria of the functions of the new mode of T'ang dress. [

Balance between the academic and the practical approaches

Academics have to demonstrate a connectedness with the changing world outside the schools, the commercial culture (McRobbie 2000: 258) and the emergence of sociological interest of the contemporary society. In the preceding paragraphs I have attempted to address some debates and to assess the manifestations of the current problematic and paradoxical relations between the scholarship on Chinese fashion and Chinese fashion practice and design. I am convinced that

¹⁸⁷ See Eicher and Sumberg 1995: 298, 300. A variety of definitions exist. See Sproles (1979) for a useful review. The dress of cultural form is best understood as those items, ensembles and modifications of the body that capture the past of the members of a group, the items of tradition that are worn and displayed to signify cultural heritage. This can be referred to the analysis given by Vos and Romanucci (1982: xi). They define ethnicity, in this study referring to Chinese culture, on four levels of analysis:

"first, in respect to a social structural level; second, as a pattern of social interaction; third, as a subjective experience of identity; and fourth, as expressed in relatively fixed patterns of behaviour and expressive emotional style." These patterns of behaviour and expressive emotional style include styles of dress and the meanings associated with them.

historians must not only compress and synthesize historical materials but also have the courage to adopt practical disciplines in order to make the widest connections possible with practice. We need an eclectic attitude toward Chinese fashion design. The over-simplified design theory and limited scope of historical explanation of Chinese fashion suggest that we need to seek to go beyond the ineffective design theory or pure description of the historian. The design process therefore should be a dialogue between the academic and the practical approaches to Chinese fashion design. I believe that fashion studies must be brought back into the marketplace and fashion design must be brought back into culture.

Charsley remarks that cultural objects (like the dress which is the focus of this study) tend to condition their use, and "objects and uses together condition the meanings that may be attached to them." (Charsley 1992: 132 quoted in Lindisfame-Tapper and Bruce Ingham 1997: 26) He writes further:

Where the past is positively valued and precedent is clear it may seem important to people to follow it. . . (sometimes leading to) a conscious struggle to preserve as much of established tradition as is possible. . . Where adequate precedent is not immediately available, a creative reworking of whatever record there may be is possible. . . But even if the past is not given any special value, there is only one other option for events of importance. That is to find something new and special, to exceed the past. (1992:135-36 quoted in Lindisfame-Tapper and Ingham 1997: 31)

Chinese costume has to adapt to modern life and draw inspiration from both history and contemporary cultures to survive. Taking a practical perspective would replace an antiquarian point of view by a fashion design approach based on scholarly subjectivity. But how would improved scholarly study affect practical design? A wider scope of historical studies on Chinese fashion should be encouraged and the link between the academic and the practical fields could be made through fashion journalists and schools of fashion design. Design theory would only make sense if it took cognisance of its modernist context. A deeper theoretical study of historical resources such as the attempt to study T'ang dress through several different pairs of spectacles simultaneously--of normative moralism, of aesthetics, of visual images, of social phenomenon, and of cultural exchanges--could provide a rich resource for Chinese fashion design. This would enable the designers to place the designing of their products in a larger cultural framework so that there can be no separation of the marketplace from cultural values.

Design concerns with intrinsic quality and eternal cultural appeal of Chinese clothing

As forms of late the twentieth-century post-modernity, the overall patterns of sexual ideology and practice of Orientalism and globalism have encouraged an unreflecting focus on the dictates of homogenous taste and the power of dominant fashion empires without considering the appropriation of modernist forms in Chinese clothing and leaves little space for individual attributions of meaning or cultural choice. I argue that the manner of modern Westernisation demonstrates both the shallow understanding of Chinese clothing and a preoccupation with stereotypes. It runs counter to the goals of my inquiry. I hold the view that clothing should provoke sentiments and reactions in those who wear them. The Chinese woman is deemed most beautiful when she is wearing her cultural form of clothes. The readily perceived features of T'ang fashion and the parallels of the two periods which I demonstrated in earlier chapters are consonant with this view. My design concept seeks to incorporate elements from both immaterial and material aspects, resuscitates both the intrinsic quality

and eternal cultural appeal of Chinese clothing, and my consideration of what is beauty in T'ang dress does not curb the craving for novelty.

It is important to ask whether a new direction in fashion method should be driven more by a designer's personal creation or by an obsolescent T'ang convention? I believe that my innovations could create a new idea or style of a dress. It will dissolve the fixed contrast drawn between a dress's "expressive" and "spiritual" dimensions. I consider both the intrinsic form and the formal part of dress. I believe that the validity of Chinese clothing should not consist merely in expendable styling for a tangible garment but in the aesthetics that lingers on as a more permanent monument to an expression of a time whilst conveying T'ang traditions¹⁸⁸.

Utilitarian values of functionalism and aesthetic values generally provide the two aspects of fashion design. I primarily aim to create a balance between functionality and aesthetics¹⁸⁹. This is a question of how to balance the functional and aesthetic claims of Chinese clothing design. I assume that if the former is stressed, without due regard to the latter, as in much modern work, clothes become expressionless and meaningless. Yet if the symbolic element is overdone at the expense of the functional, the dress functionality is sacrificed to cultural expression.

The parallels resolve the form and criteria of the new mode of T'ang dress

There are some discrepancies among different contemporary disciplines involved in the process of the designing: Should the form of clothing be derived further by cultural implication or determined by utilitarian concerns? How could traditional T'ang cultural forms and modern functionalism be adopted interdependently without many conflicts? In an earlier chapter I have discussed the parallels from an essentially comparative perspective on T'ang and the contemporary 21st-century fashions. How might I account for the parallelism between the Chinese wearers' preference in T'ang and current century to create a new model that is distinctively Chinese? One possible answer is that both design principle and techniques adopted from T'ang traditions will contribute to the development of the new mode of T'ang dress. At this point I would like to return to the parallels. The aspirations and sentiments of the Chinese which I pointed out in an earlier chapter, the Chinese psychological, social, and cultural needs that condition the use of the garment, would possibly resolve the criteria of function. My awareness of the aesthetics of T'ang times would probably decide how I appeal to the form of the new dress. Rather than spread the conventional principles to insist on the resuscitation of exactly T'ang taste and notions which might lack modernist consideration, my own design concept poses the fundamental concern that the survival of Chinese clothing tradition depends on its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. It is in the light of these aims and distinctions that I want to speculate on the issues of modernisation of T'ang dress. To prevent the speculation from becoming totally diffuse and abstract, and to allow the arguments to encounter the particular realisation of this application I will be establishing a design methodology to apply T'ang-dress-inspired contemporary design, which will be explicated in the following chapters.

¹⁸⁸ The topic of tradition itself is currently undergoing reevaluation. In ethnographic research "tradition" has come to mean an item or action inherited intact from the past, "relatively invariant from generation to generation." (Dominguex 1986: 549 quoted in Seng and Wass 1995: 229)

¹⁸⁹ See Whittick 1971: 173.

Chapter 8: Philosophy of Design: *Chih* 質, *Wen* 文 and *Yun* 韻

Clothing is a practical art that accumulates and settles as culture develops. Blended with social lives, clothing becomes a phenomenon of time. Modernism and creativity are part of the process through which historical heritage, including clothing, is preserved. In an earlier chapter I clarified the means of defining and establishing my design concept for modernised T'ang dress in an attempt to eliminate ambiguities about the theoretical basis of my design methodology.

How can the principles of Chinese values and the particular concerns and meanings invested in T'ang dress—employment, practice, regulation, use, convention and function—be rendered as recognisable signifiers of culture? In short, can the dress act as a carrier of cultural symbols? Or, can the garment have a new structure on the base of Chinese conventions? I will approach these questions by considering the language that I can use to translate the presence and effects of what I have interpreted from the complicated literature and sensitive visual images into terms of fashion designing. And, how do I situate them in relation to the present or even the future? In other words, in contemporary life and in modernity?

Relying on an interpretation of literature sources to conceive a dress design carries the risk that an endeavour that is ultimately practical will be analysed in abstract linguistic terms. As a mode of modernity, dress is just as concerned with praxis as with meaning, with stimulation as with intellectual explanation, and with the social context as with the individual wearer. I hold a view that a design process analysis must encompass these dimensions, and explain their relationship. Thus, my physical fabrication of my designs will be included in my analysis. This will include literal, visual images and metaphorical images that give an interpretation of the role and status of the designer.

The designers I admire are those who will be remembered over centuries because they have created some kind of fundamental form, like Paul Poiret's hobble skirt. He applied Oriental overtones to western clothes. My situation is the reverse; my goal is to replace western elements with Chinese ones. By attempting to achieve this goal, I am preoccupied with how to develop my own idiom—my individual style drawing on elements of T'ang dress. According to Hodder's contextual analysis of symbolic meanings in objects (1998), meaning in Tang dress is threefold:

- T'ang dress had practical implications i.e. its uses and value—the cultural value that Chinese costume revealed can be made use of in modern days.
- T'ang dress had structural or coded meanings—ethical, political and spiritual values placed on it by society.
- T'ang dress was historical; it had meaningful associations with the past.

The three principles of my design philosophy will be derived from the above: (1) The functional criterion: "*Chih*", which is devised by Chinese artistic maxims and dress conventions, (2) Symbolic structure: "*Wen*", which contains T'ang dress's symbolic meanings, and (3) Aesthetic resonance: "*Yun*", which is identical to, and originates from, the iconic forms of T'ang dress.

8.1 Principle of *Chih* 質 (substance)

In the *Analects*, Confucius (551-479 BC) admonished,

When substance [chih] exceeds ornament [wen], we have rusticity; when ornament exceeds substance, we have the writing of history. When ornament and substance are in harmony, we shall then have [the way] of a gentleman. (Fong et al 1984:2)

Chih (substance) is an essential element of Chinese cultural aesthetics; it is expressed in austere clothes whose components including shape and material embodied a primitive functionality which is connected to antiquity¹⁹⁰. Artistic conventions, mastery of technique, space and symbolic design as well as a deep sensitivity to, and perception of, the characteristic essence of natural forms—all these are abundantly evident in the images and description of T'ang dress.

The quality of beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and is thus subjective. I take the view that the most approachable quality in T'ang dress is not just confined to the superficial appearance of garments¹⁹¹. In an earlier chapter I expressed the opinion that rich symbolic meanings are the main characteristic of traditional Chinese clothing design. Here, I assume that the stylisation of clothing can reveal the consciousness of modelling inherent within T'ang convention on clothing and can enable me to formulate my own way of creation in an integrated artistry. Instead of concerning myself with the garments' details or decorations, my philosophy of *Chih* is intended to invoke in the human body, a certain intimacy and a sensation of serenity.

8.1.1 Flowing of “*chi*” 氣

In the T'ang period, traditional principles influenced T'ang people's thoughts; they not only affected artistic creation, but also had a direct bearing on the sensation of dress. I have interpreted how T'ang people felt in the dresses they wore. Taoism believes the sentiment of a garment carries power—because power has been invested in it—a circular flow of energy: “*chi*”. Cosmic meaning is the symbolic counterpart of spiritual reality, and it constitutes the inspiration of and drives my “*Chih*” (Substance) principle. The *pi-bou* (shawl or ribbon) wrapped images on Taoist or Buddhist ceremonial clothing have strongly inspired me—simple lines cycling all around the human body provides an exercise of “*chi*” (energy). They express a sensation of fluidness and flowing. I adopt this idea as the essential element for my creation. I then transform the intangible thoughts to the tangible garment by forming a garment with strips' fluidly and sensually in a manner that mirrors the religious style of T'ang vestments and the harmonious and interactive relationship between yin and yang.

8.1.2 Rhythmic linear modelling

The second thought which inspires my *Chih* principle is driven by an ancient mode of aestheticians' theories and by T'ang artists who succeeded Wu Taozi such as Yen Li-ben and Zhou Fang. In an earlier chapter, I have shown how “*chi*” is connected in its origins with the Six Maxims of the

¹⁹⁰ The *ta-chieo-mien* (large leather ritual dress) was worn by ancient Chinese emperor. Lamb skin was adopted because of its *chih* (substance) of primeval simplicity, which symbolised respect for the antiquity. (*Ta T'ang Giao Si Lu* by Wang jin, chuan 3, Ch'ing Tao kwang 25th year); *A Concordance to the Guliangzhuan*: 99; *A Concordance to the Guliangzhuan*: 161.

¹⁹¹ The Master said, “Extravagance leads to insubordination, and parsimony to meanness. It is better to be mean than to be insubordinate.” In Chapter 15, *Confucian Analects*, tr. by Legge 1885: 95.

pre-T'ang aesthetic tradition of the fifth-century¹⁹². One of the most distinct maxims is linear styling. I extrapolate from the images seen in T'ang paintings. Those styles are developed primarily through linear styling with ribbon-like cloth, draping and wrapping the body, rather than by tailoring cloth to fit the body. I expand these Taoist religious practices of styling into a semaphore as my functional criterion which retains the effects that rationalise the disclosure of the supple female form. With my principle of *Chih*, new forms are made of lines. The lines of the same strip are manipulated running around the body in diverse directions. It creates continuous lines in which the body's breath and movements transform flat shapes on a two-dimensional plane into fluid three-dimensions in the swirl of the hems and the drapery of sleeves, creating varying rhythm. The fluid flowing lines result in a blending of effects and alternative approach of my dress form, in which drapery and spirals are used both as structural support and to accentuate the rhythm that establish a transcendent association with Naturalism and Idealism.

8.1.3 Minimalist construction

I step back from the construction and become immersed in simply linked rectangular structures which replace the western complexity of assemblage of cutting blocks for modern clothes. Proceeding from the *Chih* principle, using one single strip as a foundation constantly in the whole garment is my principal structural method. My garments are constructed with an economical use of strips of controlled-width from straight-edged rectilinear modules, sewn at sides with a simple running stitch. This requires my technique in the manipulation of shapes, not only to create elegance but also to capture the sensual rapport between the Chinese woman's body and the clothes.

Unlike juxtaposition of old forms and striking colours in conventional notions of Chinese clothes and their exotic Orientalised western versions, this minimalist construction /maintains the integrity of the cloth/ is based on Chinese clothing traditions. While conforming in regards to the rhythm presented in historical images, with its supple and sensuous wrapping and draping with controlled tailoring of stitching and belting, my designs contain subtle structural elements which differ completely from the western way of shaping. Simplicity and utility are basic tenets of *Chih* that echo the use of T'ang dress. The tailoring of the garments employs an original technique, which is also informed by the desire to emphasise Chinese over western elements in dress making and which conforms to modernised design concept that I have earlier devised.

8.2 Principle of *Wen* 文 (symbols or symbolising)

The past has its depth, the present has reality and the future has its illusions. The meanings of the symbolic connotations described in the literature, express themselves in a cultural idiom. I ask:

- Can the complexity and depth of meaning of T'ang conventions be adequately expressed in the modernist forms that I am proposing?
- How do I create something that can last for a longer time than a seasonal market collection, or that may even be timeless?

¹⁹² Early texts quoted by Zhang better serve his more pictorial purpose, the chief among them the six maxims included in the *Guhua pinlu* (*A record of the Classification of Painters of Former Times*) of Hsieh He (Xie He) (fl.ca AD 500). The Six Maxims have been outlined in an earlier chapter in this volume.

"*Wen*", words or symbols¹⁹³, is a social phenomenon. In their ancient Chinese sense, scripts are not simply arbitrary linguistic signs. They result from an accumulated process of social convention. They are immutable cosmological entities, each one of which contains within itself a kernel of absolute moral and ethical principle; such principles in turn reflect much of what the Chinese are able to learn about the nature of the world and of the society in which they live. For example, "*Mu*"木 (wood) is associated with the "*Ts'ng lung*" (Green dragon), a constellation of the eastern quadrant of the Chinese firmament, thus giving it a concrete rather than an abstract reference¹⁹⁴. The moralistic implications can be presented through the graphic form. In attempting to apply this concept in my design, the problem raised is how a garment can be a representation of the meanings embodied in T'ang signs?

Chinese pictographs are symbols that are used to develop and express abstract ideas. The idea of imbuing cloths' shapes with cultural meanings could have historical and humanist associations stimulates my design philosophy of "*Wen*". The Twelve Symbols are good examples: sun, moon, etc. and all have recognisable symbols, which are similar to the objects which they denote. After several experiments, I take the decision that rather than adopting the complex meanings of certain T'ang signs, I choose symbolic sources familiar to modern Chinese, to give my garments a fresh verve according to my own vision.

8.2.1 *Hsiang-hsing* initiates the idea for structuring a garment

Chinese scripts have a graphic structure; their graphic components are susceptible to an analysis of the meanings that they represent. They are ideograms, patterned after what one sees. An ideogram is defined as a graphic symbol of idea, an intellectual notion, and not merely a representation of an object¹⁹⁵. Its structural method was initiated by *hsiang-hsing* whose enigmatic context developed the earliest forms of Chinese words as symbols¹⁹⁶.

Chinese writing by brush calligraphy is poetic painting. The T'ang image depicted through ink painting is pictorial poetry. In poetry, a self-referential literary corpus forms a common pool of images and expressions for all the élite of the time. In this view, T'ang dress, like the Chinese scripts, is a vehicle for the expression of artistic sensibilities. For example, a garment may encompass the ritual context in which the clothes may evoke a sense of Chinese tradition. Outfits and literature alike are composed within the dictates of structured systems. I have therefore adopted the idea of *hsiang-hsing*, a conceptual notion of Chinese linguistic system, as the structural method to base my garments on. The *Wen* principle holds that a dress whose shape can be like a Chinese script contains a symbol and the symbol takes graphic form. Their characteristic themes, e.g., the shape of *shen-yi* (profound dress, see Figure 61) shape, dragon, or cloud, betake either Confucian ideology or description of the nature. A typical instance is referred to in Figures 2 and 3, an illustration of comparative figures of the *yi* 衣 (Chinese word for clothing) and its symbol (a shape of an ancient Chinese garment). This suggests the abiding resonance of T'ang forms through the medium of dress. It is especially explicit in its address of a concrete rather than an abstract reference. This is my solution of my design problem of how

¹⁹³ See Wechsler 1985: n. 114.

¹⁹⁴ Shaughnessy, "*I Ching*". See Loewe 1995: 216.

¹⁹⁵ See Yang Jung-Shih 1991: 43.

¹⁹⁶ For *Hsiang hsing*, See an earlier chapter.

intangible historical elements are to be transformed from principles into substantial clothes. Thus the forms of clothing are not just bound to literary or symbolic meanings.

8.2.2 *Wu-hsing* represents the cosmic meaning of the clothing form

I have expressed the opinion that in imitating costume's physical parts and making minor changes as modern designers would do, the spiritual aspect, namely the meanings of Chinese clothing, is lost. I ask: instead of realistically rendering a human body's shape, namely the imitation of human forms, with the western way of assembling cut pieces of a garment's components,

- Can a garment's design incorporate Chinese ancient ideas and simultaneously maintain T'ang conventions?

I consider that dress in the pictures and symbols of Chinese scripts resonate with each other in form and content so much that often they inter-penetrate each other completely-like the court dress of the T'ang times. At this point, I consider applying ancient Chinese scripts of the Five Elements of the *wu-hsing* which contains T'ang thoughts of Nature and Universe, to the shape of my garments as essential structures. Based on *hsiang-hsing*, each garment of my design contains visual hieroglyphs of the Five Elements of the *wu-hsing*: *Iin* 金, *Mu* 木, *Shui* 水, *Huo* 火 and *Tu* 土 which are made more explicit by referring to the essence and constructs of the original context of yin-yang theory in which the objects of the Chinese world were composed. It is a form which penetrates almost all communication in Chinese and is of great potency, rich in nuances and shades of meaning.

This solution appears satisfactory because the design excludes exact resemblance to Chinese costume's form. It works by allusions and by adopting convention to denote the meanings of T'ang dress, with little sense of visual identity of concrete objects but a common quality of T'ang conventions. This method is to realise idealistic conventions in the tangible structure of a garment. It is this tier of communication that I seek to elucidate in my design. Thus the posture and outlines composed for my garments are a linguistic extension of sympathetic bodily sensations to that of nature which involve one in an open-ended quest for more implications of cultural meanings. Discrete symbols are a fount of convention to structure and imbue cultural meaning in clothes. It is a structural method which follows my pursuit of T'ang aesthetics and conventions.

8.3 Principle of *Yun* 韻 (resonating elegance)

"*Yun*" means resonating elegance. *Yun* principle is based not on a sense of beauty alone, but on a series of associations or suggestions that imply a resonance of harmony and elegance which is portrayed in T'ang images. Several dominant forms are chosen and referenced to apply their visual and tactile qualities into the form of my garment. I ask:

- How do I redefine T'ang women's sense of sensuality and modesty?

The forms of the garments describe the image arrays of different periods of T'ang. They are comparatively sober, authentic or delicate forms: (1) The Yuan-he style (the international style), (2) The Princess Yongtai style (the early T'ang style), (3) The Equestrian style (the *Hufu* style), (4) Dancer costume style (or the Buddhist artist style), and (5) Court style (or Kai-yuan and Tian-pao style). These forms provide the characteristics of distinctive silhouettes suitable for my design resource

derivation. I try to mark a difference from the eroticism of the Orientalist view by creating a new sense of femininity for Chinese women.

Conclusion

In evolving my own creation, I have focused on three attributes of T'ang dress that I have identified from my study: use, meaning and form. They are central to my design philosophy. Formulating my design philosophy involved a wider spectrum of analysis including exploring the underlying stimulus of physical forms. It involves the realisation of ideas and traditional beliefs in physical design, bringing into play certain conceptualisations (in terms of the *Use*), connotations (in terms of the *Meanings*), and information and sensual experience (in terms of the *Forms*). In summary, I have employed the following three principles in my fabrication:

- “*Chih*”: essential aspect of bodily intimacy and serenity sensation. It manipulates linear modelling in clothing.
- “*Wen*”: expressive aspect of encoding literary and convention. It constructs symbols to the garment.
- “*Yun*”: extrinsic aspect of endorsing a distinct new T'ang look. It describes the iconic T'ang styles.

Reference to the symbols remains a constant and central issue of my design principle.

(See Table 15) Consequently I created a set of garments. I will describe the creation in next chapter.

Table 15 Principles of *Wen* and *Yun* in relation to T'ang forms and the Five Elements

	<i>Wen</i>	The Five Elements	<i>Yun</i>
The Theme	Garment's structure in association to <i>hsiang-hsing</i>	Meaning attached to the garment	Garment's Form referring to T'ang iconic style
<i>Jin</i>	金	Metal	Yuen-he style
<i>Mu</i>	木	Wood	Princess Yongtai style
<i>Shui</i>	水	Water	Equestrian style of <i>Hufu</i>
<i>Hua</i>	火	Fire	Dancer costume style
<i>Tu</i>	土	Earth	Courtly style

Chapter 9: Fabrication of a new model of T'ang dress

Design methodology cannot avoid addressing questions concerning the nature of the products being designed for two reasons. First, the design process and the design product are so intimately related to each other that an understanding of the nature of the design process requires insight into the nature of the kind of product designed. I have elaborated on this in Chapter 7, "Design concept for modernised T'ang dress" and Chapter 8, "Philosophy of design: *Chih, Wen and Yun*". Secondly, the design activity is both internal (i.e. mental, conceptual) and external (i.e. physical, concrete design work) (Taura 2002: 167). Traditional ways of designing seem to commonly merely analyse the process by showing the source board or sketches of design but neglect the integration of the thought processes or the designer's philosophy that guide them. If, as I have claimed, conventional methods of fashion designing are unsatisfactory, for the purpose of this research, I ask: can they be improved or replaced by a new method? I hope to explore this possibility by enquiring how design process and activities can be conducted so that the experience can be translated and the fabrication process can be explained analytically.

I believe that an analysis of the elaboration of design process is the essential key to the understanding of design methodology. In this chapter, I try to identify my design thinking process and describe the design activities in which designing proceeds. I intend to describe the creative process both in a visual and textual way. It establishes predictable and rational relations between the design goals and outcomes and suggests expected ways of identifying the design process. My view of the approach to the design process implicitly contests the view that the designer's creativity is essentially mysterious and that the gap between intuition and intellect could be closed.

This enquiry into the design process is of critical importance to the aim of this research: how can Chinese costume be reconceptualised and modernised? It tries to show how these design processes of the abstract and the physical parts both come together, through presenting corresponding drawings and samples. The elaboration of the design process could guide a network of design thinking and making of the clothes. I will outline a constructive procedure in design, providing some empirical evidence about the appropriateness of the proposed approach to designing a new model of T'ang dress. The design methods are recorded and the design activities are displayed visually to show that each plays a part in the final solution arriving at the design product. A structured sequence of processes that would lead to the design outcome is arranged in the following way.

9.1 Process of imagery reinterpretation and mental synthesis

My understanding of the evolution of T'ang fashion is derived mostly from observations of depictions of clothes ensembles in artefacts. A wide variety of existing designs can be seen in historical images. I chose the design elements that were found to have characteristic elements and that were most attractive to me, for example, the linear style depicted in ink paintings. I should recall that the purpose of the observation of historical images is to input historical elements into the concept and forms of my design. How can this best be done? Barratt testifies to the intricate nature of this endeavour;

something has been made visible which could not have been perceived without the effort to make it visible (Barratt 1990: 282).

Visualisation

To achieve deriving historical images for my design source, the process of visualisation is undertaken in my eye's mind. I will first conceptualise abstract forms from observing the historical images (Fig. 140). This initial form will be informed by my preferences and will be guided by my concepts on how to modernise the historical forms. I will study the image's silhouette and proportions, composition of pattern and colours, combination of layers, drapery details, usage of fabric, and so on in order to choose useful source for my design. I will employ my instincts to contemplate the inner spirit which lays hidden under the images. A form of an object (in the case of this study, T'ang costume) is only the outward appearance. I will remind myself that visual images do not fully portray the essence of a cloth; hence I will not allow this limitation to imprison my imagination. My approach to design not only emphasises the "visual form" which concerns the realistic appearance of the dress but also the "felt form".



Fig. 140 A sample of historical images for visualisation.
AD 706.

Source: Shen 1988: 245.

Design method: Aesthetic motivation and impulses happen during the process of visualisation. I filter the visual elements through my own eyes and feelings about T'ang aesthetics, for example, the floating "chi".

Spontaneity of sketching

My early exploratory drawings visually recall the physical nature aspects of historical dress. Sketches can act as both facilitator and recorder of creative ideas and allow me to try out potential design solutions on paper. The advantage of the freehand sketch is that since it is relatively unstructured, it prevents one from getting fixated on designs which could still be improved. I try sketches on papers. I begin to draw images according to my feelings. I use pencil drawings or ink brush paintings to transform the historical images into more abstract forms. The sketches will have a form similar but abstract to that of my observed historical images.

Sketching is tried out in the mind's eye before they emerge into pre-solution model. My principal aim is to capture the "inner essence" of the form of the images that I observe. The focus is from an aesthetic point of view. The "devices" to achieve creativity will mainly be the contours: more profound and less specific than individual details. The historic forms are two-dimensional or three-dimensional geometric shapes and volumes of clothes. Therefore, drawing of a pattern or an item of the garment is developed. With selected historical images, I analyse them with notes and drawings. (Fig. 141) The sketches are intended to provide a range of starting points and to act as a stimulus for further ideas. For example, if an image consists of a piece of folded fabric I will replicate the folding in my drawing and explore the possibilities of developing a design that will change its shape. In the meantime I make notes of a special method for making its new shape.



Fig. 141 Drawing associated with the imagery style of T'ang costume.
21st April 2003. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: This drawing shows a result of the process of visualisation. I transfer the layered, linear lines into my sketches. The notes which I made on the paper are for the analysis of the patterns and colours in the costume.

The visualisation also involves a problem-solving process, i.e. working out the relationship between clothes and the body. I am thinking: a decoration on a sleeve may have its origins in a painting by a T'ang artist. The sleeve may be longer than a mere sleeve; I may turn it into an ornament, into a scarf or a mantle. It may however be too long for practical use. In reality, I need to transform the object such as a sleeve to the popular practice of utilising space. Therefore sketches are tried out on any potential solutions for changing the shape with new methods. I analyse the relationships between the wearer and the clothes among the drawings to gain better understanding of the function of the clothes. The structure of my sketches may not match the volumetric part of the structure of the historic costume that I have observed. They may not respond to the spontaneity of human body. This requires thinking about how to modernise costumes. I am then proposing a stage of generating abstract ideas which would offer solutions for my design.

9.2 Process of generating abstract solutions

Methods for stimulating creativity are strongly based on generating ideas for solutions. Here I describe my experience of generating potential solutions at an abstract level. These solutions consist of different stages that are related to each other and to the quality of the final solution. In this abstracting stage, visualisation also helps to enhance my ability to generate solutions. Investigating various historical costumes in terms of their geometric forms will increase the possibility of creating more interesting forms.

Topological generations

I combine a set of pre-defined basic elements (circle, rectangle, or ellipse) or special forms such as the curved strokes of traditional Chinese calligraphy. I try to assemble these basic elements to develop the possibility of using them for my designs. For example, in attempting to develop a typology for structuring clothes, I derived sources from Chinese calligraphy. See Figure 142.

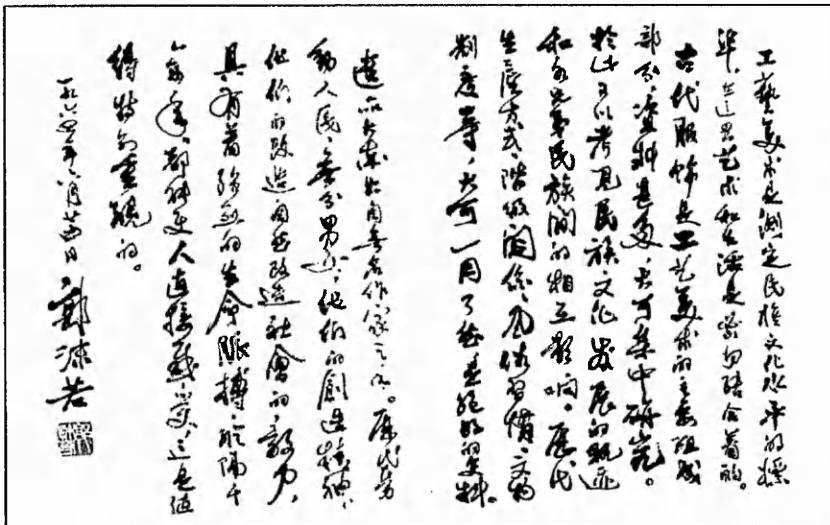


Fig. 142 A piece of work of Chinese calligraphy.
Late 1980s. Calligraphy by Ko Mao-rou.
Source: Shen 1988: 2-3.

Spatial configuration

In order to generate potential spatial configurations for each element, I try to fathom out how each element of a pre-model can be oriented in space. I also pay attention to interfaces between the elements, spatial constraints of making the garment and how they relate to the wearer's motions. I use possible spatial variants of each basic element to study the orientation and position relationships between each element. For example, I consider how to transfer traditional Chinese costume's disposition of two-dimensional phrase onto a new phrase of three dimensions in space. Figure 143 shows a piece of calligraphic work, a curved style calligraphic script 水 ("Shui") that I derive from the calligraphy. Figure 144 shows the transformed shape from its design resource. These images are taken from my sketchbook, electronic data and prototype trials. They are annotated with their origin and dates.



Fig. 143 A curved style calligraphic script 水 (“Shui”).
Late 1980’s. Calligraphy by Ko Mao-rou.
Source: Shen 1988: 2.

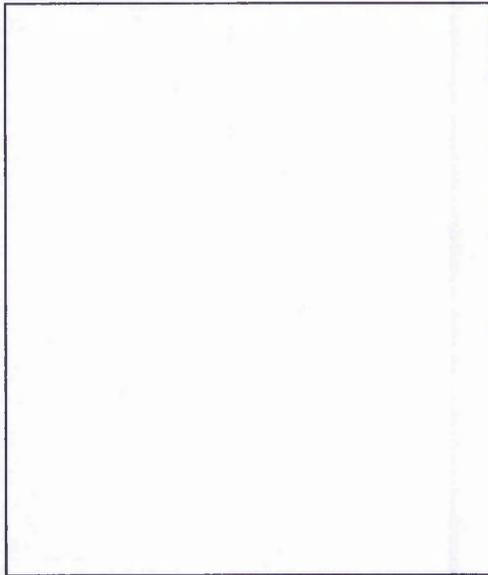


Fig. 144 A design of continuous line that initiates the shape of character 水 (“Shui”).
5th May 2003. Design and illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: For spatial configuration of the abstract element, this design is structured diagrammatically alongside the images of the Chinese characters. It is the disposal of the script outlines alone which structure the garment.

Physical embodiment

Potential physical embodiments are generated based on the spatial configurations. This embodiment is composed of a set of generic components or assemblies and their generic interfaces at the geometric level. Each generic component or assembly has an approximate shape of the real component or assembly. For instance, different types of connections (such as by either manual or mechanical

methods: seaming, folding) between components (such as different shape of cloth) or assemblies (i.e. two pieces fabrics sew together) provide different functions. Figure 145 shows a drawing conducted at the physical embodiment level which takes into account actual shapes or dimensions of the components (of the dress) to predict the physical structure. I develop the possibility of configuring the shape and create the space around human body. Concepts are detailed from topological solutions which are composed of basic elements.

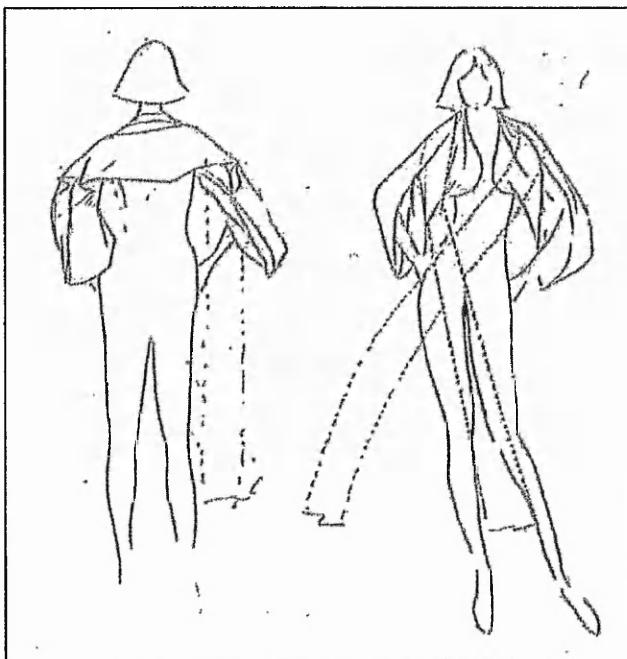


Fig. 145 A drawing associated with a garment's structure.
14th June 2003. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: With drawings, I consider how to realise the physical shapes of the clothes. I manipulate the cloth, tending to unify the surface and space to a kind of shape that covers a three-dimensional sculptural statement. I study how a physical structure (in the case of this experiment, a sleeve) can be developed from abstract (a linear rhythm) to details.

9.3 Process of choosing design solutions

Solutions that are similar can be better grouped together. The design solutions would avoid the repetition of same shapes but a group of similar types of shapes grouped together would possibly build up a unique style. The forms generated can be called presolution models. Various types of similarities are identified, such as arrangement similarity where two premodels are composed in a similar way. I discard some solutions because of their infeasibility or similarity or their failure to meet further design requirements. The requirements may be for functional or aesthetic purposes of a garment which I predict as a constraint. For example, a solution (i.e. a sleeve that has a drapery shape) that meets aesthetic requirement may not fulfil functional criteria. Therefore it is discarded.

The knowledge that I have accumulated from practical experience will be used to develop the pre-solution model: The factual knowledge of materials (e.g., different kind of fabric, wool or silk of same weight would create drapes differently), and the procedural knowledge of which signifies

actions or know-how information (e.g., some seaming methods would only work with certain specific fabrics). Figure 146 shows the presolutions are laid out for selections.

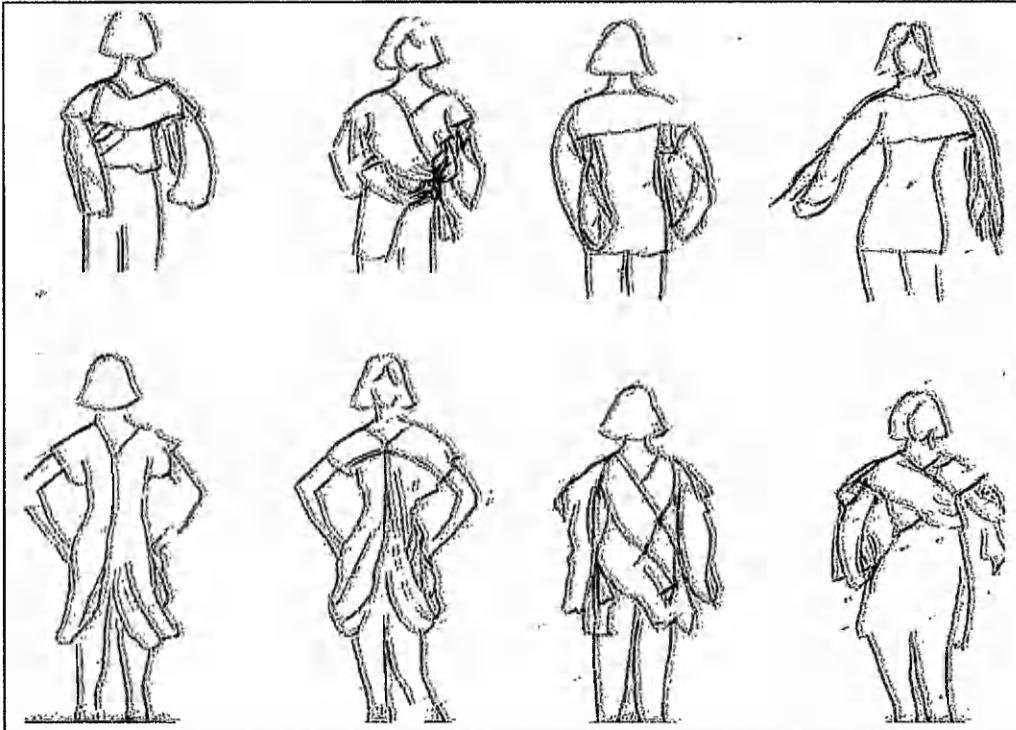


Fig. 146 Sketches of a layout for constructing a sleeve.
5th July 2003. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: I lay out the presolutions in order to compare their qualities and to choose the most suitable way of constructing them for sleeves. In this case I am concerned with the sleeves' aesthetic form and functions.

9.4 Process of physical realisations of abstract solutions

The quality of abstract solutions can be assessed only after transforming them into physical level. I ask:

- How can the characteristic design elements of intangible form be given tangible expression?

These design activities occur in sequences that are physical. The design methods include manipulating mental images for form generation or developing and applying design rules to generate solutions. To develop the form of pre-solution models, I start out bearing in mind constraints such as the need to make the cloth functional and how I arrive at a product. Attention is paid both to design solutions and design methods, questions arise over how the physical garment can realise a certain function.

To achieve this I choose some solutions and transform them into premodels (prototypes) based on the experimentation with materials and mechanical methods that I have devised. Then I put toile on mannequins that provide a sense of scale. Manipulating the spatial relations between the cloths and the human body or mannequin, the premodels are built in fundamental geometric shapes. Figure 147 is a record of my experiments of manipulating and choosing the premodels.

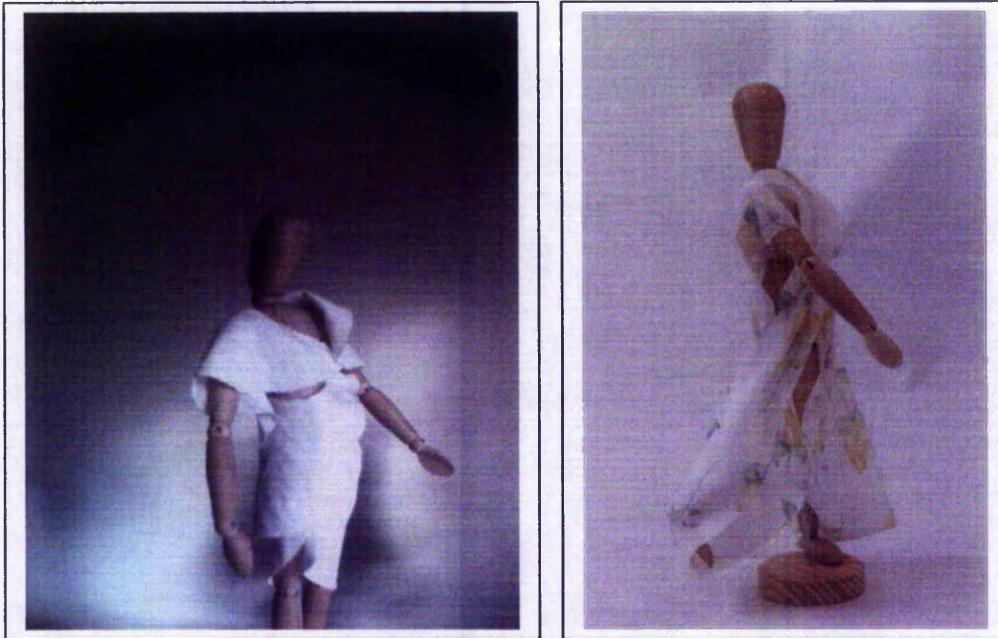


Fig. 147 Two Premodels for studying the physical realisation.
22nd Aug 2003. Modelling by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: At a functional level, I consider subjectively the functionality of the solutions. At an aesthetic level, I intuitively consider the desired shape.

I may have my own method of problem formulation and solving methods. I found that the approaches of more expressive qualities (e.g., aesthetically form appealing) often conflict with functional qualities and the constraints of time and cost affected the design and production process. I am proposing a new method to solve the design constraints. Conceptualisation and physical realisation methods are equally important in the development stages. The process of sketching and problem-solving does not fully cover the spectrum of design activities. With a belief that clothes can be made from the adaptation of conventional principles, I study Chinese conventional construction of layering, folding or flattening. Figure 148 shows an illustration of traditional Chinese way of constructing a dress.

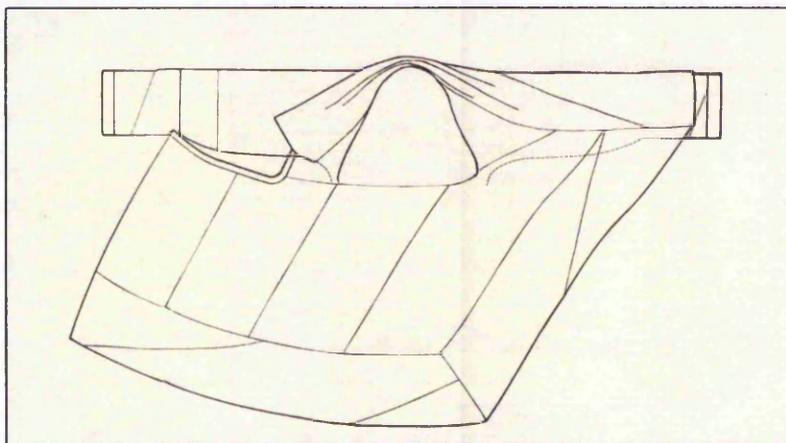


Fig. 148 A layout of traditional Chinese dress's structure.
Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220).
Source: Shen 1988.

Spatial relationships between paper models and the mannequin

I use tissues and tapes to form models of paper which are inspired by the emotive fragments from my drawing based on observations of the historical images. The models portray some parts of the silhouettes and shapes of my drawn items. I put them on a small-scaled mannequin. See Figure 149, the papers are stable and stay in place so the sculptural models enable me to study the spatial relationships between different folded layers in the paper model and the mannequin.

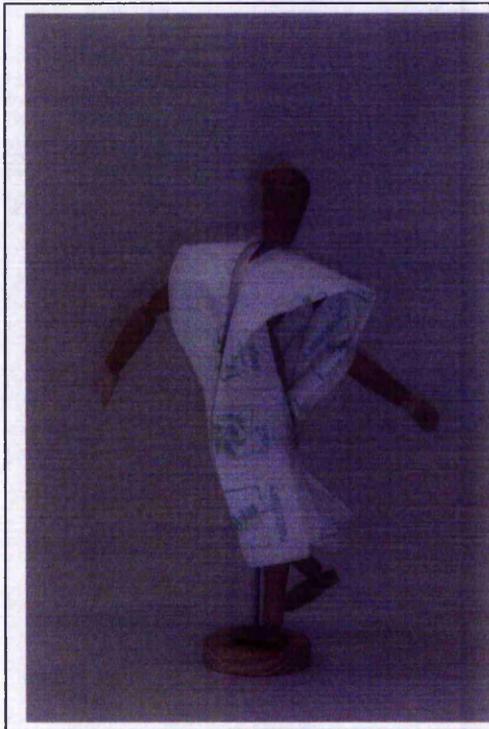


Fig. 149 A paper model.

30th Aug 2003. Modelling by Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Sue Pike.

Design method: With paper models, I experiment with the simple geometric shapes of those single units, thinking of how the units could be joined together.

After constructing the paper models, I use thin toile to transform the paper to different components of a garment. See Figure 150, by trying the units on a full size-scaled mannequin and thinking of how the units could be joined together, I experiment with the simple geometric shapes of those single units. Solutions provide information in terms of shapes, interfaces, and spatial constraints. This allows me to visualise the approximate shape of the solutions, and thereby to think about their practical requirements.



Fig. 150 Toile on stand for studying the shape of solutions.
10th Sept 2003. Modelling and photography: Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: I moved different parts of the mannequin where I put the toile on the dress stand. From different angles I study the possible presolutions, considering the clothes' function and aesthetic look.

Intimate relationship between the clothes and human body

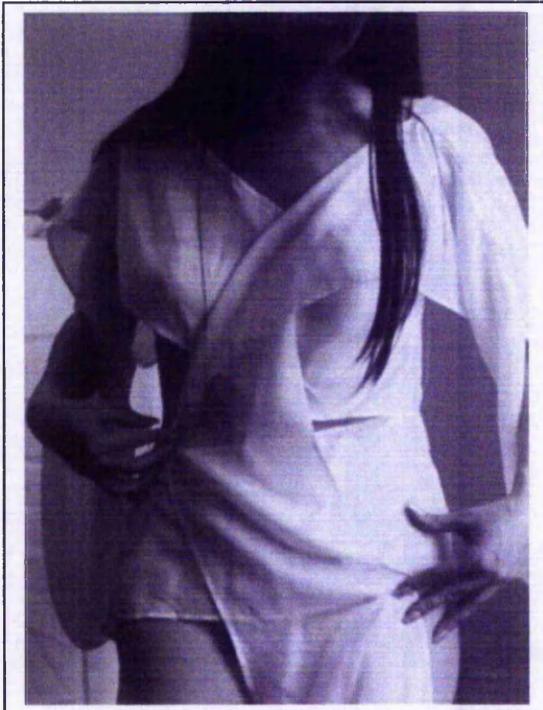


Fig. 151 A silk strip-made prototype of a dress worn on a female model.
10th Oct 2003. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

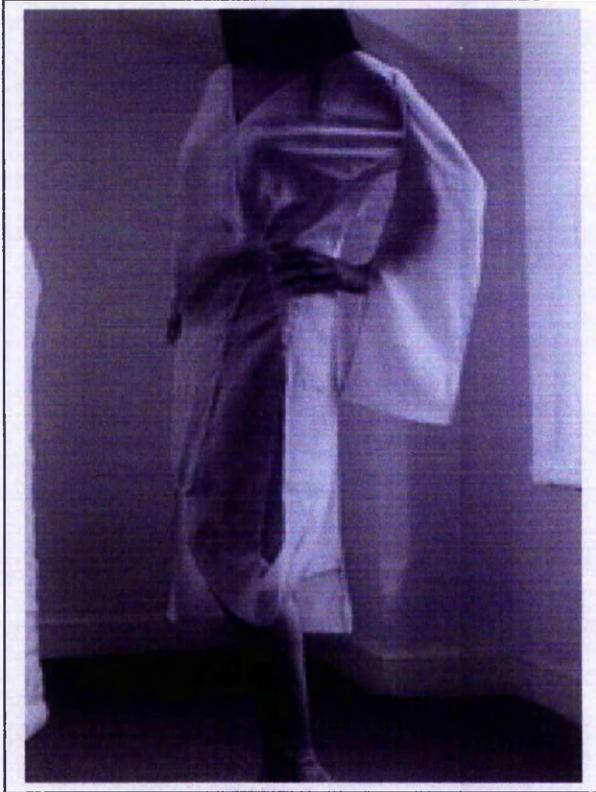


Fig. 152 A silk strip-made prototype of a jacket worn on a female model.
10th Oct 2003. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

Design method: I am concerned mainly about how the garment I am wearing feels on my body and not about how other people perceive it.

Silk is chosen to produce prototypes because it feels good on the skin and it flows rhythmically. To keep a sense of Chinese traditional clothing, it is essential that the fundamental elements are sensual and that the drapery feels fluid and flattering. After studying the spatial relationship between paper models and the mannequin, now it is time to understand the spatial relationship between the clothes and human body. I wear the components of the prototypes made by silk strip and focus on my body's sensations in response to the clothes. Some of the experiences are nonanalytical and tactile. The strips create natural motions. This experience inspires an intimacy between my body and the cloth that stems naturally from my inherent instinct. See Figures 151 and 152.

I concentrate on an inner comfort which affects bodily intimacy to a cloth and ask:

- How do I feel about the clothes and which materials and arrangement of the components of the clothes will feel best on different parts of my body?



Fig. 153 A drawing to analyse how a strip wraps human body to construct a garment (a).
15th Oct 2003. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 154 A drawing to analyse how a strip wraps human body to construct a garment (b).
15th Oct 2003. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: I put the prototype on my body to sense how I feel about the cloth and how the clothes act in motion. With drawings, I analyse how the strip wraps the human body for different components of a garment (e.g., sleeves, bodice) to construct a garment.

In the meantime I analyse the experience of wearing silk strips. I make record for further development of the prototypes. The process reflects all my ideas about the relationships between the cloth and a human body. In the meantime I make my judgments about what is a right shape for modern wearers. I ask

- What does a dress mean to me and what is my attitude to the space between my body and the clothes that it contains?

After successfully studying the spatial relationships between small models and mannequin, and full size components on human body, I enlarge the mini units for full size garment items in toile. These fabrics are chosen for their characters such as suitable weight. I chose plain fabrics because they do not distract me from my concentration on constructing the prototypes of garments. I integrate them and build in the garment's shape with different volume, structure and construction. After taking photos of them I make necessary changes and draw the shapes of these experimental pieces on paper as records for analysis of design problems, e.g., a curve of a collar may look better when it is of smaller scale. (See Figures 153 and 154) When it is enlarged it doesn't look good enough to go with the same shape of the garment body so I will need to change its shape and also adjust the way to join the garment body. Then I produce a full size prototype according to the decision of adjusting the premodels. For example, I found that the drapery creates volume that does not look neat. More prototypes are tried for a more functional and neater look.

9.5 Process of realisation of design principles

Sources of inspiration play an important role in the design process, especially in defining the context for design principles (or rules). *Chih*, *Wen* and *Yun* are the three principles, which generate a tangible product. I am adopting these principles for my elaboration of design process. Their sources of inspiration have been acknowledged in the preceding chapter. I will develop my design method based on the following principles.

9.5.1 Form the garment with strips based on principle of *Chih*



Fig. 155 Rhythmic lines in the clothes seen from T'ang image (AD 618-907).
Source: Shen 1988.

Presolution models are developed from an experimental manipulation of fabrics on dress stands. I start out by exploring how to surmount some constraints. I am particularly sensitive to the rhythmic lines in the clothes. (Fig. 155) Now, while attempting to transfer the intimacy experience to a non form-fitting or non body shape-dominated lined silhouette. I ask:

- Can the lines depicted in the historical images be transferred to the contour, the silhouette, of a series of layers of a garment?

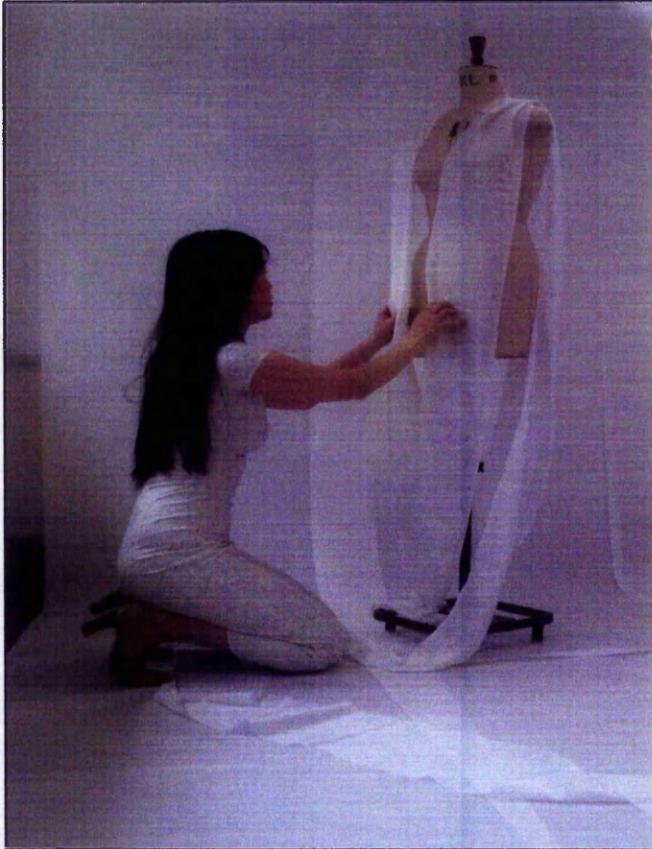


Fig. 156 A long silk strip put on a mannequin (a).

12th Nov 2003. Manipulating the cloth: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Sue Pike.

Design method: I spontaneously manipulate the cloth on dress stands using the strip to form the garment based on my *Chih* principle. The drape, volume and curve that the strip creates are stable. Using the same width of fabric is in accordance with the *Chih* principle.



Fig. 157 A silk strip put on a mannequin (b).

12th Nov 2003. Manipulating the cloth: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Sue Pike.

Design method: In this stage I do not use machines or cutting. I use strips to form a garment which avoids Western methods of imitating the form of human body. I think the more cut, the more distractions or interruptions to the bodily sensations and look.

I use a single long strip of silk to form the whole garment on a dress stand. I imagine I am a Chinese ink painter at work while alternating the finishes and forms—rhythms, folds, draperies, wraps and reverse curves. See Figures 156 and 157, I try to manipulate linear rhythms to express the spirit of Chinese aesthetics and I try to feel through images and visualise from the cloth I am touching. My hands become an extension of the ink brushes of a calligrapher and myself a painter. The cloth is put on the dress stand and manipulated to exercise around the model body circling like strokes of a brush. I imagine that this modelling activity was perhaps the way images were depicted with ink on silk by T'ang painters. My forming the shape of a garment on a dress stand maybe similar to the ways in which T'ang artists depicted dress on T'ang women. The difference is that I can really breathe the space where I am living and manipulate silk for rhythms, not just looking at the images. I also put the strip-formed prototypes on my body. (Fig. 158) This manual work with natural materials revives a sense of naturalness.

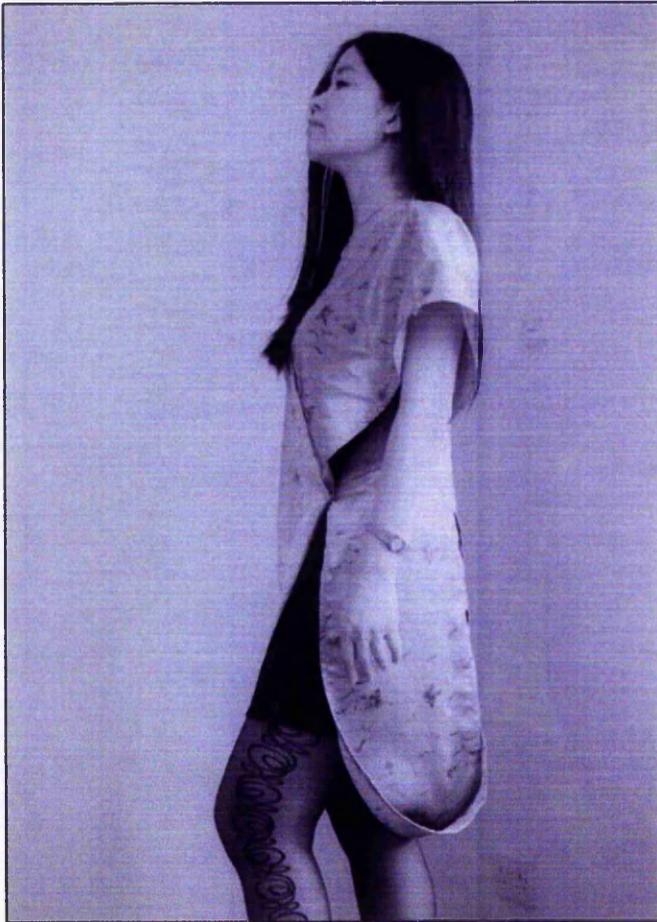


Fig. 158 Study how clothes respond the wearer's emotions.
15th Dec 2003. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.
Design method: I try to put emphasis on overtly bodily sensations so that there is something intimate about a garment when it is worn. It should pulsate with rhythmic breath, responding to Chinese wearer's emotions and motions.

9.5.2 Develop dress style based on principle of *Yun*

A style comes from the original fabrication of the models. It results from a series of decisions made in the process to define the pattern of expression. Although the shape may differ with different garments, the consistent application of similar methods of manipulation of certain key forms or constructions generates a style. I ask:

- What will be the style that marks my distinctive personal and professional way of designing?

I derive the source of T'ang costume to develop my *Yun* principle to define a new look. I use medium weight fabrics such as wool blended with silk to model prototypes on a dress stand. I define their looks and proportions. I try to endow a kind of timeless quality by avoiding any eccentric details or exotic decoration. In the meantime my guiding principle is to find my path to create something suitable for the Chinese wearer. The use of specific forms in designs will be the hallmark of my work. The exquisite silhouette of my design is resonant of T'ang characteristic style. Based on *Yun* principle, my Five Designs are developed. They are: *Jin*, *Mu*, *Shui*, *Huo* and *Tu* Designs. I consider how to

redefine the styles. My focus is not centred on a decorative aesthetic which was known to the Chinese as a visual sign signifying the conspicuousness of officialdom (e.g., decoration of dragon). I then reduce and simplify the costume's form. This is done through transforming T'ang style to a modern look.

One of the Five Designs, *Mu* design, is developed through the impulse of an image of an early T'ang costume. (Fig. 159) The illustration on the left side of Figure 159 shows the design resource for *Mu* design. The illustrations for the front, side and back views of the garments show the modelling process. My garment consists, above all, in simplifying and purifying. After several adjustments, the modern look is asserted with a delicate illusion of verisimilitude that is new, marking the transformation of the images of T'ang beauty.

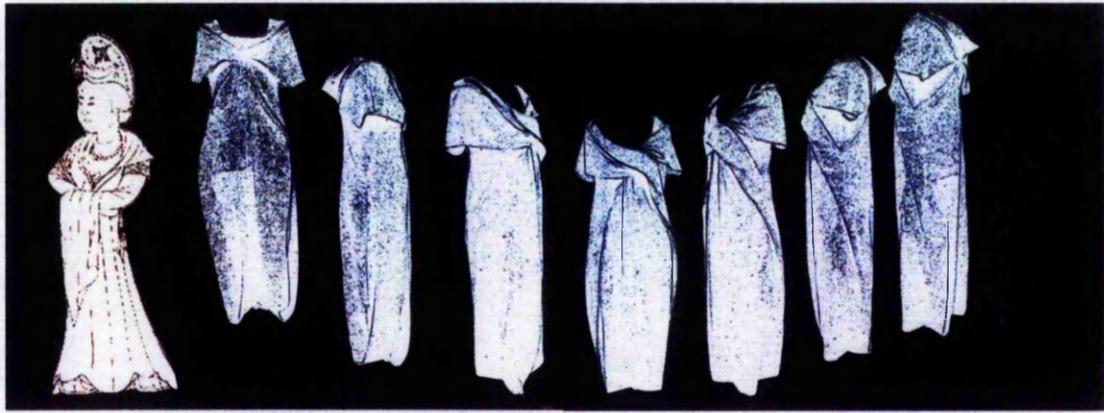


Fig. 159 *Mu* Design, developing new shape of early T'ang style with *Yun* principle.
24th Dec 2003. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: I model the clothes without copying historical images, or resorting to ready-made Western fashion design formulae. I focus on the contemporary appropriation of the dress form. Different techniques are applied (draping, folding, turnover, etc.) to produce prototypes to define a new look of T'ang dress which is in contrast to the eroticism of Orientalisation.

***Jin* Design associated with the Yuen-he style**

Jin Design associates with the elegant shape of the Yuen-he style. See Figure 160, the lady preparing newly woven silk shows that the Yuen-he style of narrow-sleeved upper dress, *pi-bo* (shawl), high-waistline skirt tied by a belt represents a mixed and exotic T'ang international style. See Figure 161, the illustration of *Jin* Design.



Fig. 160 Design source associated with *Jin* Design, the Yuen-he style of T'ang dynasty.
Source: Shen 1988.



Fig. 161 Illustration of *Jin* Design by Lo Hung-chih.
21st Dec 2003.

***Mu* Design associated with the Princess Yongtai style**

The form depicted in stone-engraved figure in the tomb of Princess Yongtai that has been fluid a medium of aesthetic expression explicit in the universal outlook of the transcendental faith of Buddhism and Taoism. The *pi-bo* wrapped images convey a sensation of fluidness and flowing. (See Figure 162) Among the Five Designs *Mu* Design perhaps is the most distinctively complex garment. See Figure 163, the illustration of *Mu* Design.



Fig. 162 Design source associated with *Mu* Design, the Princess Yongtai style of T'ang dynasty.
Source: Shen 1988.



Fig. 163 Illustration of *Mu* Design by Lo Hung-chih.
21st Dec 2003.

Shui* Design associated with the equestrian style of *Hufu

Shui Design is a composite *Hufu* ensemble. The design is inspired by a historical image of the equestrian style. Figure 164 shows that in the palace scene the standing girl wore *Hufu* style wide-lapelled belted tunics which was more than gender determined dress. See Figure 165, the illustration of *Shui* Design which evokes a multicultural *Hufu* context. The cross lapel and tube shape illustrate the merging of elements seen in the historical image. The simplification in shape of *Shui*

Design conveys the impression of an explicit disclosure of the body's contours that is consistent with the evidence of *Hu* culture's effects on T'ang attire over the course of time.



Fig. 164 Design source associated with *Shui* Design, the equestrian style of *Hufu* of T'ang dynasty.
Source: Shen 1988.



Fig. 165 Illustration of *Shui* Design by Lo Hung-chih.
21st Dec 2003.

***Huo* Design associated with dancing costumes**

The flaring form of dancing costume seen in Dun-huang Cave inspired my *Huo* Design. (See Figure 166) The *Huo* Design (See Figure 167) uses one continuous strip to wrap into a spiral dress, corresponding to the use of ribbons with a point of contact with a flying genii seen in the historical image. (See Figure 11, the dancer) The construction of the garment makes comparatively sober use of the flowing lines of the flying scarves and draperies of the dancers' extravaganza.

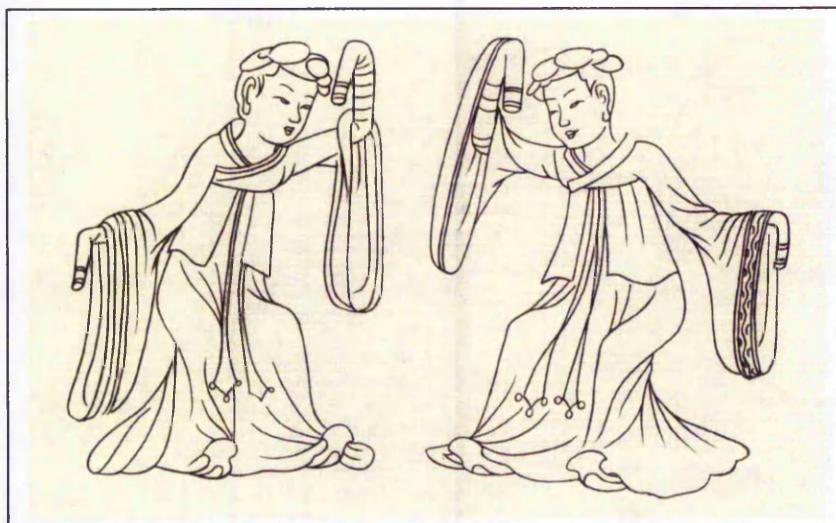


Fig. 166 Design source associated with *Huo* Design, dancing costumes of T'ang dynasty. Source: Shen 1988.

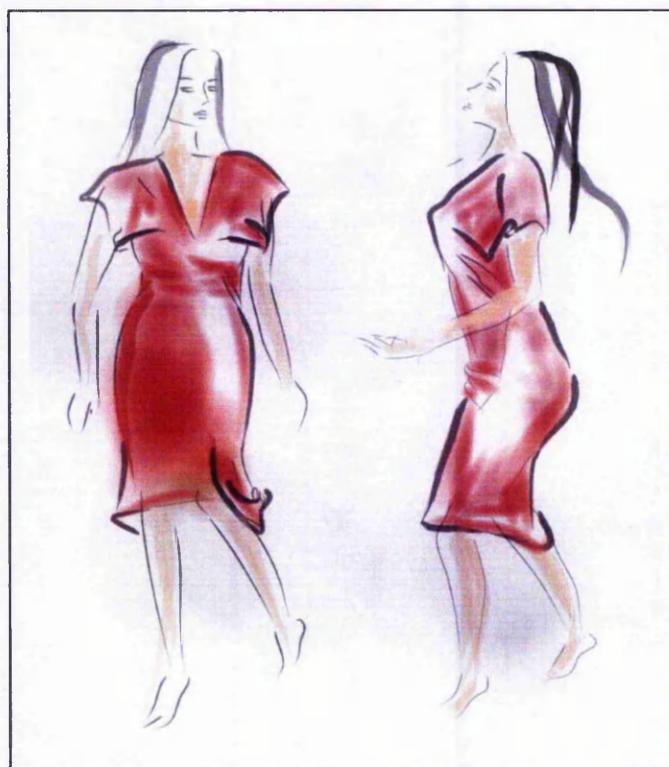


Fig. 167 Illustration of *Huo* Design by Lo Hung-chih. 21st Dec 2003.

***Tu* Design associated with the Kai-yuan and Tian-pao court style**

Tu Design derives from the static august Kai-yuan and Tian-pao courtly style in the palace scenes. Figure 168 shows the court lady wore a low-cut bodice that came from the *Hu* counterculture. This court style radiates an aura of ritual and acts as a symbol or metaphor for the authentic form. See

Figure 169, the illustration of *Tu* Design, the forms of front-wrapped, sided opening with rectangular sleeves and a belt are the key items of this style as signifier of cultural identity.



Fig. 168 Design source associated with *Tu* Design, court style of T'ang dynasty.
Source: Shen 1988.



Fig. 169 Illustration of *Tu* Design by Lo Hung-chih.
21st Dec 2003.

9.5.3 Structure the garment based on principle of *Wen*

T'ang dress amalgamates hues tenderly. The line or colour is always softened, each stealing a little of the other at the junction of the two and the shapes appear harmonious. By contrast, Western cutting produces sharp edges and abrupt connections. I ask:

- How can I create a new constructive method which avoids excessive display of the details of the physical cuts of a dress?

Traditional Chinese dress construction did not imitate the form of the human body. Western dress, on the other hand, refers to a dressmaking system that is built by assembling cut pieces to shape the garments which imitate the form of the human body. I ask:

- How was T'ang dress fabricated and what new construction methods would be required to produce a new model?

While attempting to embody social and cultural context to Chinese costume-inspired design, the question is posed:

- How to combine the symbols to the shape of a garment?

The Chinese character “yī” (衣) was initiated from the shape of a traditional Chinese dress. This gives me an idea for generating my design principle *Wen*. It refers to the script-making method in the Chinese writing system (*hsiang-hsing*) and I adopt this system to apply my structural method for dressmaking, of which I have given a description in the previous chapter.

Based on *Wen* principle, each garment of the Five Designs will consist of a single diagram (a symbol). But using a piece of fabric to construct a garment is not the same as writing a script. I ask:

- What diagrams am I using which are most representative of Chinese ideas?

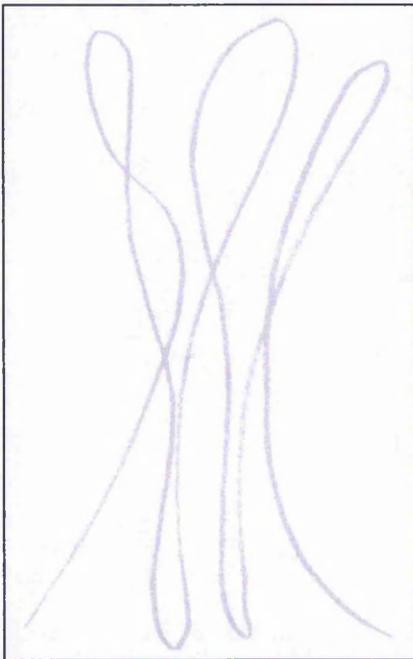


Fig. 170 Clothing structure inspired by script *shui* (“水”).
 \21st Dec 2003. Design and illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

I decide to choose the Chinese characters for the Five Elements: 金, 木, 水, 火 and 土 (*jin, mu, shui, huo* and *tu*) because they represent the Chinese worldview that the Universe was composed by these Five Elements: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. With my design principle of *Wen*, I try to interpret the shapes of these scripts and work out their possible combinations of different distilled

forms to structure a garment. For example, see Figure 170, the continuous line initiates the shape of the script 水 (*shui*). Based on the *Wen* principle, the structure of each garment of my Five Designs is distinctive. As a result, the five clothing structures of my designs imitate the symbols of the Five Elements. See Figure 171.

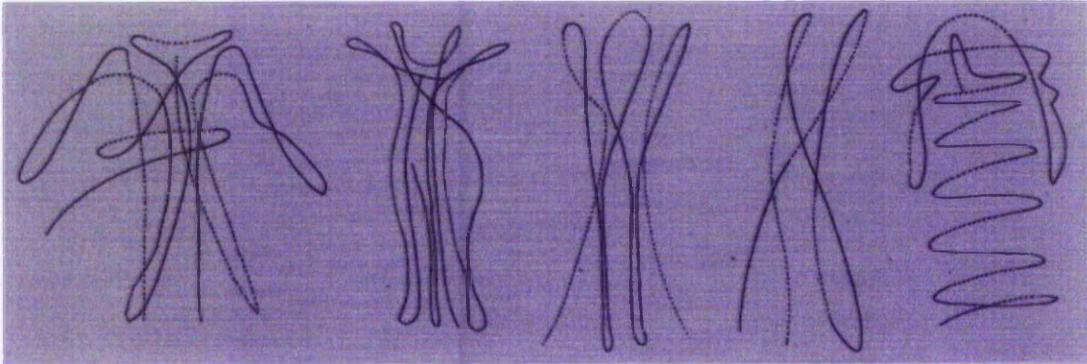


Fig. 171 Clothing structures of the Five Designs-*tu, mu, shui, huo, and jin* to imitate scripts 土, 木, 水, 火 and 金.

21st Dec 2003. Design and illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: The continuous lines describe the strip's forming process.

9.6 Problem-solving and design constraints

There are design constraints in which the design rules are embedded. For example, I use the same width of cloth constantly to form different parts of the garment, the sleeves, and the collars. The pre-solution models serve as solutions for certain tasks in later prototyping. In the process, my own tastes, attitudes to defining clothes, and disposition towards certain forms would influence which solutions would be chosen. While designing, I develop a notation system for recording the problems that I encounter and the strategies adopted to solve them.

I engage a process of prototype development to solve the design problems. My claim is that no dress can be beautiful that is not appropriate, and appropriateness consists chiefly in graceful expression and the dress's practical function. Forms of originality and aesthetics are essential; functionality is also indispensable. I make notes to identify and state the problem, such as how to change the voluminous form of a dress to a neater form and the dress can still be worn comfortably. I analyse the problem by listing the considerations involved.

The prototypes of the items invariably have an incomplete look, and seem to require defining the details of construction and sewing methods. I look at various solutions and assess their use. Questions are asked: Do the methods work? Do the styles look good? How can I invent my own way of making a garment with integrity using traditional and modern methods? What is the key idea in manufacture? To solve these design constraints, I try to solve the general fundamental difficulties in utilising the aesthetic characteristics of T'ang dress.

In my examination of the modernisation in terms of cultural forms versus practicality of a dress, I found that T'ang dress may be seen from the perspectives such as: When dealing with the contrasting perception of looking at T'ang dress such as the court style as a voluminous form which is sensual and also as a comfortable form that is not suitable for modern living.

I engage in operations involving different combinations of distilled forms for different constructions. I compose a rule of structure method to satisfy a set of constraints. I use panels of a controlled width to construct an anatomical loose fit dress which fits the average physical characters of Chinese women. With this constantly employing using the same width of fabrics my design doesn't resort to Western dressmaking methods that are dependent on shaped pattern pieces. For example, I consider that T'ang costume normally has a layered look. I choose an image of *Hufu* which has crossed lapels (Fig. 164) and develop its form. I create a garment which has layered look and is resonant to the characteristic look of T'ang style.



Fig. 172 An incomplete prototype showing back collar and belt of *Shui* Design. 16th Jan 2004. Design and photography by Lo Hung-chih.

Design method: I connect the strips at their edges to give the item structural rigidity of straights in order not to create too many drapes or curved lines. I create three-dimensional forms by new methods such as folding, turnover which replace the traditional two-dimensional seaming method. This solves the problems of the relationship between method and constraint. I invent a new structural space of asymmetry, vertical as well as diagonal.

One of the concerns is to create a prototype of a non-drape and neat look garment. For this purpose I maximise the length of the strip and use the whole width of the strip (W: 22 cm) to construct a garment for a womenswear. I combine my method of tailoring with a reinvented system based on Chinese tradition of dressmaking. This reflects my intention to respect convention while my usage of vertical and horizontal lines that have stability and sloping lines that represent an attention to changes of shapes in garments. Figure 172 shows the process of my wrapping a strip on a dress stand to work out some constraints of design. One strip of cloth is seamed at a diagonal in front and symmetric at the back, in which a geometric silhouette is the basis of the garment's construction. I try to maintain the layered look without using voluminous fabric. They show how a strip crosses the upper front of the breast, goes to the midriff and down to the skirt hem. It continues to wrap from the front to the back and complete a garment. A female look is formed without assessing an Oriental look. Dismissing the

western method of inserting many different pieces of cloth to shape a human body's form, I constantly use a controlled width strip to shape a desirable female look.

Choosing material and adopting suitable techniques

Design possibilities can be explored by using proper materials and techniques. A durable finish is desirable as the clothes will have to withstand wear and show. I discuss my designs with the technician and possible wearer and agree upon the choice of material. The discussions include such as: What would be the better sewing method to use with transparent material or opaque material? One of the solutions is that my design is of a sober style so it needs a subtle monochrome colour with little transition. I choose a mixed fabric of silk and cashmere to create a pared-down, minimalist vision style with the finest material and the control of material characteristics. (See Appendix VII) Natural fibre feels good and relates to a sense of history. The colour I choose is feminine soft and fashionable. I use cashmere and silk partly because my living in an English climate and it is cold most of the time. I make marks of sewing points on the fabric. From the materials available I list those which I consider to be most suitable and effective. My final decision is based upon the constructions and shape of the clothes, and my budget of production. A record of my working diary with a technician shows how the solutions were selected and discarded.

Work diary with technical support advice, date: 30th Feb 2004

I discussed one piece of my garments, *Huo Design*, with the technical support manufacturer. In particular we spoke about a dress constructed with a narrow length continuous strip wrapped into a spiral. I was asked about the seaming method to seam this type of dress. My method of sewing that garment was commented suitable. For each strip of the dress I used the simple method of folding over the cloth edge twice to give a tidy finish. I then sewed the strips together to create the garment shape. The simple way that I used was straightforward considering the effect of the stitching and the garment's shape.

Finding a very fine fabric and performing this simple method would ensure the best quality of that garment. It was recommended that I lay the two pieces of fabric face to face and sew one seaming line. Then open the piece out face down, the two edges from the seam are then spread out flat, and can be pressed flat with an iron. From the facing side the join is a clean simple line, without any stitching showing.

9.7 Process of wearing prototypes

I complete the prototypes of the Five Designs and try them on myself. When wearing the clothes, I check different parts of the clothes in terms of their look, function and the structural and sewing method that I applied. Because these garments are made by strips adopting my invented method there must be a new way to wear them. By recording my wearing prototypes process, I make notes of my design problems and questions.

For *Jin Design*, I will find fine wool for a new attempt for this model for an exhibition. For further commercial development, I will also consider to choose two pieces of thin silk or chiffon in contrasting colours (e.g., pink and light green) for making a two-sided garment for summer clothes. See Figure 173, the prototype of *Jin Design* was worn and the adjustment of the clothing form is considered.

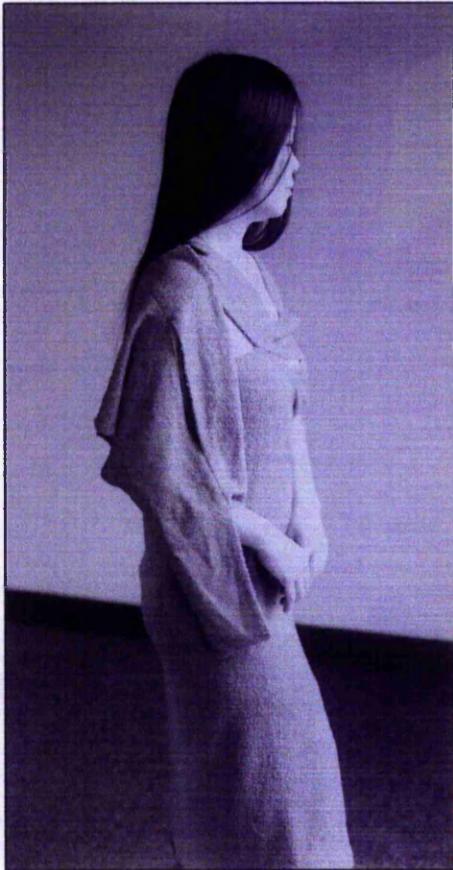


Fig. 173 Try out the sleeves, jacket of *Jin Design*.

20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

Design method: I consider: How much space is possible to allot to the sleeve between its armhole and opening to give a drapery look? Will the sleeves perform well when lifting objects, or dining at table?

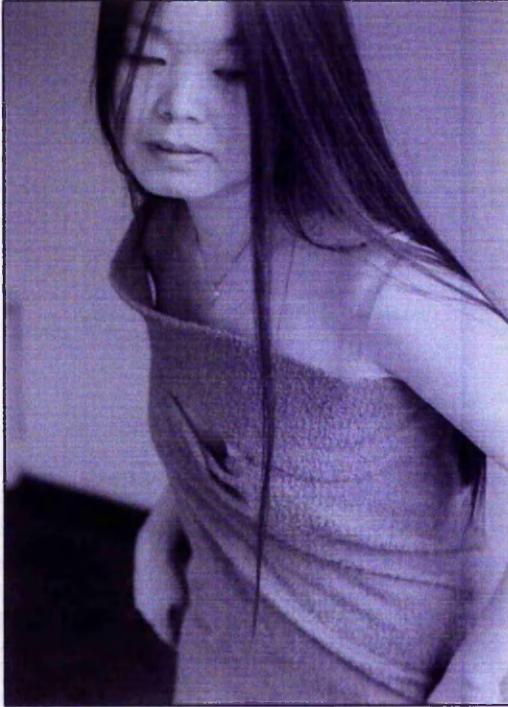


Fig. 174 Try out the collar and bodice of *Jin* Design.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.
Design method: I make judgments about the shape of the collar: whether it is too loose. I adjust the height of the collar to give it a sensual look which is subtle.

When wearing *Mu* Design, (See Figures 175 and 176) the dress looks a bit long. It covers the legs too much and is not active when walking or sitting. I therefore consider how to adjust the length of the dress, and change the shape of the hems to give enough opening for the free movement of the feet.

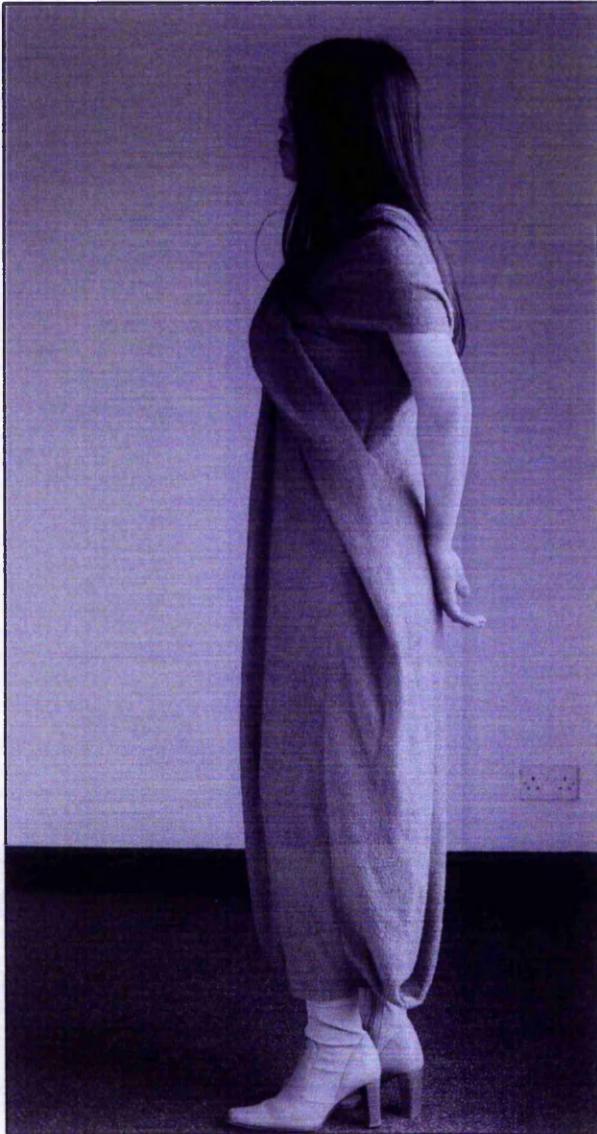


Fig. 175 Try out the hem of *Mu* Design.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.
Design method: I check: Does the dress perform practices well such as walking or sitting down? Whether it should be given more space for striding.



Fig. 176 Try out the armhole of the sleeves, midriff and collar of *Mu* Design.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

Design method: I check: Is the garment easy to put on or take off? Does the armhole of the sleeves give enough space for moving the arms?

For *Shui* Design, the collar looks practical because it will suit different sizes of women. (Figure 177)
The belt controls the width of the dress to suit different sizes of wearers. The length of the dress is added to avoid the exposedness of the legs when sitting or walking. (See Figure 178)

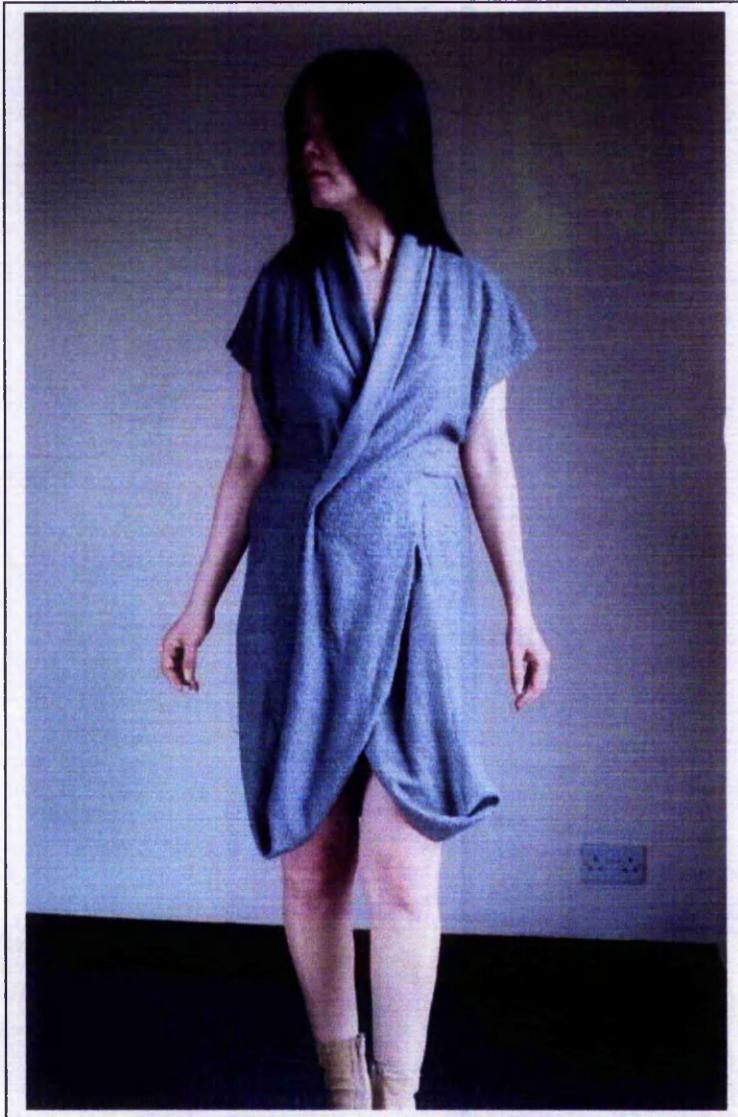


Fig. 177 Try out the prototype of *Shui* Design (a)
20th Feb 2004. Model: Hung-chih Lo. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

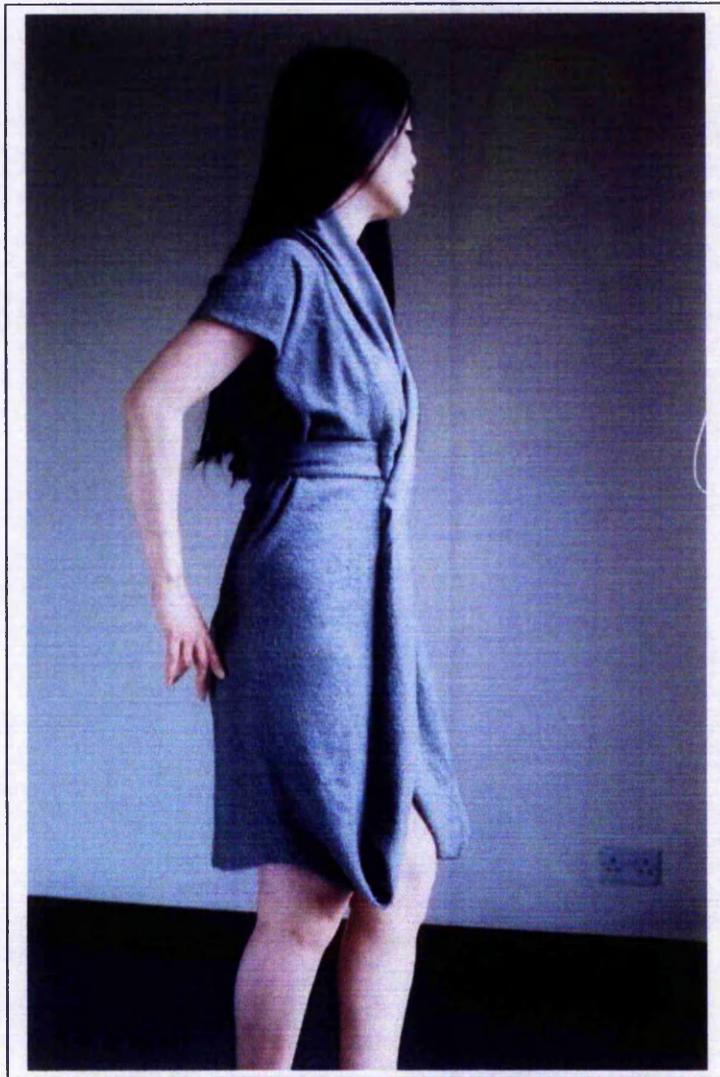


Fig. 178 Try out the prototype of *Shui* Design (b).
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

The armholes and the shape around the midriff and waist of *Huo* Design look fine and natural. I consider whether the part of midriff is loose enough. (Figure 179) For further improvement, the treatment of the midriff which creates looseness can be changed by using material which has slight elasticity, so that the garment looks natural in this kind of detail in terms of its shape and drapery. Its collar in front and back look neither central and do deviate an equal distance from the central point which give a sense of uniqueness. (See Figure 180)

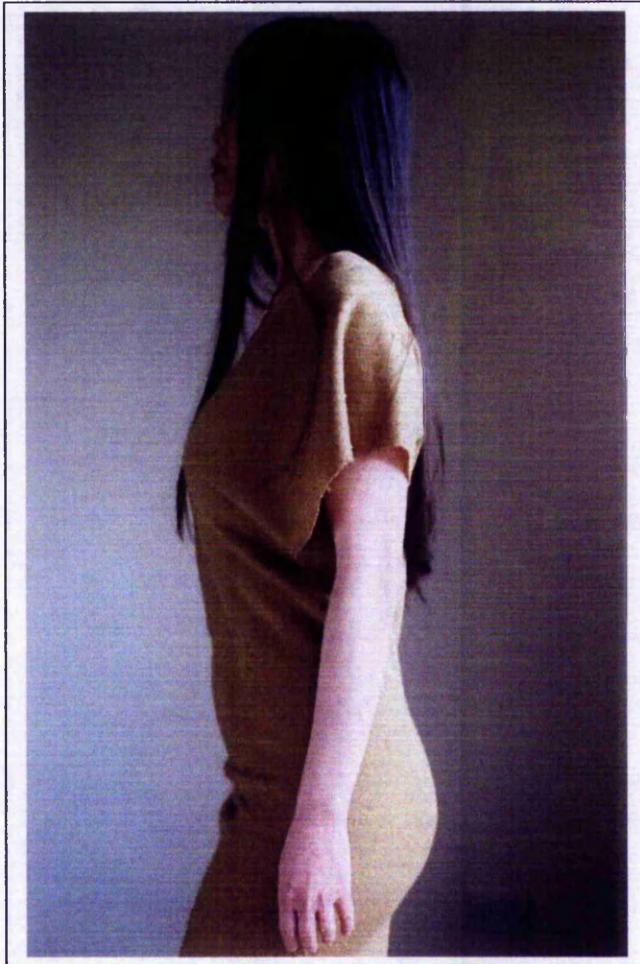


Fig. 179 Try out the shape of *Huo* Design.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

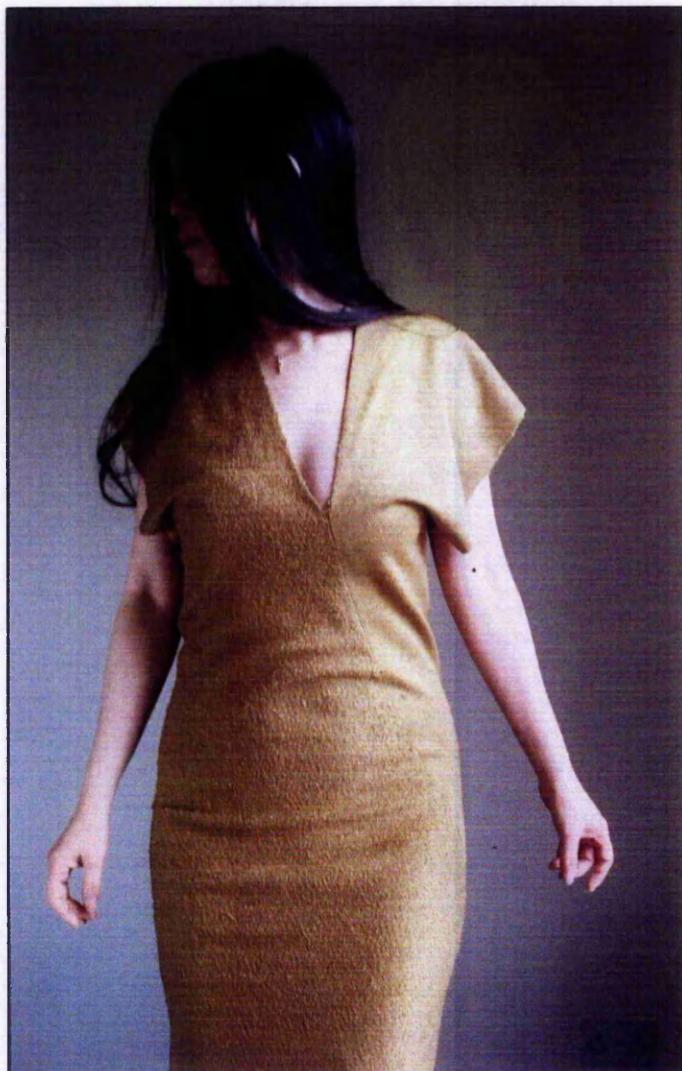


Fig. 180 Try out the collar of *Huo Design*.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

For *Tu* Design, I ask: Are the drapes sufficiently fluid but not voluminous? In the meantime I simply reduce bulky form according to what I think is modern. The belt can be tied in different ways to create different look of the dress and develop a versatile and appropriate form. (See Figures 181 and 182)



Fig. 181 Try out the front opening and belt of *Tu* Design.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.



Fig. 182 Try out the sleeves of *Tu* Design.
20th Feb 2004. Model: Lo Hung-chih. Photography by Malcolm Bailey.

Wearing these new garments is also a learning process for me to know how to move in them. After actually wearing the cloths, I consider how one can wear the clothes straightaway without learning. I also consider how to care and store the clothes such as storing them laid flat, wrap or folded, etc. I make more changes to some proportions and components of the prototypes with considerations of applying sewing process and techniques that are appropriate for both their physical appeal and functions.

9.8 Process of creating a production system

The design is often more easily understood when scale, measurement, context or drawings are added. In order to justify its normative stance towards design processes, the design methodology will have to consider the issue of the process of production. Apart from the quality of the product (i.e. the garment), the functionality, versatility and durability are concerned in the production process too. To set up a criterion for an effective production method, I studied how to specify the sewing method for the production. The following figures are illustrations of work process of formulating the production specification.

Marking sewing points on prototypes

First, I mark the sewing point on prototype in order to transfer the technical criteria to dressmaking pattern. (See Figures 183 to 185) The joint point and length of the seaming or opening parts are noted. The production specification shows the method of no cut, linear seaming, and the simplicity of linking the sides of one rectangular piece.



Fig. 183 Work process of marking the sewing point on prototype of *Shui Design* (a), front view. 20th March 2004. Design and photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 184 Work process of marking the sewing point on prototype of *Shui* Design (b), side view. 20th March 2004. Design and photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 185 Work process of marking the sewing point on prototype of *Shui* Design (c), back view. 20th March 2004. Design and photography by Lo Hung-chih.

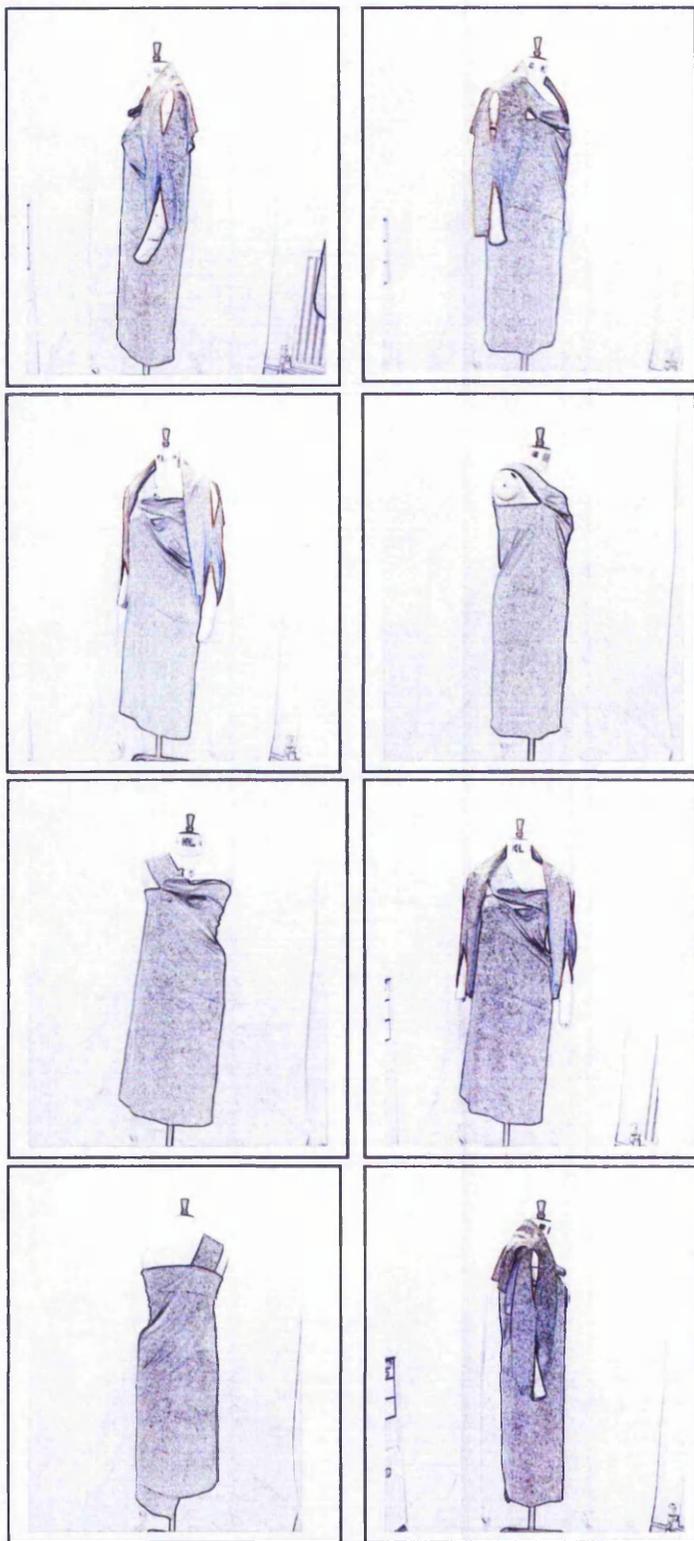


Fig. 186 Prototypes of *Jin* Design put on dress stand.
1st March 2004. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

I make marks with pinned clothes with numbers on the prototypes and then transfer the marks to pattern blocks. I put prototypes on a dress stand to take photos. I transfer the photo images on paper to study the shapes of the garments from different angles. (See Figure 186)

I draw the designs to analyse the structural sense, the logic of composition, (Fig. 187) and structure route and analyse how to make an effective stitching to connect the sides of the strips edge by edge. (Fig. 188) I analyse how the strip constructs the garment, what can be created, at some point, sewn or cut method? (Fig. 189) And what are their goals to contribute to an assemblage? (Fig. 190) And dressmaking details such as controlling the length of the strip to achieve making certain desired forms of the garment. (Fig. 191)

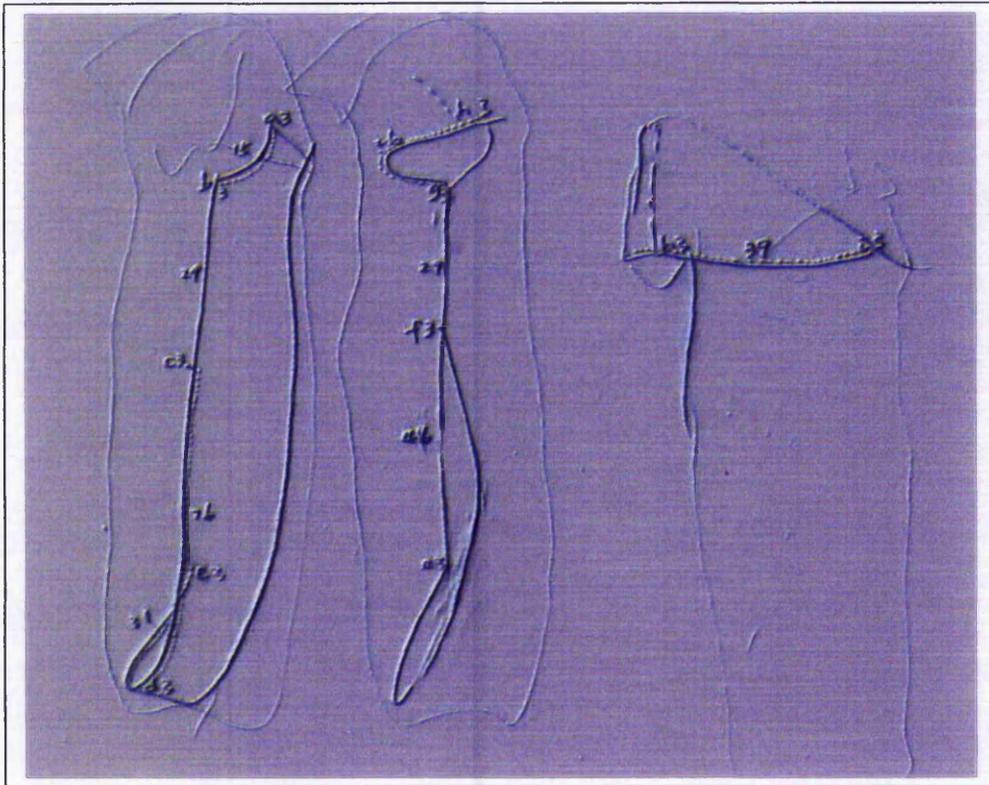


Fig. 187 Sewing point reference for *Mu Design* (part).
15th April 2004. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

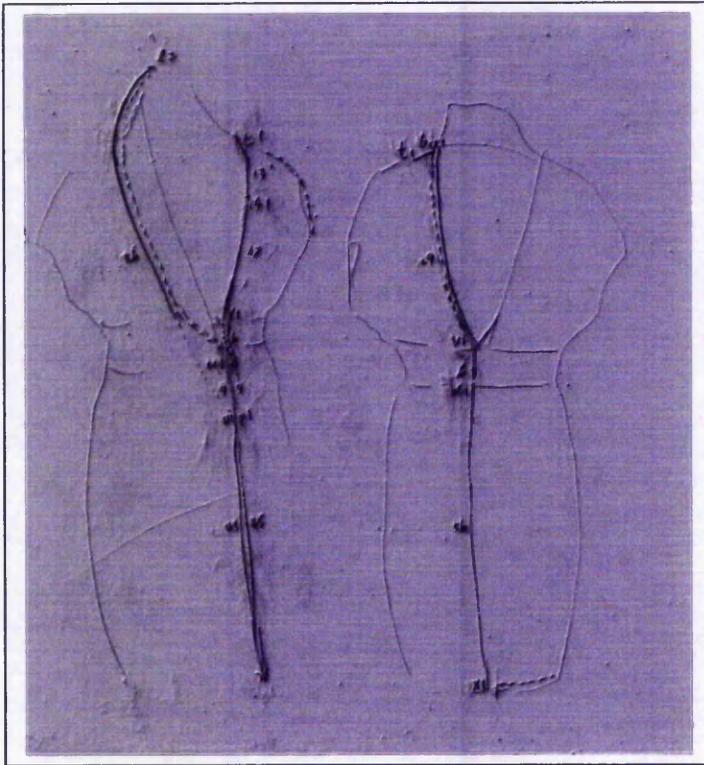


Fig. 189 Analysis of the stitching route of *Shui* Design (part).
1st May 2004. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

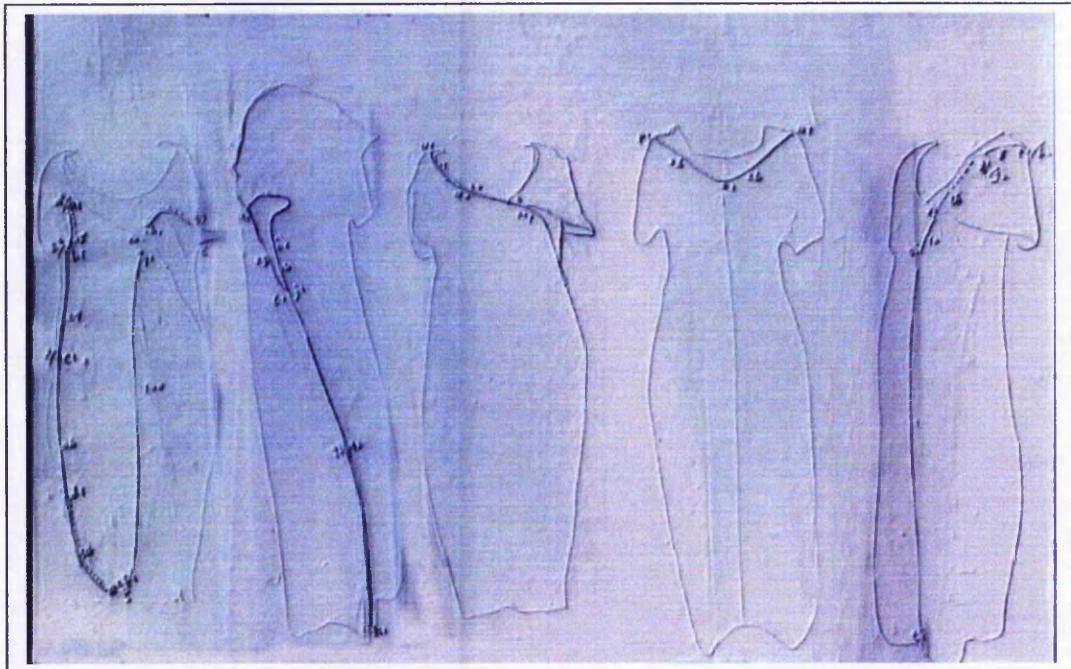


Fig. 190 Production analysis for *Mu* Design (part).
1st May 2004. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

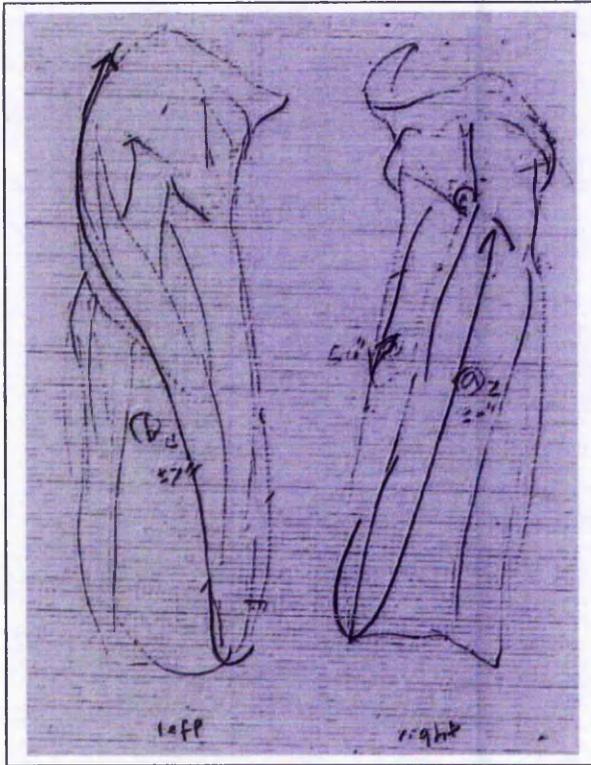


Fig. 191 Analysis of the dressmaking details of *Mu* Design (a).
1st May 2004. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

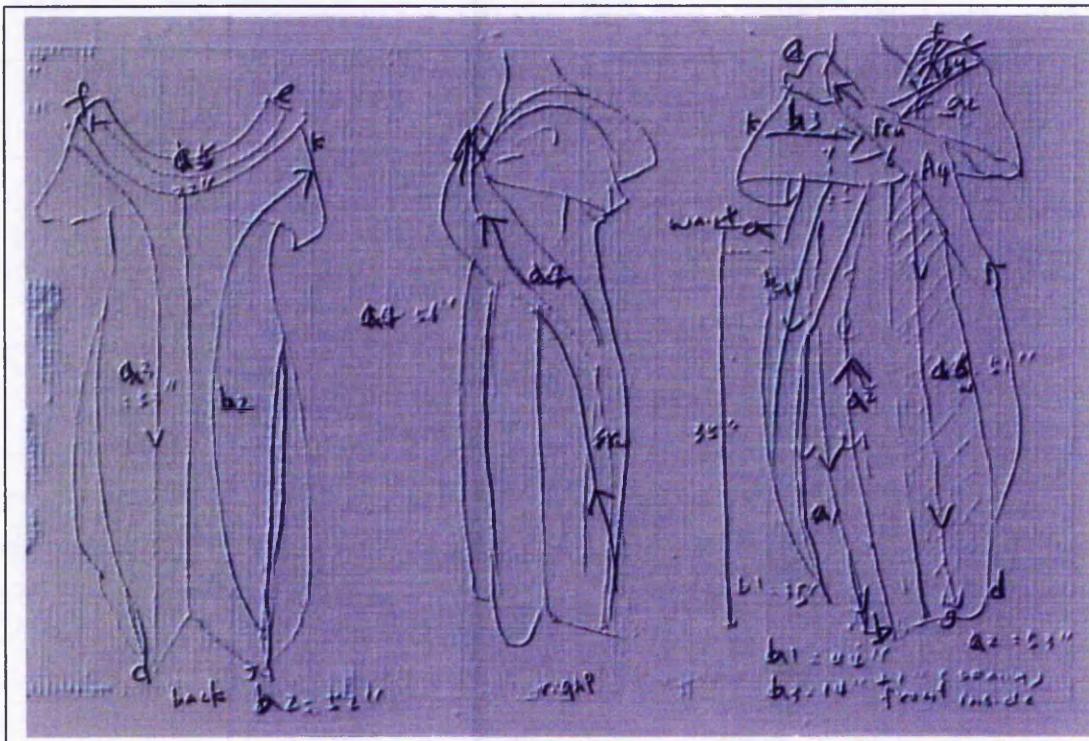


Fig. 192 Analysis of the dressmaking details of *Mu* Design (b).
1st May 2004. Illustration by Lo Hung-chih.

Specification of production

The points define the different lengths between the sewing points in different part of the garment, i.e., two side points of the opening of the sleeves. Sewing pattern is made on a long rectangular paper of two parallel lines on two sides with sewing points. I make a description through detailed notes of the specification of different parts of the garments in relation to human body, e.g., the waist lines, the collar and the hem lines. I make marks on the block about the position of the sewing lines of different methods of stitching, and the closed or opening parts at collars, sleeve holes, and hems. (See Figure 193) For larger scale of this pattern block, see Appendix VIII: Production specification for *Shui* Design. By stitching one or two strips together along either edge to form the garment, the essence of my garments lies in the relationship between compound curves and straights. The simplicity and reduction of linked rectangular elements replace the complexity of assembly of cutting blocks for modern clothes.

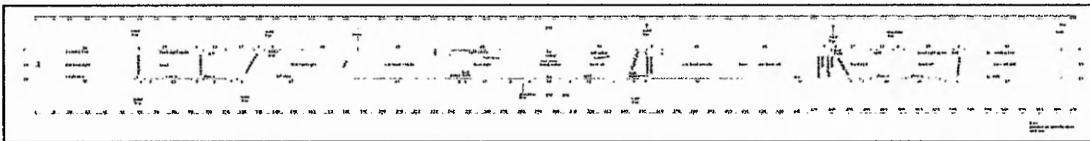


Fig. 193 Pattern block indicating production specification (scale: 1:20).
20th May 2004. Design and illustration by Lo Hung-chih. Electronic copy: Sean Fu.

The block size: W: 20cm; L: 594cm. Size grading: size 8 (UK): using width 20cm strip; size 10: width 22cm, and size 12: width 24cm.

Production method: I transferred the sewing marks to the "pattern block", showing the layout and notations. I make technical specifications of methods of stitching route and manipulation of the garments' shapes. I plot the sewing points on grid papers to illustrate the construction of the garments. Then I draw a diagram lucid in linear alignment to indicate the measurements and the position of rectilinear stitching, methods of turning-over, belting and foldover.

I have technicians' help to produce the garments with reference to the pattern block and the marks on fabric. Reductive dressmaking using single un-cut fabric and simple running stitching brings down greatly the cost of production. For example, completing the *Shui* garment takes four hours only for a technician who has not been sewing this type of garment. The job includes marking, sewing and ironing. See Figure 194, a piece of fabric of width of 150cm and length of 780cm can make the five garments without any wastage.

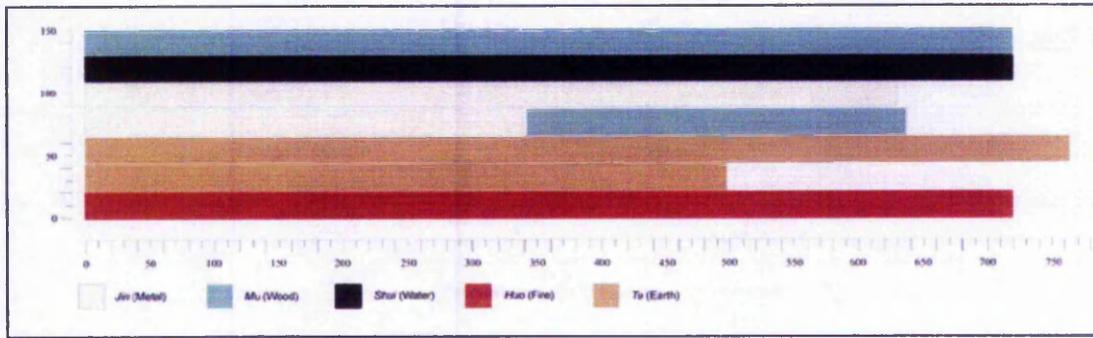


Fig. 194 Production layout indication for the five pattern blocks for the Five Designs. 20th May 2004. Production plan and illustration by Lo Hung-chih. Electronic image by Sue Pike. Each block is of 22cm width with different length. Colour code: white: *Jin* garment; green: *Mu* garment; black: *Shui* garment; red: *Huo* garment; yellow: *Tu* garment. Design method: The production is planned using the entire width (150 cm) of a length of fabric (790cm) with no wastage.

9.9 Process of exhibition for evaluation

Finally, the collection of the Five Designs (*Jin*, *Mu*, *Shui*, *Huo* and *Tu*) is completed for an exhibition for public viewing. (Figures 195-214) For the description of the design concept of the exhibition, see Appendix IX.

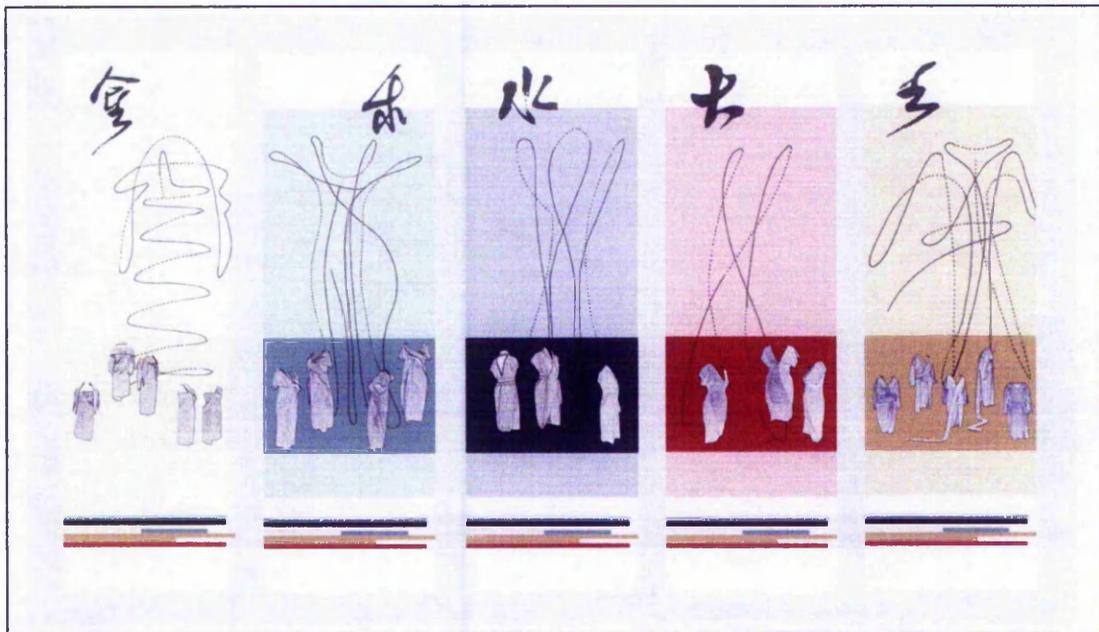


Fig. 195 The Five Designs: *Jin*, *Mu*, *Shui*, *Huo* and *Tu* associated the Five Elements and the Five Colours. 30th June 2004. Illustration: Lo Hung-chih. Image design: Tim Rundle and Lo Hung-chih.

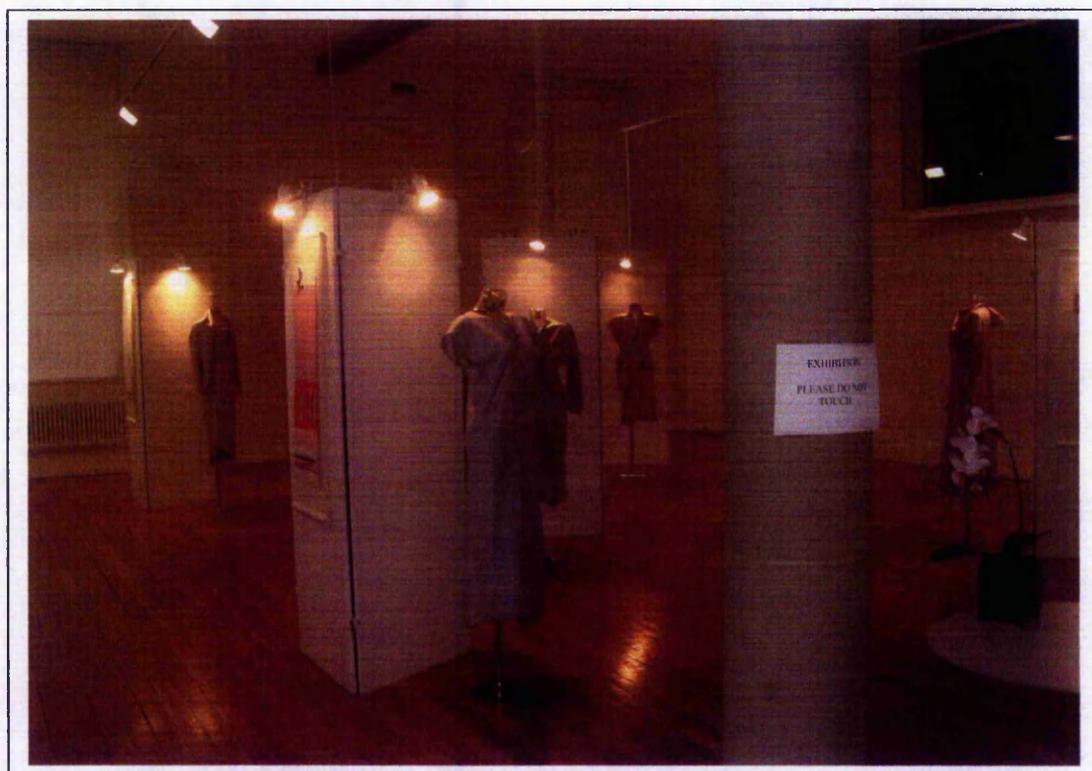


Fig. 196 Exhibition for *Chih, Wen and Yun* Collections by Lo Hung-chih.
12th-16th July 2004. The 1851 Gallery, England. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

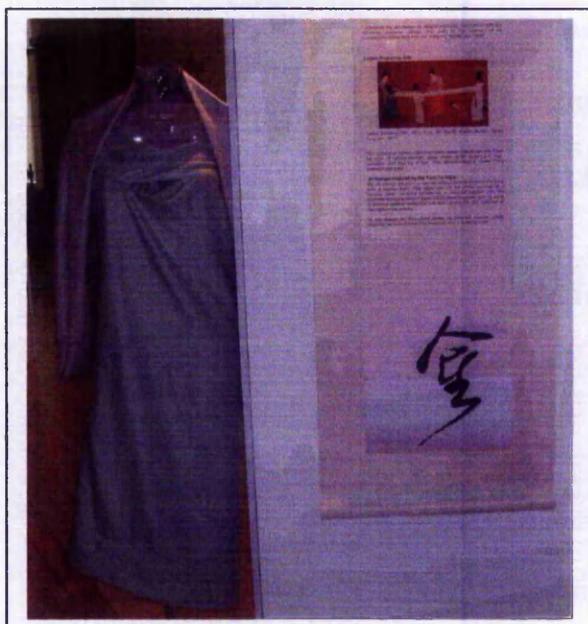


Fig. 197 *Jin* Design by Lo Hung-chih.
16th July 2004. The 1851 Gallery, England. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

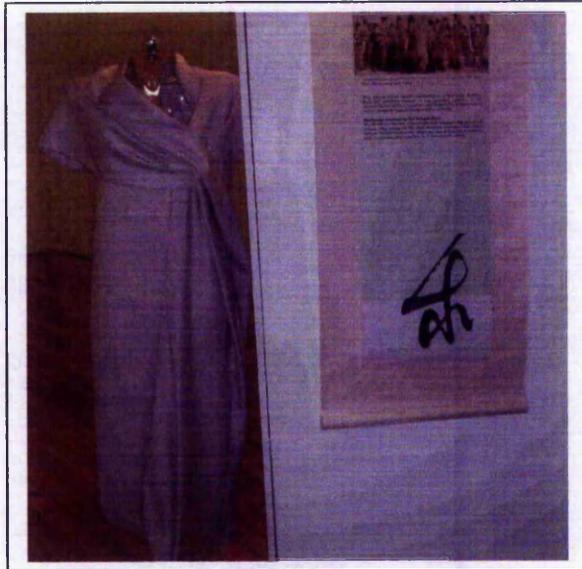


Fig. 198 *Mu* Design by Lo Hung-chih.
16th July 2004. The 1851 Gallery, England. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

Collection of the Five Designs

Jin Design

Jin Design evolves to a narrower silhouette and encases the body within a tubular form. The upper part of the dress consists of a loosely open neckline which conveys the Chinese woman's feminine sensual rapport that the clothes have with the body. The lower part is constructed by a swirling upward horizontal line which mirrors costume Yuen-he style seen in court scene. In *Jin* Design, the fissured sleeves of the short jacket are created resonant of rhythmic sensuous lines, responding to the hanging down shawl seen in the image.

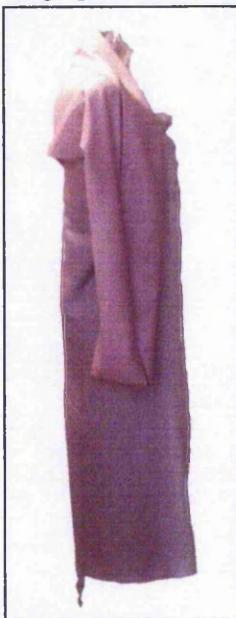


Fig. 199 *Jin* Design, front view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih*, *Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 200 *Jin* Design, side view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

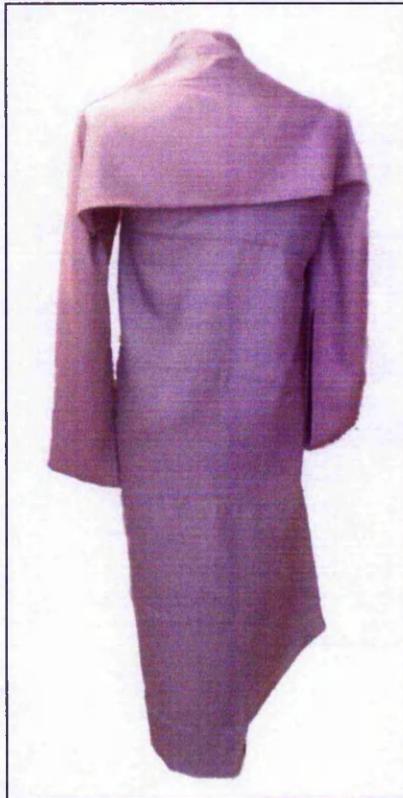


Fig. 201 *Jin* Design, back view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

***Mu* Design**

Mu Design is formed by a seeming raised waistline and bias cross details which are identified with the silhouette of Princess Yongtai style. The high waistline shape increases stature and the fluted edges at hems are regularised into a rhythmic fold. The accentuated collar line mirrors the shawl's curves.

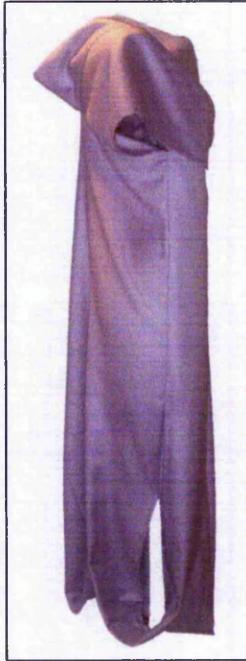


Fig. 202 *Mu* Design, front view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

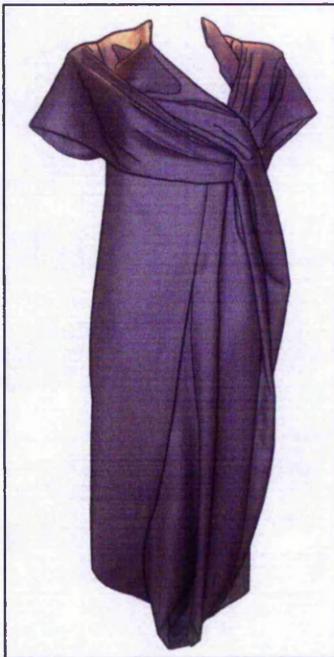


Fig. 203 *Mu* Design, side view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 204 *Mu* Design, back view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

***Shui* Design**

Shui Design is formed by one strip of cloth at a diagonal in front and symmetric in back, in which a geometric silhouette is the basis of the garment's construction. The simplification in shape is an explicit disclosure of the cross lapel, tube shape and belt which illustrate the merging of elements seen in the historical image.



Fig. 205 *Shui* Design front view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 206 *Shui* Design, side view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 207 *Shui* Design, back view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections/ Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

***Huo* Design**

The curved hem of the garment of *Huo* design makes comparatively sober use of the flowing lines of the draperies of the dancers' extravaganza.

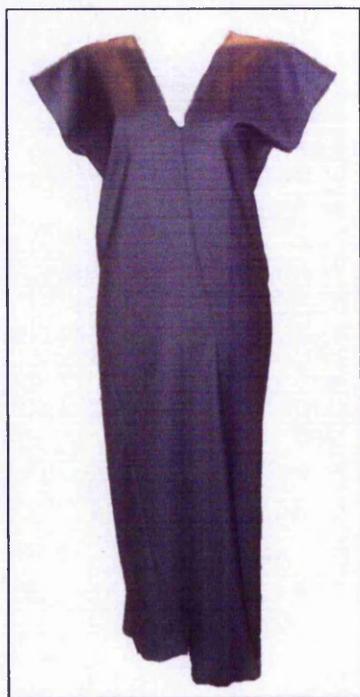


Fig. 208 *Huo* Design, front view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

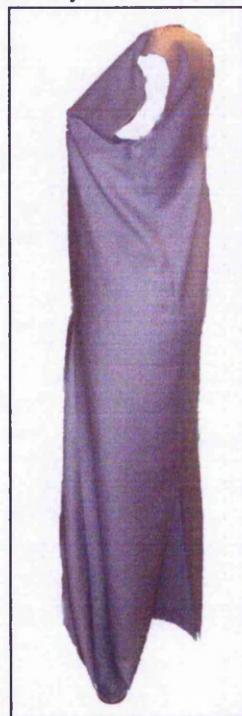


Fig. 209 *Huo* Design, side view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.



Fig. 210 *Huo* Design, back view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

***Tu* Design**

Tu Design derives the static august courtly style in the palace scene. Virtually within its silhouette, the garment lends itself to a spatial sensation, retaining an imaginary translucency. My focus is not centred on a decorative aesthetic which was known to the Chinese as a visual sign signifying the conspicuousness of officialdom. The design encodes the allusion of archaic exaggeration into a minimalist ceremonial look. The broad space encompasses a ritual context in which the clothes hint at an authentic metaphor and social hierarchical meaning which dictates Confucian decorous genuine modesty and a quality of dignity.



Fig. 211 *Tu* Design, front view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

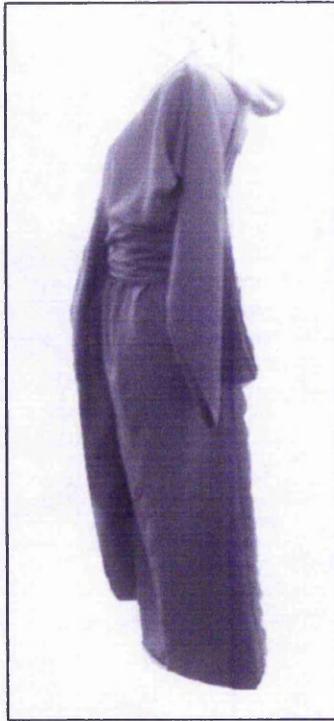


Fig. 212 *Tu* Design, side view at The 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

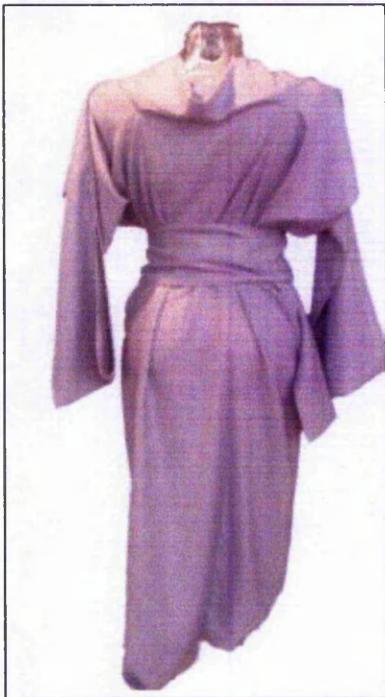


Fig. 213 *Tu* Design, back view at the 1851 Gallery, England.
16th July 2004. *Chih, Wen* and *Yun* Collections. Photography by Lo Hung-chih.

Conclusion

Jin Design is structured diagrammatically in correspondence with the Chinese character “金” (Metal) which links to its reality: Autumn, White and West. *Shui* Design is diagrammatically structured in correspondence with the Chinese character “水” (Water) which link to its reality: Winter, Black, and North. *Mu* Design is structured diagrammatically in correspondence with the Chinese character “木” (wood) which links to its reality: Spring, Green and East. *Huo* Design is diagrammatically structured in correspondence with the Chinese character “火” which links to its reality: Summer, Red, and South. *Tu* Design is diagrammatically structured in correspondence with the Chinese character *Tu* “土” (Earth) which link to its reality: Mid Autumn, Yellow, and Middle. See Figure 214.

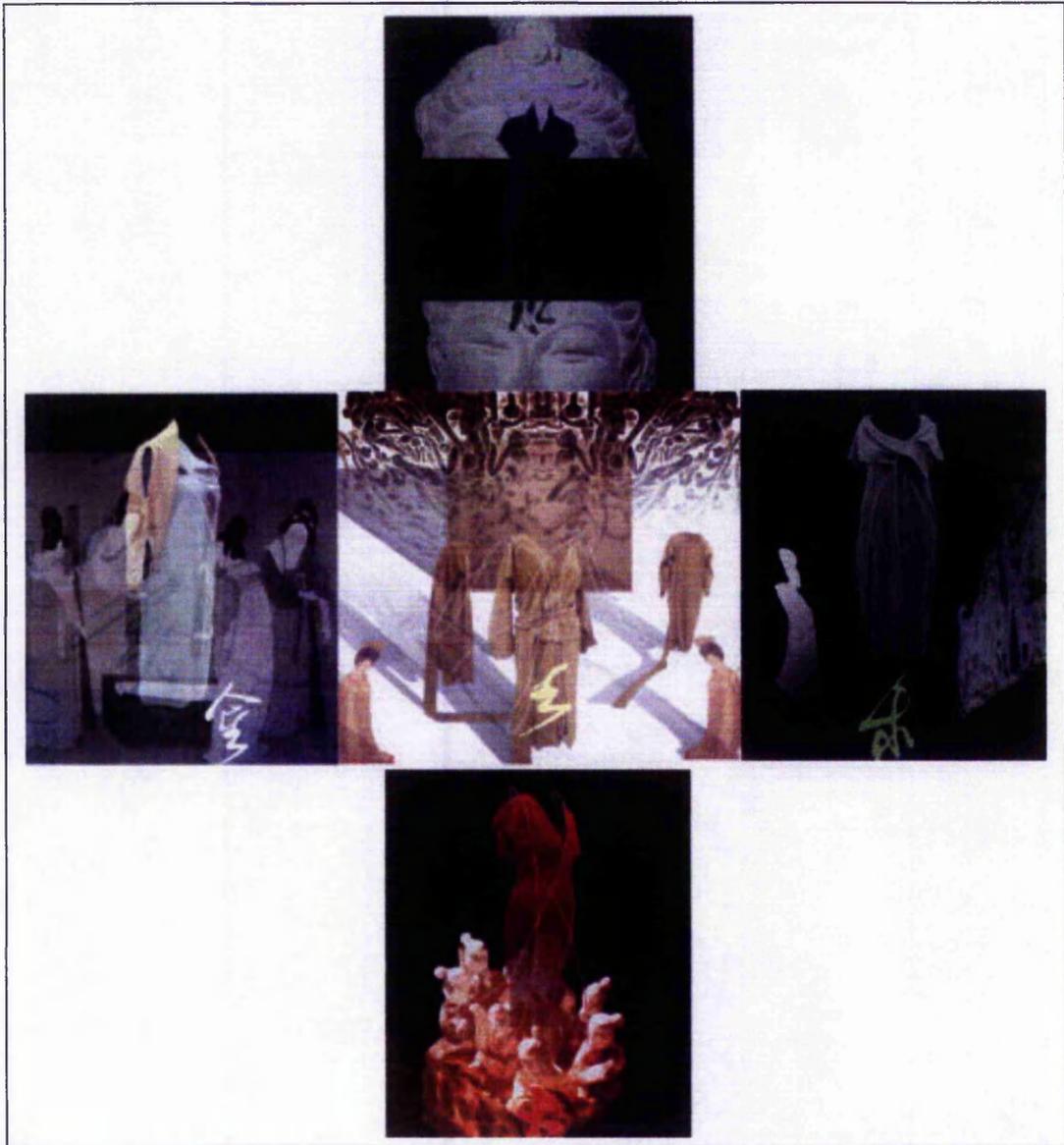


Fig. 214 An illustration showing the interrelationship between the Five Designs and the Five Elements, Five Directions, Five Colours, and Five Tang dress styles.
15th June 2004. Design by Lo Hung-chih. Electronic image by Sean Fu.

The model presents an improved efficiency in the dressmaking process and opportunities for improved evaluation and the re-stating of problems. The generation of those solutions is all based on physical principle (*chih*) in terms of dressmaking, based on the symbolic principle (*wen*) in terms of structure, the aesthetic principle (*yun*) in terms of style. The design process is shown in Table 16.

This elaboration of the design process has been unravelled by explicating the method about the connections between my design principle and actions. The process is not only subject to externally imposed aesthetic restrictions; it also resolves the problems of Chinese modernisation while banishing the Western dress making system by creating a new model of designing.

Table 16 Elaboration of design process

Date	Process	Method, activities and technique support	Medium and Outcome
April 2003	1. Process of imagery reinterpretation and mental synthesis	- Visualisation: - Spontaneity of sketching	Sketches and presolutions
May-June 2003	2. Process of generating abstract solutions	- Topological generations: - Spatial configuration - Physical embodiment:	Presolutions
July 2003	3. Process of choosing design solutions		Premodels Selected premodels
Aug-Oct 2003	4. Process of physical realisations of abstract solutions	- Spatial study - Operations involving experiments of different possibilities and combinations	Presolutions (prototypes either small scale or full size)
Nov-Dec 2003	5 Process of realisation of design principles	- Making paper and toile models - Working with prototypes - Forming the garment - Develop dress's style - Structure the garment \	Toile, paper, fabrics Prototypes
Jan 2004	6. Process of problem-solving and design constraints	- Choosing material - Adopting suitable sewing method and techniques to form the garment	Solutions of using suitable materials and adoptable techniques
Feb 2004	7. Process of wearing prototypes	- Solve the design problems/constraint in terms of the ends of design (aesthetic and functional)	Solutions for the modification of the prototypes
March-May 2004	8. Process of creating a production system	- Analysis of the dressmaking detail - Build up a criterion for production specification	Pattern block of production specification Production of the Five designs
May-July 2004	9. Process of exhibition for evaluation	- An exhibition for public viewing	Feedback and comments

With *Chih* principle I employ a linear forming method to make a garment by constantly using a controlled width strip to model my garment which is novel in terms of its economic and straightforward way of making garments. Designing a garment as an element of the natural world is not the same as describing it as a symbol of ideas. With *Wen* principle my structural method based on T'ang convention has resolved the problem of transferring the idea of symbolism to a tangible object, my garment. This responds to the social-cultural context of Chinese fashion. With *Yun* principle I manipulate the shapes of my design with different approaches, which give a satisfying relationship among contour, texture, and space, to exhibit unity. This is to embody T'ang beauty to the style of my garments which offers a new version of an ideal beauty of Chinese women which is opposite to the Oriental version of westernised Chinese fashion. In summary, I have demonstrated how inspirations from historical sources can be applied to contemporary fashion design through planned routes. My application employs modern forms in T'ang dress to create detachment, repose and spiritual beauty instead of forms of surface decoration and iconography. This fabrication contributes:

- Original concept and process of design;
- Evidence of the outcome of the design methodology; and
- An innovation in garment making concept and production method.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

In this study, I have explored how the barrier between historical and contemporary fashion can be broken down through investigating the cultural and social linkages between T'ang dress and modern fashion. I have established that the whole notion of Chinese costume as rigid and unchanging is false and that the western idea that Chinese clothing was only sexual is ill conceived. I believe that my research to identify the modernisation of T'ang dress revealed insights to support my contention that modernisation is certainly not equivalent to Westernisation. I found out that negative western attitudes to Chinese fashion prevented looking on it for sources to modernise it.

I assume that traditional analyses of Chinese fashion that are preoccupied with politics or objects focus are inadequate as potential sources for deriving design resource. My approach to the study of historic Chinese fashion is therefore holistic. I situated T'ang dress and fashion within the context of traditional T'ang worldview, from which the T'ang aestheticians' theories were derived and examined in a modernist perspective which enhances my understanding of the origins of T'ang dress. I selected what I consider exceptionally inspirational in T'ang scholarship, and delineated their principal principles which characterise them. I have mainly directed my attention on the form, meanings and usage of T'ang dress that I consider most valuable as sources for deriving design applications. I have argued that the Western view of Chinese fashion is problematic. It has exaggerated the functionality of the modern fashion at the expense of its relevance to the individual's cultural needs. T'ang dress is far more complex in its meaning that came to be understood in modern times. T'ang source material proved to be abundant, though difficult to master from one single perspective.

I have argued that because of the effects of interaction with foreign cultures, the evolution of fashion and symbolism and social practices during the T'ang period can best be studied through a cultural perspective. I have based my arguments on conclusions drawn from a detailed examination of Chinese texts and archaeological remnants such as paintings from the T'ang period. My findings will be a good foundation for later research that takes a holistic approach to the study of T'ang. I have modified the conventional fashion design method and substituted features that are better suited to contemporary life for some of its elements.

1. T'ang court dress, as a signifier of cultural identity, was rooted in the heritage of the Han imperial court culture. In the imperial environment, it was considered important to distinguish civilised (the Chinese) from *Hu* (barbarous), male from female, superior from inferior, and proper from improper—it was an instrument of order dedicated to hierarchy, harmony and moderation, supporting the Chinese society in which *li* (etiquette) was important.
2. T'ang civilisation has a universal and cosmopolitan quality. Not only were styles of T'ang dress adopted and adapted by their neighbours along with cultural and social practices, it also proved to be one of the richest traditions in all Chinese historical periods, which was successfully adapted and modified to meet the needs of the court and the masses within the

Chinese cultural sphere. T'ang dress was marked by a high degree of multiculturalism; it was extensively diversified and altered to various forms as evidenced for instance in its assimilation of influences from with *Hu* culture and the modification of court dress under the influence of Buddhist art and Central Asian styles. The impetus for changes in T'ang fashion also derived from political and religious authorities. Ideas and materials were influenced by *Hu* factors both geographically and temporally. Tastes and values shifted from modesty, gender restriction and hierarchy to modish and liberal hedonism (e.g. cross-dressing).

3. T'ang clothing could possess symbolic meanings carrying both ethical and moral codes (e.g., the Twelve Symbols) which were linked to principles of Chinese beliefs and aesthetics (e.g. Confucianism and Taoism) and could have a social function such as denoting status. It could embody cosmic meanings speculation (e.g. yin and yang) towards materialism (e.g., the Five Elements). All these functions link T'ang dress to political power in the T'ang era relied on persuasion and the manipulation of esteem, prestige, and ritual symbols (e.g., issuing clothes status code).
4. Natural, symbolic and decorative aesthetics are all found in images of T'ang fashion. The construction of T'ang dress in different periods was characterised by dominant features which are fixed as well as others which were less permanent or modish. The interplay of indigenous and foreign cultural and aesthetic forces provided the central core of the T'ang tradition, established its canons of taste and sensibility, and shaped the quintessential form of T'ang dress: extravagant court styles, Buddhist naturalism inspired forms (e.g., low-cut bodices, floral and foliage patterns) and *Hufu* (foreign clothes) styles of Central Asian origin (e.g. high-waistline skirts, equestrian dress and veiling).

I found that T'ang fashion was characterised by a process of shifting dynamism. Factors that drove changes in T'ang fashion included political upheavals and changes in artistic and religious convictions. The visual forms of clothing revealed not only social and cultural traits, but also artistic developments and conventions of their times. *Hufu* was a reflection of the changes that took place in society, the prerequisites for the emergence of fashion. Its incorporation into T'ang dress and its meanings reflected Chinese beliefs and thought and religions and the aesthetics associated with them: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The images that I examined contained indications of the provenance of these various influences on T'ang fashion. By analysing them, I found out that T'ang fashion underwent constant changes that were associated with the context of social changes. I have interpreted the conventions of T'ang dress with a keen eye for Chinese aesthetics which is characterised by a balance in the beauty of form and spirituality. I have discussed my application of this finding to my design.

I have sought to draw on both of the past and the modernism of Chinese fashion because I believe that it provides both an endless source of models and ideas that could enrich practice. In my interpretation of the parallels between T'ang and modern Chinese fashion, the similarities that I found suggest to me that the past can be used as a resource for present practice. My study has identified aspects of T'ang dress which could be used to build a new model on the basis of the T'ang tradition; it demonstrates that fashion designers could use historical source in evocative ways. In my application

of T'ang resource, the garment that I have subtly drawn on the cultural resource as opposed to some modern designers who transplant all the elements of a historical resource to their works. Parallels in both T'ang and modern fashion underscore the continuities in Chinese culture. My study of T'ang dress was less concerned with aesthetic fantasy or changes institutions in the physical form of costume.

I criticised western perspectives of Chinese fashion, out of which Orientalism stands out for being preoccupied with no more than a superficial study of fleeting embellishment in Chinese clothing. The much broader approach that I have adopted in this study has not being sorely concerned with cultural discourse or descriptive history, rather it seeks to transcend barriers of history and I have sought to demonstrate how modern designers could use historical resource for designing in a more effective way.

In attempting to understand what it was that determined, at a profound level, the Chinese wearer's sensibilities in terms of the evolution of fashions, I studied the factors of social changes that influenced Chinese fashion in modern times both in China and the West. In my historical reading and interpretation of the fashion changes in several areas of attitude, production and mediascape which enables me to explore my modernist response aroused in contemporary phenomenon: I contemplated the similar patterns of change in both T'ang and modern fashion and sought to apply the principles of T'ang dress to a modern dress in a way which would retain its essence and reflect the continuity in Chinese clothing culture. The result is a work of my design which manifests the realities both of T'ang times and those of my own modern environment. I found that T'ang and modern fashion displayed the cohesion of an essential Chinese culture. I have applied T'ang elements at practical levels. This assured the practicality and functionality of the new model garments that I designed. Perhaps, the most important single insight a study of T'ang dress offers to the clothing historian or designers is a keen awareness of the gap between academic analysis and practice and how this gap can be closed.

Parallels can be found in the Westernisation and modernisation of Chinese fashion. From the Han times onward, Westernisation in China permeated the culture widely and reached its zenith in mid T'ang period in the eighth century. T'ang scholars thought that it corrupted authenticity. The political upheaval of the An-lu Shan rebellion which took place around AD 800 was one of the determinants of the evolution of T'ang fashion. It resulted in reactions analogous to those of nationalism under the T'ang that took the vague shape of Chinese tradition combined with an attitude of hostility to foreign influences. The late T'ang period saw a desire to return to the pure and imaginary sources of orthodox thought and tradition and to resist Westernisation¹⁹⁷. My ideas on modernisation correspond to the T'ang return to the classics of and refine the "ancient style". My desire to preserve Chinese tradition through T'ang dress inspired contemporary designs that stand in distinction to the Westernisation of the 21st century. It is a kind of enculturation. Thus my application focuses on the contemporary appropriation of historical styles and a keen awareness of their affiliations.

¹⁹⁷ See McMullen 1988: 70. For example, in the late eight century, the utilitarian re-appraisal of the origins, and "interiorisation" of the tradition which was to culminate in the idealistic and introspective Confucian philosophy of the early T'ang phase of the Neo-Confucian movement.

My interest in the modernisation of Chinese fashion on the basis of Chinese cultural resources has led me to investigate the dynamics of the Euroamerican dominated fashion market. Likewise, I have had to analyse the conflicts between academic and practical approaches to the study of fashion design. Both considerations are crucial to any academic enquiry into the modernisation of Chinese fashion that would have practical implications. I had attempted to understand the problematic issues and limits affecting Chinese fashion design within the Western market as a whole. My personal insights into Chinese culture have also allowed me to understand the limitations Chinese fashion have in western markets. Westernisation and Orientalism were a superficial form of evolution of Chinese fashion. Chinese clothing had been dominated by a Westernisation process instead of developing on the terms of its own culture. The traditional Chinese dress's design approach (e.g., structural connotations) had been fundamentally undermined by following Western fashion's emphasis on anatomical difference rather than its own virtues. I recognised that a major pitfall in approaching modern Chinese fashion was to regard Western fashion as a permanent or single solution for its development. I contested that although functionalism seemed to have succeeded in working with Western capitalism which results in the emphasis of the practicality of modern dress, the cultural dimension in fashion design approach is also important. I pointed out that globalism had situated different cultures in a framework of the West within the span of assimilation and integration but within this framework Chinese fashion seemed to have lost its important content. In adopting a methodology to fabricate a new model of T'ang dress, I have come to three main conclusions:

First, professional designers can use the insights of academic study; they can offer a renewed design resource and methodology for Chinese fashion design. Through this research I believe that I have been able to bring the outcome of my historical research together and consider it in its relationship with the product and market. I have avoided antiquarianism by adopting a practical designer's approach to my historical research. Designers will need to recognise that the products that aim to secure contemporary acceptability must use an effective design method appropriately so that historical forms and meanings could consonant with the feelings, worldview or lifestyles of modern wearers. My approach is based on a combination of scholarly investigation and practical application.

Secondly, I have also suggested that it is desirable and feasible to reverse the excessive Westernisation of Chinese fashion. Westernised Chinese fashion itself is no more rooted in the cultural and local concerns or the lifestyle of the Chinese wearer. My argument is that one of the satisfactory resolutions to the many problems and limitations of the development of Chinese fashion requires a genuinely cultural perspective. The Chinese clothing tradition could be adopted within a cultural context of interpenetration with its form and meanings.

Thirdly, the findings of this research point out that an over-simplified design methodology cannot offer an idea of how to adapt T'ang dress for the modernisation of Chinese fashion. I intend that my design methodology should integrate T'ang and modern elements and exhibit qualities signifying cultural aesthetics in terms of both intrinsic and eternal "validity". It should be a philosophical creation in relation to aesthetic cultural forms rather than being only utilitarian. This view may be both a practical one in the sense of market and a cultural ideology in the sense of a belief in the relevance of Chinese cultural heritage to Chinese clothing. I have developed my own approach

based on a critical perspective on the existing systems of design. I believe that the human body is more than a biological entity; it is also a social being. I argued that the western method of designing clothes to emphasise sex differences does not recognise Chinese view on clothing in a symbolic device. This view influenced my enquiry concerning problematic of the Westernisation of Chinese clothing. I do not think that the Western way of looking at clothes and making them is the appropriate solution for Chinese fashion design.

The formulation of my design principle has been based on insights developed from theoretical analysis and a balanced application of historical originality and cultural identity. My re-evaluation of Chinese fashion has had to examine concepts which address questions concerning issues of convention, invention and identification. This approach leads me to be critical of the western system's rigid utilitarian approach. Inspired by my interpretation of the scholarship of T'ang times, and images of clothing ensembles in artefacts, my design principle of "*Wen, Chih and Yun*" emerged. It is a dialogue between myself the designer and the researched historical sources. I intend that my garment should offer a paradigm on inventive dress styles that are aesthetically pleasing and that carry a sense of cultural identity close to historical fidelity. It recognised the distinctness of Chinese culture and epitomised what I defined as "invented tradition"-a reconceptualised model of T'ang dress. My collection contained elements of shared value, convention and sensibilities linking T'ang together with contemporary Chinese wearers. A significant outcome of the project was the balance of the functionality and aesthetics of the Chinese cultural form. My collection of clothes offers proof that Chinese style clothes can be designed and articulated in an original and evocative philosophical style, to unravel the meaning of Chinese traditional thoughts. I believe that the perspective I derived from the design principle was defined satisfactorily: I had resolved the problems of the modernisation of Chinese fashion by adopting a new structural method based on T'ang convention (*Wen*) and iconic silhouette (*Yun*), and by employing a minimalist dress styling (*Chih*) in my designs.

My design concept establishes a new T'ang model through a cultural dimension and the incorporation of diverse social identities of Chinese wearers. The methodology was dictated by a logic which emerged from the interpretation of historical sources and my propositions on the modernisation of Chinese clothing. This experience of conceptualisation and modelling of a new model of T'ang dress accounting for the establishment of a design methodology was intended to change the stereotypical impression that fashion design is concerned with mere evanescence and aesthetic fantasy and its methods would depend on its unpredictability.

My design philosophy had led me to find the solution of modernising T'ang dress. My range of clothes demonstrates the applicability and practicability of my approach, which validated the design process. The design process describes how I transform the intangible materials to tangible clothes. In place of a Euroamerican--Orientalised fixation with body exposure and bodily sensation of the western system, I put forward a different cultural approach. I made a clear distinction between "modernisation" and "Westernisation", shifting the trajectory of western shaping of pattern pieces for anatomical fit of clothes to simple strips forming complex-seeming garments. My minimalist construction maintained the cultural integrity of the cloth; i.e. its basis in Chinese clothing traditions. There was not any loss or waste of fabric and the production process was economical, conforming to

the modern demand of utility. My reductive construction was invented as a simplified system, originating from the Chinese structural principle of *hsiang-hsing*. It transformed the two-dimensional into a new form of three-dimensional with a sensitive manipulation of folds to create rhythmic beauty. Its effect was to create more palpable space into which the dimension of T'ang aesthetics could extend. This dimension was different from western emphasis on visual sexual difference. My collection implies a cultural form. My dress making system and production criteria are based on the fundamental issues avoiding overt western methods and developing my newly developed concepts.

I am even more strongly steeped in tradition after the experience of this study, having a stronger self-confidence and identity with Chinese culture. It would be erroneous to attribute the belief that Chinese identity and culture could serve as the basis for the modernisation of Chinese fashion to "nationalism", as a species of "social cement", or a *recherché* statement of historical continuity. I have been motivated by an identification with my cultural roots rather than by the recent idea of national pride. I targeted the reverse situation-not Euro-Americanisation of Chinese clothing, but modernisation of T'ang clothing for the Chinese wearer. The clothes that I designed are for wearers who are interested in exploring clothes that can better express their Chinese cultural identity and ideology.

My analysis of T'ang dress could not but emphasise and perhaps overestimate the importance of investigating historical sources for fashion design. It was reassuring to know that the questions that I had asked were indeed worth posing. Still, I had not fully discussed how the important primary sources I have used are described in by T'ang scholarship, nor had I dealt with such important matters as deeper symbolism in terms of T'ang meanings. For example, I had only mentioned simply the colour code of T'ang courtly dress and the beliefs of T'ang disciplines in terms of their social impacts, which operated presumably very strongly in the political arena of the imperial court and influenced the T'ang people's psychology of clothing. The historical source helped to judge the use of dress to a degree; its social functions could be gathered from the documentary information. The absence of reference to T'ang wearers' individual behaviours or interactions with their peers seems to preclude the fuller understanding of T'ang wearers' social psychology, their thinking and mannerisms of fashion. The focus of the fashion changes in terms of the path of western influence (*Hufication*, or *Huhua*) was difficult to detect clearly. Analysing how T'ang dress served a practical function involves speculation on my part as it would be difficult to test all the historical findings of contemporary scholars.

I have yet to finalise answers to all these theoretical inquiries that I raised in my design methodology. My research may throw up some new questions of its own and more enquiries may usefully be pursued further. However, this study and application-revaluation, confrontation, and change, extends the knowledge gained by a designer's view and may give some ideas for future scholarship. The emphasis of the methodology was based on a profound understanding of Chinese clothing. A new fashion based on traditional Chinese clothes in twentieth-first centuries could be a new exciting, promising paradigm for Chinese designers to work on. I hope that this study will affect general understanding of the potentials of historical resource in fashion design, also the public

consciousness and the perception of Chinese. I see the pluralism of this exploration of design methodology as a contribution to the field of fashion and design studies.

It should be reiterated, however, that my own vision is based as much on the T'ang sources which contain scholarship and histories. It is an attempt to demonstrate how a modern designer can derive design elements from historical sources and how the sources can be used for practical ends. I have tried to understand the attitudes, biases, and limitations of the works that I used. I have to form my own judgment on the basis of the discoveries of prominent modern historians, so that I can use them with their potential practicalities.

Further line of enquiry could place an emphasis on what role Chinese fashion could possibly play in the twentieth-first century. This study is in part a contribution to that understanding and in part a foundation for it. As Chinese society becomes economically and politically stronger and its huge population become increasingly consumerist, there would be a huge advantage in the ability of Chinese culture to contribute to penetrate fashion markets elsewhere in the world, as the Chinese did in the seventh to the ninth century or the West did in the twentieth century. I do not expect that Sino-identification will lead to a return to the age-old power of the traditional past and a negation of the western system, closing itself in the modern world. This subject should be justified by the needs of Chinese people for greater and deeper understanding of Chinese culture. But the future will appear highly problematic as Chinese fashion has long lost its cultural identity not only owing to the Orientalist and western influence but also Chinese fashion designers' and modern consumers' inadequate understanding of their own culture.

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Glossary

1. Classics and standard histories

I Ching (Book of Change)

Built around a system of sixty-four hexagrams, each of six lines with unbroken and broken lines presumably used for divination, and with later additions to the text which is "a storehouse of image and symbols from which Chinese literati frequently drew". The text probably originated in the Western Chou (c.1027-771 BC) but some of the additions are as late as the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220).

Zhou li (or Chou li, Rites of Chou)

A description of the Chou bureaucracy. Probably written during the Warring States period as an idealised description of the government in the early Chou period. May have fragmentary information about the early Chou bureaucracy.

Yi li (Book of etiquette and ceremonial)

A detailed description of ceremonies claimed to have been carried out during the Spring-and-Autumn period (770-475 BC). May have been written during the first half of the Warring-States period (475-221 BC).

Li Ji (Book of Rites)

Contains information on rituals and the development of Confucian philosophy from late Warring-States to early Former-Han (206 BC-AD 9).

2. Terms and Definitions

Buddhism

In the first century was the time of the Buddhist invasion of China, first the transplantation of basically Indian ideas and institutions, followed by their transformation into Chinese adaptations, in almost infinite variations of those ideas and institutions. With the growth of Buddhism and its spreading power came the emergence of the Chinese tradition of Daoism which, from the fifth century onwards, began to compete with Buddhism for the minds of Chinese of all classes (Wright and Twitchett 1973: 2). Buddhism became properly established by the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386-534). Tenets of Buddhism taught that a release from suffering came through subjugating the desires of this world in order to achieve individual salvation. Under the founder of the T'ang dynasty Tai Tsung (AD 627-649) and later under Ming Huang (AD 713-755) the borders of the Empire were extended to India and the Caspian. With the close connection with India and celebrated monks as Hsuan Tsang, who returned to China in AD 645 with copies of famous Indian images, Buddhism flourished during the T'ang dynasty and the powers and privileges of the Buddhists were quashed during great proscription of AD 842-845. It attained its greatest period of power, in spite of the adoption of Daoism as the official religion.

Chi

The issuing forth of the Dao intelligence in the physical realm, in nature, was defined as *chi* (or *qi*) in Chinese. *Chi* is both a presence and a form of cosmic energy or vital spirit. Chuang Tau spoke of it as a

"life-breath". The earliest reference to *chi* was in the *Book of Moral (the Dao De Jing)*, where it was stated that *chi* is what unifies yin and yang and creates their harmony. *Chi* is characterised by the historical Chinese art critics and aestheticians as "life-movement" and "spirit resonance". It is the essence reality and, as the observable energy or operant spirit of Dao in physical form and existence (Willis 1987:49).

Confucianism

The philosophical school propounded by Confucius (c.551-479 BC) based upon a series of key relationships and behaviour which determine social balance and harmony became a keystone of the Chinese belief system and determined subsequent structures within the Chinese state and society (Michaelson 1999; Brislin, et al. 1988: 304-21)

Taoism (or Daoism)

The philosophical and religious set of beliefs of Daoism based upon the writings of Laozi and Zhuang Zhou (c. 399-295 BC) which stressed non-action (*wu-wei*). In contrast to Confucianism, the philosophical texts propound the need to retire from the world in order to master the Tao, or the way.

Hsiang (symbol, or symbolism)

"Symbol" is a generic term, and in the modern sense includes all that is meant by a sign, mark of token. In philosophy, psychology, sociology and art it is regarded as that which stands for something else. "Symbolism" is a bringing together of ideas and objects, or an object that stands for an idea. The Chinese word for symbol, *hsiang*, refers to a countenance, a look, or to a sensual pleasure. Karlgren traces its meaning, among them figure, to represent, to imitate, image, shape, appearance, to depict, pictured, emblem, and symbol (quoted in Wechsler 1985: no. 130). The development to the expression of abstract ideas in Chinese was by means of true picture symbolism. In ancient Chinese, concrete objects were denoted by conventional drawings (greatly summarized in modern Chinese). The sun, moon, fire and animals are all almost recognisable drawing. Symbolism of an idea by an object which by its nature, analogous character, function or purpose suggests the idea: the dragon, lotus, phoenix are among the best traditional example (Whitick 1971:3-5). Symbolism in Chinese pattern design is viewed rich in nuances and shade of meaning. It is this tier of communication in T'ang dress that this study seeks to elucidate.

"Hu" (Barbarians) and Hufication

According to the vocabulary of the T'ang dynasty and Chinese academic tradition ever since, "*Hu*" does not refer to western or westerners in the modern sense but instead to the peoples who lived to the Northwest of Central China, including Central Asia, and what are now North-western parts of modern China. Thus *Hu* people (*Huren*) includes the peoples of Asia Turks, Uighyrs, Tibetans, people from Khotan, Kucha, Sogdians, Kashmiris, Persians, Arabs, Indians and Singalese. From around AD 200 (Han dynasty) to the late ninth century (T'ang dynasty) there was widespread foreign influence in China. Regular communication was opened by land across Turkestan to the states of Central Asia, to India, to Iran and to the Roman Orient. njoyed as never before the luxury and social panache offered by exotic goods. In the arts and clothing, new foreign forms, largely from *Hu* areas, revolutionized native Chinese taste (Mahler 1959: 106-07; Moses 1976: 61; Paludan 1994:2, 38-39; Twitchett 1985, 4-5).

Li (Etiquette)

As one of Chinese tradition, “*li*” denotes the correct performance of all kinds of religious ritual, sacrifice to the ancestors at the right time and place. A certain deportment and attitude is *li* (Bodde and Morris 1967: 19). *Li*'s origin and ethical meanings can be traced by reviewing the books of *Li*, e.g., *Li Ji (Book of Rites)* (Legge 1885; Lau and Chen 1992), *Zhouli* (Lau and Chen 1992). The most important Confucian discipline is *li*. From the Chou dynasty (1027-771 BC), there existed codes by which the officials must abide by the *Li Ji (Book of Rites)* to conform to the concept of *li*. *Li* embraces ceremonies, sanctioned social practices, traditions and notions of morality and culture (Budde and Morris 1967: 29, n. 55; McMullen 1988: 120, 134, n. 29; Wechsler 1985: 24-25).

Silk Road (or Silk Route)

The term Silk Road was not used until the 19th century. The Silk Road was already in use during the Han dynasty, and silk was exported to Rome. The T'ang capital of Chang'An was situated at the eastern end of the land route, along which caravans travelled in both directions between China and the West; dividing in two at Dun-huang, to skirt the Taklamakan desert and then converging again at Kashgar. China exported silk lacquer, bamboo-ware and steel westwards, while importing exotic spices, perfumes and jewels in return. The Silk Route brought many foreign residents to Chang'An including Sasanian metalworkers, Central Asian and Cambodian dancers, Turkish soldiers, Persian kings, and foreign ambassadors. See Michaelson 1999.

The T'ang dynasty

In the millennial history of the Chinese Empire the T'ang (AD 618-907) is one of the great ages. It was a time of unprecedented material prosperity, institutional growth, new departure in thought and religion, and creativity in all of the arts. It cosmopolitanism – it was open to foreign influences of all kinds. These qualities of T'ang civilisation gave it a universal appeal. This was a time of territorial expansion and prosperity when the T'ang capital, Chang'An (modern day Xian), became a cosmopolitan cultural centre. Han Chinese lived alongside foreigners from lands along the Silk Road that ran across Central Asia and linked China to the Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds. Exotic goods and foreign fashions were in vogue at court. In an age of religious tolerance, Buddhism gained imperial and popular support coexisting alongside the indigenous Chinese beliefs of Confucianism and Daoism.

Yin-yang and the Five Elements

Tsou Yen's (350-270 BC) theory of yin-yang and the Five Elements (*wu-hsing*) was based on an ancient belief which was partially expressed in the *I Ching*, that is, the Universe was originally an obscure mass with two forces, the Yin and the Yang, which could be observed in such opposing manifestations as male and female, light and darkness, opposing manifestations as male and female, light and darkness, warmth and cold, hardness and softness, movement and quietness. The interacting activities of these two basic forces gave rise to the Five Elements—wood, fire, earth, metal and water. The clearest signs of these powers are found in colours which had applied in clothing system in Chinese dynasties. It is also evident with the regions in the five directions.

Orientalism

Orientalism was a strong component in the thinking of nineteenth century Europe at the height of its colonial power in the non-Western world. The historical term used to describe the West's fascination with and assimilation of the ideas and styles of the East. West sees the East as different "other" warranting Western supremacy and segregation, and vested with exotic mystery. Significant factors in Orientalism are the periodic exclusion of the East from Western gaze and the continual repudiation of the East in favour of the moral and cultural coordinates of the West. (Martin and Koda 1995: Introduction) Cultural historian Edward Said's discussion (1978) of the political and psychological aspects of nineteenth-and twentieth-century Western attitudes toward the Middle East in his book *Orientalism* sheds light on the impact of the appeal of Chinese clothing in contemporary fashion design. Said describes Orientalism as a search for missing or repressed elements—the subconscious longings and desires—of Western society. In order to govern subject peoples in countries such as Egypt and India, he explains, people in the West defines Orientals (an overarching term that included people from the Middle and Far East) with such terms as *instinctive, irrational, intuitive, childlike, lazy, cunning and feminine*. Westerners perceived these qualities as the opposite of themselves, yet they felt an underlying attraction to many of them (Stevens and Wada 1996: 23-24).

Six Maxims (Six Principles)

Hsien He (AD 500), an artist and critic, formulated Six Principles (of Chinese arts criticism and of aesthetic theory) which make a painting worthy. His qualitative judgment of painting as well as to aesthetic and technical theories detailed analysis, literary research, classification in categories, and general speculations of Chinese art. Soper's translation from Hsieh He's work, the *Ku hua p'in lu*: '(Good) painting has six conditions: "animation through spirit consonance", "structural method in use of the brush". "fidelity to the object in portraying forms", "conformity to kind in applying colours", "proper planning in placing (of elements)" and "transmission (of the experience of the past) in making copies".' (Sickman and Soper 1971: 132-33)

Fashion, dress

Most authors agree that fashion is a process involving change, from the introduction of a variation of a cultural form to its acceptance, discarding, and replacement by another cultural form. Roach-Higgins (1981) declares that in addition, awareness of change within one's lifetime is a requisite aspect of fashion: One means for determining if fashion in dress exists as a concept among a group of people is to consider fashion in relation to the life span. If people in a society are generally not aware of change in from of dress during their lifetimes, fashion does not exist in that society. Awareness of change is a necessary condition for fashion to exist; the retrospective view of the historian does not produce fashion (Eicher and Sumberg 1995: 299). In contrast, daily dress can easily be distinguished from high fashion or haute couture; we refer to ordinary dress as world fashion or cosmopolitan fashion. These fashions are the apparel, coiffure, and cosmetics of males and females, adults and children: the dress of ordinary people. Clothing examples of world fashion include jeans, sweatshirts, T-Shirts, trench coats, parkas, trousers skirts, blouses, shirts, blazers, business suits, school uniforms, and athletic shoes. The same process of acceptance, rejection, and replacement of form is found in both high

fashion and world fashion whether local or global, for daily dress exhibits change from year to year or season to season just as haute couture does (Eicher and Sumberg 1995: 300).

Appendices

Appendix I Background-personal context

A record of my experience would help to make sense of how my work was initiated and developed. In the 1970s my mother was doing small trading business for boutiques to support our family while my father worked at the National Art University. My mother took me with her on her trips between Hong Kong and Taiwan. Customs would allow her to import more commodities if she travelled with more passengers. Ever since then I have been fascinated by those new products like wools from England. My aunt gave us many of her clothes. She was active in high social cycles in Hong Kong and had a private tailor. I wanted to wear those clothes but they were too big for a small girl so I split and reconstructed them. When I was studying in senior high school one summer vacation I worked at a garment factory. After that job I got my first pay and then I bought a sewing machine. I sometimes kept working overnight to make a new dress for my next day class trip or party. Once when I got up I could not find my machine. My sister had been annoyed by its noise all night while I was working and that made her sleepless. She decided to throw it into the bushes in the garden.

When I was an undergraduate student, my father's friend gave me a job to manage production for his trading business. I was authorised to decide what to produce and it turned out I was making my garments. I used traditional workmanship such as block print, dyeing and Chinese ink painting skills to give my garments a new form. I put my clothes in some small shops and the business went well. After university I opened a shop and hired a dressmaker. I spent my daytime at the shop to communicate with my customers and worked at night at my studio. Taiwan market at that time was very dynamic and there was a group of élitist women: artists, academics, or business professionals. They became my loyal customers and we made good friends. There was an interaction between them and me and I knew what they were wanting. They were concerned about how to express their sophistication and élitist individuality. Clothes of a Chinese cultural form would be likely to more easily meet their demands. The number of shops of selling my clothes increased within those years, in Taiwan, China and the U.S.

In the western fashion driven market it is not surprising that a few people have no confidence in local designers' work. The works designed by many local designers were thought to copy tastes from the Western market. The consumers were not very keen to wear those copied styles. Once I was told by a customer that in her life she had never worn anything produced in Taiwan. She felt proud of her ability to afford import clothes and her western taste. I felt pity for her and regret for the loss of a Chinese clothing culture.

In 1993 I took my master's degree at Fu Jen University Taiwan. My fashion designer friend Lee commented that he doubted the value of spending time as an academic instead of working for business. He told me he should be awarded a degree without studying since he was the most successful. He would think that studying would loose time and then loose money. In Fu Jen Professor Laumann Maryta emphasised an intensive multi-disciplined approach to clothing studies: art history, philosophy, psychology, cultural studies and global issues which helped me to have a wider spectrum for clothing. Professor Yu-ching Wang, a traditional Confucian scholar opened the door for me to study Chinese costume history. Their life long pursuits and devotion to education are my paradigms. After my graduation I started teaching at Fu Jen University and Shih Gian University. When I used Professor Wang's publications for teaching materials for Chinese clothing history my students questioned me both for using classic literary descriptions and lack of visual images.

My parents are immigrants from China. That affects my national identity. They have never identified themselves as Taiwanese and not to say their children. My approach to the clothing history of ancient China may be a reflection of my seeking for my cultural roots instead of national identify. I developed my designs in terms

of Taiwanese consumer's preferences based not only Taiwanese complex globalised local culture but also Chinese traditions.

During the second half of 1990s my profession life was very demanding. I continued to run my fashion business, working for civil programs as a consultant and a fashion adviser for fashion and textiles industry in both Taiwan and China. As a columnist I wrote articles on clothing criticism for newspapers. Demanding life and business success made my life not more fulfilled but emptier. One day when I was making my usual purchases in Hong Kong. I looked at the fleeting scene in the street and suddenly I asked myself why I should be involved in such a forever changing produce? Will I be able to find something more permanent?

Professor Edward Newton as a visiting professor gave a course of Design Management at Fu Jen. His reaction to my presentation in the class: "This is the beginning of a PhD dissertation" (or words to that effect) greatly encouraged me with to do the PhD. I was tempted to continue my fashion business. Professor Laumann Maryta suggested to me that only when I lived in western countries could I understand the western system and make comparisons of the cultural difference and develop my own unique design. The first two years of studying in England have been difficult to me both in language and new life. When I was asked why I wanted to come to England to study a Chinese subject, I am actually preparing to have a complete time for myself to search for something to be my philosophy both for my profession and a more meaningful life.

Living in England in daily life practice I feel confused often because I do not share similar values with many of my western friends. They tend to be more individual. By contrast, the Chinese have closer relationships with family and friends and help each other more and do not think of fairness in western sense. This cultural conflict and my solitary study and living all created a stronger desire to seek for the philosophy of my Chinese heritage, i.e. Confucianism and Taoism. I feel more grounded. On the other hand I started to accept the difference and absorb many aspects of a western intellectual approach both at academic and practice, i.e. how English preserve their heritage and how scholars become devoted to a subject and explore their expertise for technological practice. I had complete time to develop my thinking and study the western system in terms of rationality and attitudes towards knowledge and its application. If I make a comparison of my previous design work and the work of this study, I think my Master's graduation collection (1993) is more form appealing and this work approaches to a wider dimensions in terms of time and space. My attitude of insisting that Chinese clothing modernisation is not Westernisation stays the same as it did before but my way of designing is somewhat more logical in terms of the link between the design source and the product.

Appendix II Chronological table of the Chinese dynasties

SHANG c.1550-c.1027 BC.

CHOU c.1027-256

Western Chou c. 1027-771

Eastern Chou 770-256

Spring and Autumn period 770-475

Warring States period 475-221

CH'IN 221-207

HAN 206 BC-AD 220

Former (Western) Han 206 BC-AD 9

Hsin 9-25

Later (Eastern) Han 25-220

THREE KINDOMS 221-280

Shu (Han) 221-263

Wei 220-265

Wu 222-280

SOUTHERN (Six Dynasties) and NORTHERN DYNASTIES

Chin 265-316 Northern Wei (T'o-pa) 386-535

Eastern Chin 317-420 Eastern Wei (T'o-pa) 534-543

Liu Sung 420-427 Western Wei (T'o-pa) 535-554

Southern Ch'i 479-502 Northern Ch'i 550-577

Liang 502-557 Northern Chou (Hsien-pi) 557-581

Ch'en 557-587

SUI 581-618

T'ANG 618-907

FIVE DYNASTIES 907-960

Later Liang 907-922

Later T'ang (Turkic) 923-936

Later Chin (Turkic) 936-948

Later Han (Turkic) 946-950

Later Chou 951-960

Liao (Khitan Tartars) 907-1125

Hsi-hsia (Tangut Tibetan) 990-1227

SONG 960-1279

Northern Sung 960-1126

Southern Sung 1127-1279

Chin (jurchen Tartars) 1115-1234

YUAN (Mongols) 1271-1368

MING 1368-1644

CH'ING

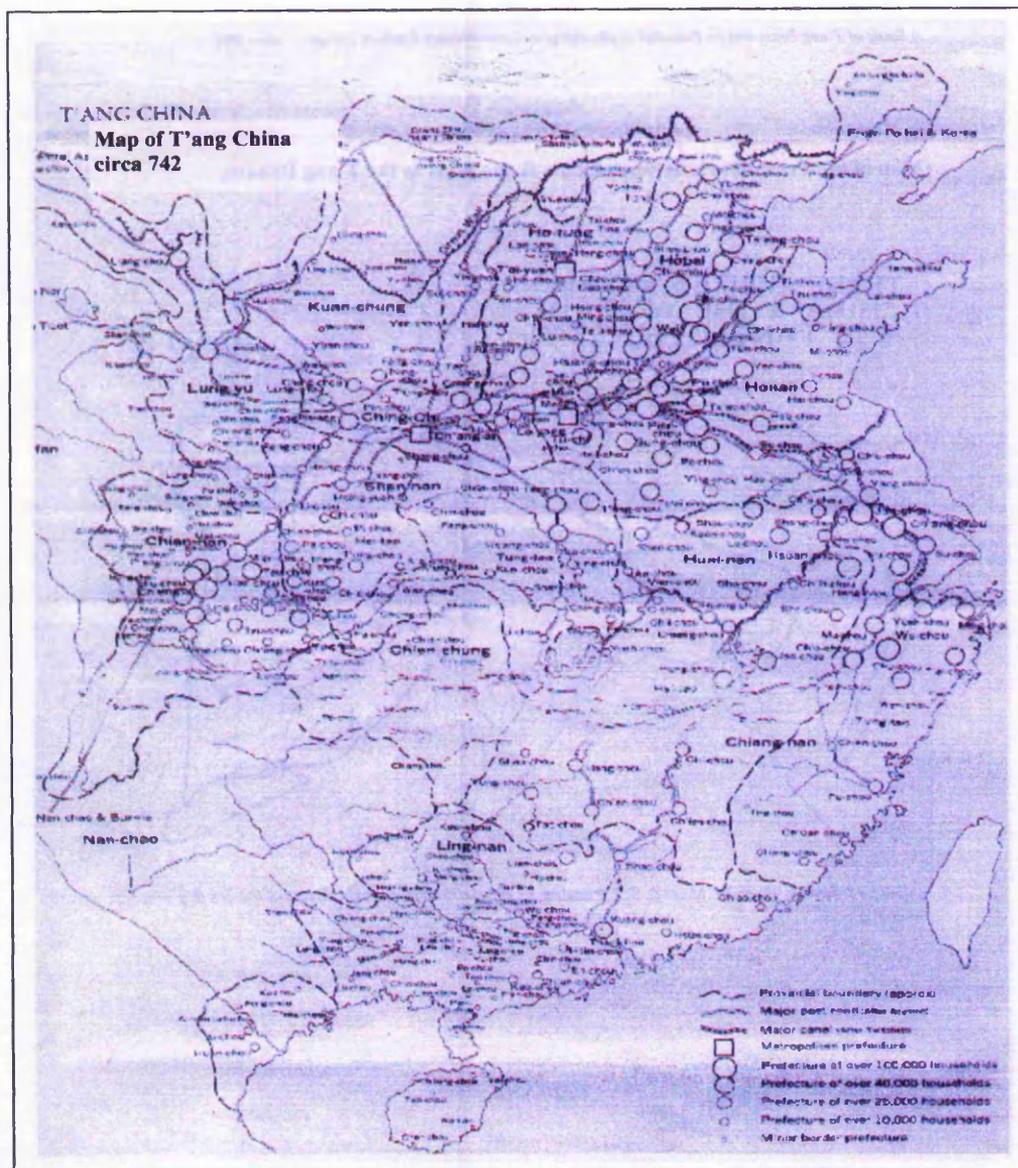
(Manchus) 1644-1911

REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1912-

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1948-

Source: Paludan 1994: 60; Sullivan 1977: 10.

Appendix III Map of T'ang China circa 742



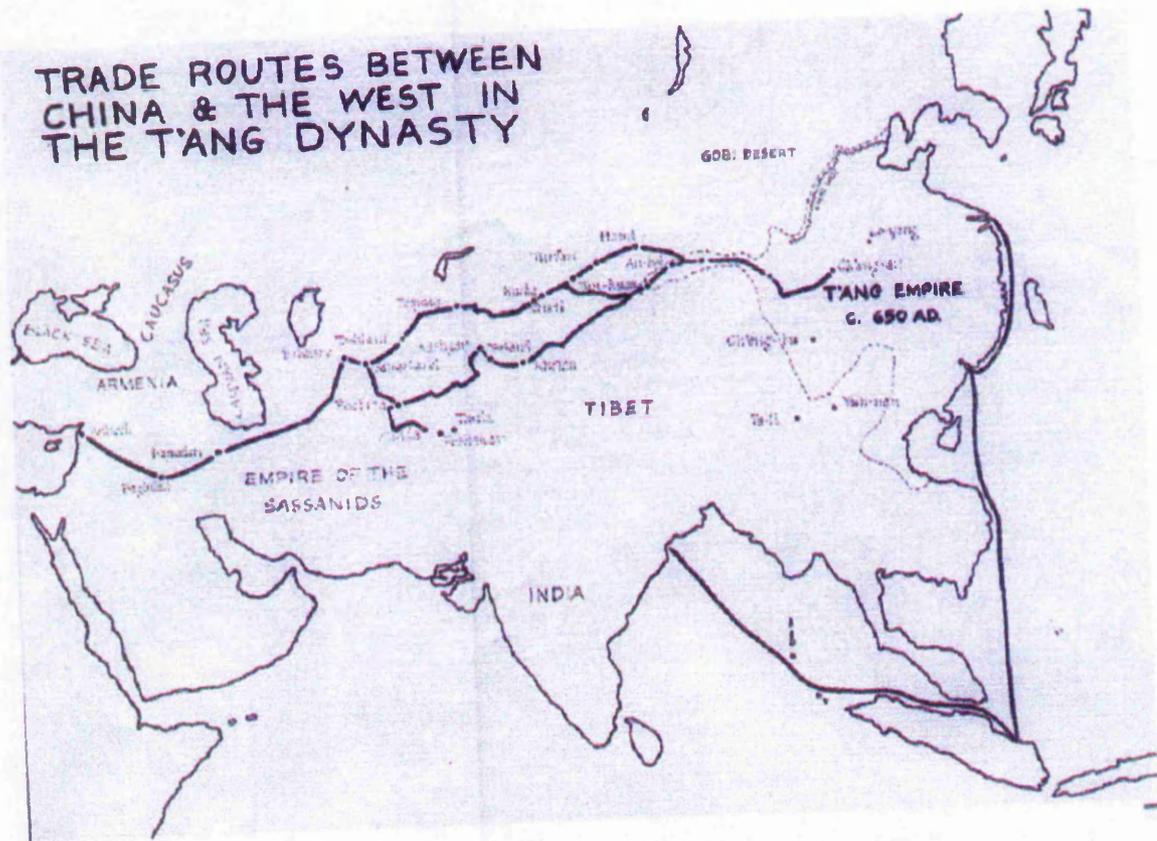
Source: Twitchette and Wright 1973: 458.

Appendix IV Silk Road after 5th century



Source: O'Neill, John P. and Walter 2004.

Appendix V Map of trade routes between China & the West in the T'ang dynasty



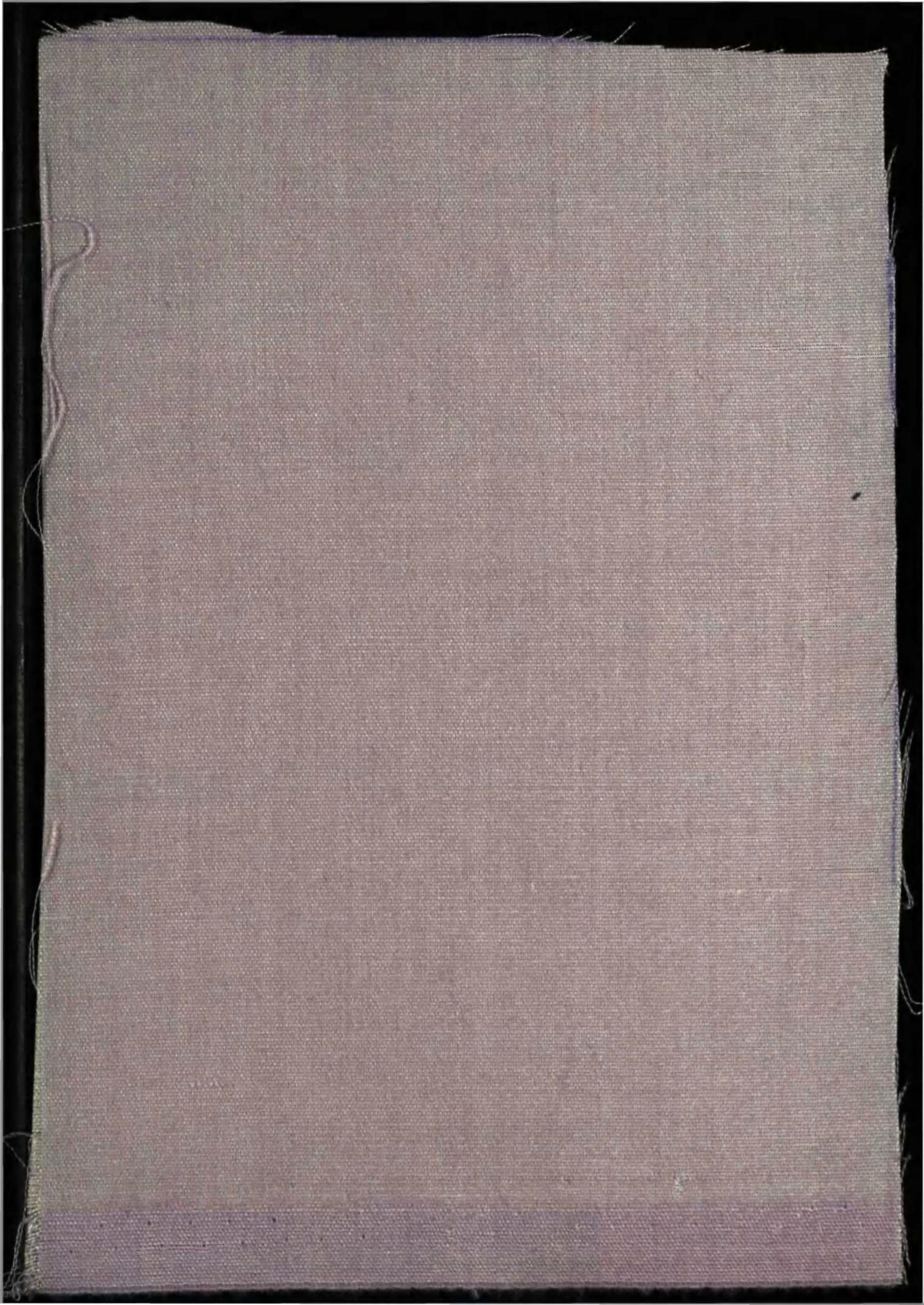
Source: Joseph et al 1970.

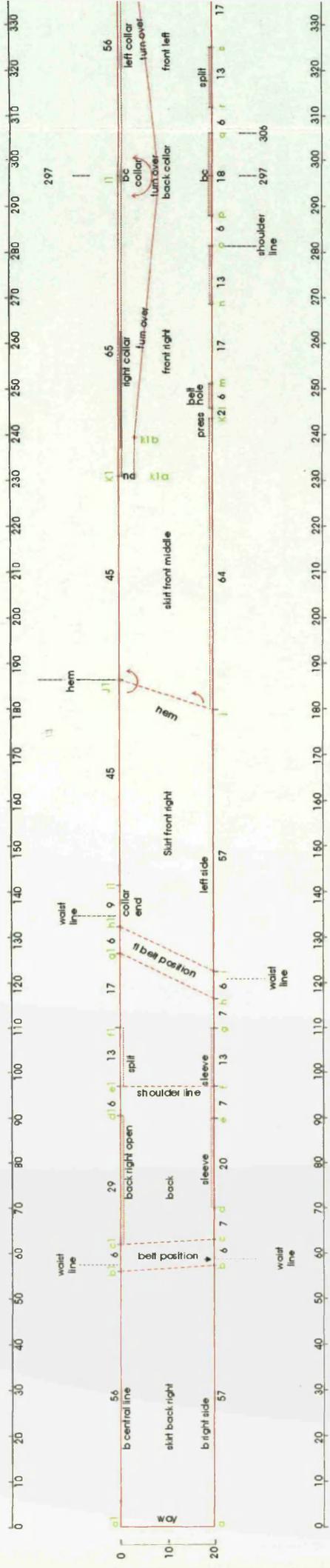
Appendix VI Western style periods & dates

Dates	British Monarch	British Period	American Period	Style
1558-1603	Elizabeth I	Elizabethan	Early Colonial	Gothic
1603-1625	James I	Jacobean		Baroque (c. 1620-1700)
1625-1649	Charles I	Carolean		
1649-1660	Commonwealth	Cromwellian		
1660-1685	Charles II	Restoration		
1685-1688	James II	Restoration		
1688-1694	William & Mary	William & Mary	William & Mary	
1694-1702	William III	William III	Dutch Colonial	Rococo (c. 1695-1760)
1702-1714	Anne	Queen Anne	Queen Anne	
1714-1727	George I	Early Georgian		
1727-1760	George II	Georgian	Chippendale (c. 1750)	
1760-1811	George III	Georgian	Early Federal (c. 1790-1810) American Directoire (c. 1798-1804) American Empire (c. 1804-1815)	Neo-classical (c. 1755-1805) Empire (c. 1799-1815)
1812-1820	George III	Regency	Later Federal (c. 1810-1830)	Regency (c. 1812-1830)
1820-1830	George IV	Regency		
1830-1837	William IV	William IV		Eclectic (c. 1830-1880)
1837-1901	Victoria	Victorian	Victorian	Arts & Crafts (c. 1880-1900)
1901-1910	Edward VII	Edwardian	Art Nouveau (c. 1890-1920)	Art Nouveau (c. 1890-1920)
1910-1936	George V		Art Deco (c. 1920-1939)	Art Deco (c. 1925-1939)
1936	Edward VIII			
1936-1952	George IV			
1952-	Elizabeth II			

Source: www.fantiques.com, accessed 25/03/05.

Appendix VII A chosen fabric for the designs





Appendix VIII Production specification for *Shui* Design

HUNG CHIH LO

A STUDY OF T'ANG DRESS AND ITS POTENTIAL APPLICATION TO CONTEMPORARY FASHION DESIGN

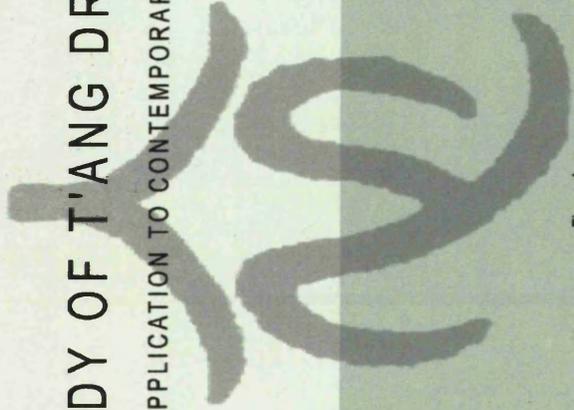


Figure 1

My designs are based on applying the ideas of *Wen*, *Chih* and *Yun* to the creation of contemporary fashion design. I use T'ang dress (A.D. 618-907) as a source of inspiration.

Wen means 'Characters' or 'Symbols'. I use *Wen* to create design motifs for my garments and to afford a basis for their construction. This idea originates in *hsiang-hsing*, which was one of the ways in which

mirrors the iconography of Buddhist sculptural styles. It was also influenced by Taoist thought and Buddhist art, which had introduced elements of Naturalism and Idealism.

I use linearity as my means of depicting drapery. I expand religious styling practices into a kind of functional semaphore to rationalize disclosure of the supple female form. With my concept of *Chih*, I use single strips to form my garments. (Fig. 6)

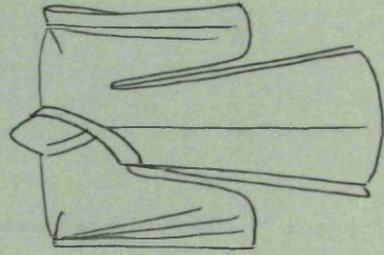


Figure 2

Chinese characters were struc
Linearity identifies the new

tured. For example, Yi, the word or character 'dress' in Chinese, mimicked the shape of a court dress. Figures 1 & 2 show the ancient form of the Chinese character and a Chinese court dress (circa. A.D.200). Chinese court dress radiates a ritualistic aura and acts as both symbol and metaphor for the form of authenticity. Its style reflected the Confucian principle that the use of right-sidedness symbolized the authenticity of Chinese culture, while left-sidedness was a sign of foreignness or barbarianism (*Hu*).

I apply the ancient Chinese scripts of the *wu-hsing* (the Five Elements: metal, wood, water, fire and earth) that embody T'ang thought on Nature and the Universe to the structural shapes of my garments. Based on the *hsiang-hsing* of the Chinese system of writing, each of the designs of my garments con-

forms with line. Drapery and wrapping are used to manipulate cloth into modeling contour. Its linear rhythms establish a transcendent connection with Naturalism and Idealism. I believe that greater amounts of cut distract from, or interrupt, the female body's sensational response to the garment and the garment's own look. I have created my own way of maintaining the integrity of the cloth by stitching one or two strips together to form a garment. Using this method constantly, I construct my garments by an economical use of controlled width strips from straight-edged rectangular models, sewn at the sides with a simple running stitch. The simplicity and reduction of linked strips replace the Western system of using complex block assemblages in manufacture and of lay planning in cutting. (Fig. 7) I tailor my garments using an original

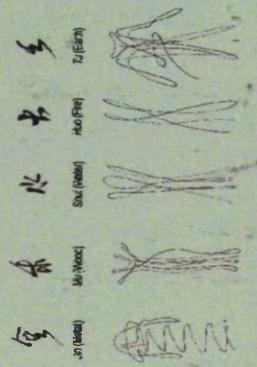


Figure 3

The Five Elements		Metal (金)	Wood (木)	Water (水)	Fire (火)	Earth (土)
Season		Autumn	Spring	Winter	Summer	Real month of season
Direction		West	East	North	South	Center
Color		White	Green	Black	Red	Yellow

Figure 4



Figure 5

tains visual hieroglyphics of *wu-hsing*: *Jin* (metal), *Mu* (wood), *Shui* (water), *Huo* (fire) and *Tu* (earth) which are made more explicit by referring to the essence and constructs of the original context of yin-yang theory by which the objects of the Chinese world were constructed. (Fig. 3)



Figure 6

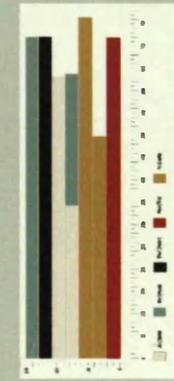


Figure 7

In my design each garment consists of a single graphic element. The clothes are structured diagrammatically in correspondence with images that link to the elements' reality: Seasons, Directions and Colors. Each image is distinctive. (Fig. 4)



Figure 8

Chih

Chih means 'Essence'. My concept of *Chih* was inspired by the use of a linear style in festival images. (Fig. 5) My dress style

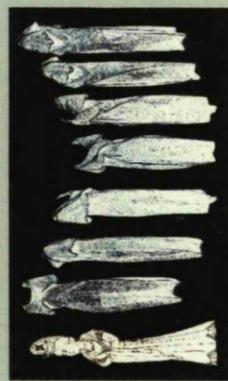


Figure 9

technique based on traditional Chinese dress-forming methods. As a consequence my creation of a modern Chinese fashion avoids westernization.

Yun

Yun means 'resonating elegance'. I use my concept of *Yun* to define a new look for T'ang dress that contrasts with the modern Western eroticized form of Orientalism. An exquisite silhouette refers to a central characteristic of the T'ang style. I chose several dominant forms: *yuan-he* style, Princess *Yongtai* style, *Hufu* style, Buddhist dancer costume style and court style, applying their visual and tactile qualities to the form of my garment. Figures 8 and 9 show that the *Mu* element of my design was inspired by the style of Princess *Yongtai*.

Appendix IX Description of design for exhibition

Design and description: author, electronic image: Tim Rundle, Sue Pike, date: 30th June 2004.