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# Document TECHSTYLE Series 1.0 Ariadne's Thread

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#CHAT  
#六廠紡織文化藝術館

新經緯系列1.0  
亞莉雅德妮的線球  
文集

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## 國家主義、婦女及她們的中國：當中國談到旗袍時，還會講到甚麼？

凌穎詩

最近，在香港（2016、2013、2010）、台北（2013）和新加坡（2012）的旗袍展覽漸多，這些展覽似乎有不同的策劃方向，究竟想展示甚麼？這種服飾除了展示中國女性的身段之外，在中國各地還傳達了甚麼不同的信息？

這篇論文首先會簡潔地論述旗袍的歷史，接着探討在香港、新加坡及台北舉行的旗袍展覽，怎樣強調中國女性的身體外型與其身份以及地域之關係。

### 為求平等而穿上男性服裝

旗袍的起源，引起過不少爭論。普遍的說法，是旗袍的誕生跟滿州人這個民族的名稱有關，因而認為是滿族服飾演變而來的。歷史和實物的證據都顯示，旗袍跟當時男性的服飾有密切關係 (Finnane 2008, 1996, Ng 2006: 1001)。1920年代早期的旗袍有寬大、「清教徒式有角」的剪裁，這種剪裁模仿男性的長袍，是提倡兩性平等的女性服裝。在當時女性解放運動的高峰期，女性穿男性的服裝，反映了她們渴求得到平等的權利，也希望個人的特性得到尊重。1920年代穿這種有角旗袍的，不但有婦女運動的倡導者及留學回國的

## Nationalism, Women and Their China: What More the Chinese Talk about When They Talk about the Qipao?

Wessie Ling

Recent years saw the proliferation of *qipao* exhibition in Hong Kong (2016, 2013, 2010), Taipei (2013) and Singapore (2012). All of which have seemingly different curatorial directions. What was transmitted through these *qipao* shows? Beyond the Chinese bodily appearance, what did the dress convey in different Chinese regions?

This essay will commence with a brief history of the dress, followed by discussion of exhibitions in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taipei addressing the relation of Chinese women's bodily appearance to their identities and perceived locality.

### In Men's Clothes For Equality

The origin of the *qipao* opens up numerous debates. Popular belief leans towards an affiliation with the Manchurians whose name gave birth to the dress. Consequently, it is often seen as a continued evolution of the Manchurian dress. Historical and visual evidences revealed a close association with Chinese menswear of the time (Finnane 2008, 1996, Ng 2006: 100-1). The early-1920s *qipao* had a wide, "angular and puritanical" cut, resembling the men's *changpao* and worn by women advocating gender equality. At the peak of women's emancipation in the early 1920s,

women's cross-dressing reflected their desire for equal rights and respect for their individuality. Those that wore the 1920s angular *qipao* were not limited to women activists and returning overseas students (Ng 2006: 272-4, Scott 1958: 81-3), but also trendy women who followed new ideas (Wong 1975: 98). Despite many suggested names to differentiate the dress from Manchu ladies' wear of the Qing dynasty – for instance, *changsan*, *changyi*, *changpao*, *zhonghua pao* (Minguo ribao, 27/2/1926, cited in Ng 2006: 274) – none were adopted. The name *qipao* was eventually accepted.

### Women's Standard Dress under Nationalism

Following the abolition of foot-binding (1911) and breast-binding (1928), Chinese women's bodies experienced a transformation that required a new wardrobe. The *qipao* emerged at the right time in order to address the problem of changes in the body and size and the dilemma that many fashion-trend followers were unable to fit into ready-made or western-style garments. Many Chinese women were prosumers of their own *qipao*. (Ling 2009) They embraced its stylistic changes that made it part and parcel of the fashion cycle, in tune with western trends and influences.

學生 (Ng 2006: 272-4, Scott 1958: 81-3)，也有願意接受新想法的時尚女性 (Wong 1975: 98)。雖然許多人為了把這種服飾跟滿族人的服飾區分開來而提議了一些名稱——長衫、長衣、長袍、中華袍 (《民國日報》，27/2/1926，引自吳 2006: 274)，但當中沒有一個被採用，最後採用的名稱是「旗袍」。

### 國家主義之下的標準女性服裝

隨着紮腳 (1911) 和束胸 (1928) 的廢除，中國女性的身型經歷了轉變，需要新的服裝。女性身型和尺寸的大小，都有所改變。此外，對許多追隨潮流的人來說，現成的服裝和洋裝都不稱身，而旗袍就能解決這些問題。因此，旗袍可說是來得非常合時。許多中國女性都穿用自己製造的旗袍 (Ling 2009)，她們接納不同的風格，使之成為時尚產品，同時跟西方的潮流和影響接軌。

### 現代化和消費文化

毫無疑問，旗袍跟資本主義的帶動有密切關係，目的是把中國推向西方的現代化及商業化。西方國家一直把現代化強加在中國之上，方法是通過不斷擴大的互動通訊網絡，跟資本主義的西方國家進行交流。旗袍展現了中國的裁縫傳統，同時深受西方的裝飾風格影響，其重要性不可忽視。

## Modernity and Consumer Culture

Nonetheless, the *qipao* had an indissoluble link with the capitalist drive for Western modernity and commercialisation. Western powers had long imposed modernity on China via an ever-widening and interactive network of communication and exchange with the capitalist West. The *qipao*'s perceived Chinese sartorial tradition, materiality, and wild partnership with western-style accessories prevailed. Its wearers in the 1920s and 1930s represented an emerging middle class with some education, financial independence, and social and cultural awareness: they are the signifiers of the hegemony of the modern. Those women wearing their *qipaos* were significant in the creation of a progressive China and were co-opted by the state as Republican icons.

The practice through which Chinese women incorporated Western-inspired clothing features into their *qipao* was paralleled by the nation's desire for modernisation. (Ling 2012) Its later banning under Communist rule for its association with bourgeois decadence only enforced its functioning symbolism and indelible relation to national agenda. (Ling 2007a) Although today, the dress remains as cultural souvenir from the Mainland, many considered its re-make from 1980s onwards in the absence of skilled and traditional *qipao* tailors.

1920 及 30 年代，穿用旗袍的女性代表着正在浮現的中產階級，她們有一定程度的學識，經濟獨立，也有社會和文化方面的意識，有着現代霸權的影子。穿用旗袍的女性對中國的進步有重大意義，獲推選為國民黨的標徵。

中國女性受西方服飾的特點所啟發，將之併入旗袍當中，這種行為顯示了國家對現代化的渴望 (Ling 2012)。後來，在共產黨的統治下，被視為標籤資產階級的旗袍被禁止，這更加强了其身份象徵的功能，以及它跟國情之間不可分割的關係 (Ling 2007a)。今天，雖然旗袍仍然是中國大陸的文化紀念品，但許多人都認為，1980 年代後改造的旗袍，都缺乏傳統師傅的技藝。

### 中西結合的香港長衫

在另一邊廂的香港，旗袍經歷了顯著演變。1940 年代末，大量技藝精湛的裁縫師從大陸移民來到香港。在隨後的 1950 及 60 年代，旗袍成了香港的中國女性的標準服裝。旗袍之所以能存留下來，也因為它發揮了許多不同的功用：可以用作校服、服飾、派對穿的衣服、婚宴禮服、服務及娛樂行業的制服。事實上，不管在甚麼時候穿旗袍，它都是中國的明顯標誌 (Clark 2000, Roberts 1997)。在《蘇絲黃的世界》這部荷里活電影裏，小說人物蘇絲黃穿着貼身長衫，這個形象不但使旗袍瘋魔歐美各國，也使它跟性

感色情及異國情調扯上關係 (Ling 2007b)。自此之後，在某程度上，這成了香港長衫的典型款式。不管是改良的長衫，還是展覽館裏的，都可看到這樣的款式。香港電影《花樣年華》(導演王家衛，2000) 中出現的誘人長衫，使這個形象再次得到了肯定。張曼玉所穿經改良過的長衫，吸引了西方和中國的目光，引起了國際轟動。在電影場景裏，想像中 1950 年代的香港，浮現了中西結合的形象，而長衫在當中扮演了不可或缺的角色。在熒幕以外，西化以及帶有時尚觸覺的長衫，一直都是許多展覽的主題。這些展覽由香港歷史博物館籌辦：《歷久常新：旗袍的變奏》(2010)；《百年時尚：香港長衫故事》(2013)；《摩登東方美人》(2016)。如果說時尚是香港長衫的主要元素，最鼎力支持的團體就是「長衫薈」(2014 年成立)。「長衫薈」是個非牟利的社會團體，倡導穿戴和製造當代長衫的傳統。團體的成員熱衷於設計和穿戴長衫，使長衫成為日常服飾，並在當中加入創新的物料，融合於本地風格當中 (Tsang 2016, Cheung 2016)，以跟其他中國地區的風格區分開來 (Fig. 1)。

除了風格的多樣化，這種服飾的命名也彰顯出它的混合性質，如果撇開政治方面。香港是唯一一個中國地區交替使

### The East-West Binary of Hong Kong *cheongsam*

Elsewhere in Hong Kong, the dress experienced a remarkable evolution given the mass migration of skilled tailors in late 1940s and the dress as Hong Kong Chinese women's standard wear in 1950s and 1960s. Numerous functions also ensure its lifespan: as school uniform, costume and party-wear, ceremonial dress in wedding banquets, uniforms in the servicing and entertainment industry as well as a strong marker of Chineseness whenever it is worn. (Clark 2000, Roberts 1997) The image of the fictional

character, Suzie Wong in her clinging *cheongsam* in the Hollywood production, *The World of Suzie Wong* (dir. Richard Quine, 1960), has not only popularised the dress in Euro-America but also largely attributed it sexy, exotic and eroticism (Ling 2007b). Such images have since, to a certain extent, typified the style of Hong Kong *cheongsam* (*ibid*) whenever it is re-created and exhibited. Only to be reaffirmed by the seductive *cheongsams* in Hong Kong Chinese directed film, *In the Mood for Love* (dir. Wong Kar-wei, 2000). Both the western and Chinese gaze have since been trapped under the reconstructed sheath of Maggie Cheung whose *cheongsams* in the film have stirred an international sensation. The cinematic setting of an imagined 1950s Hong Kong evokes an image of East-meets-West whereby the dress takes share (Chang 2017). Out of the limelight, the ever westernised and trend sensitive *cheongsam* has always been a strong feature running across numerous *cheongsam* exhibitions curated by the Hong Kong Museum of History: The Evergreen Classic: Transformation of the *qipao* (2010); A Century of Fashion: Hong

Fig. 1

Emerging Hong Kong fashion designers were invited to recreate *qipao* for *The Evergreen Classic: Transformation of the Qipao* (2010). The Hong Kong styled *qipao* is characterised by its fashionability and trend sensitivity. Courtesy of Wing Choi.

年輕的香港時裝設計師獲邀參展「歷久常新一旗袍的變奏」展覽(2010)，香港旗袍的特點在於其時尚氣息和貼近流行趨勢。鳴謝：Wing Choi



Kong Cheongsam Story (2013); *Modern Oriental Beauty* (2016). If fashionability is the major ingredient of Hong Kong *cheongsam*, earnestly supported it is Cheongsam Connect (est. 2014), a non-profit social group promoting the tradition of making and wearing of contemporary *cheongsam*. Group members, including keen *cheongsam* designers and wearers, take the dress to everyday wear embracing innovative materials and new ways of adaptation (Tsang 2016, Cheung 2016) whilst setting its style apart from those in neighbouring Chinese regions (Fig. 1).

用「長衫」和「旗袍」這兩個名稱，人們普遍都明白它們指的是同一種服裝。「長衫」是廣東話的讀法，而「旗袍」則是普通話的讀法。不過，對於這種服裝起甚麼名稱，不同的人各持己見。有些人認為，「長衫」指的是一種比較隨意的服裝（長度通常到膝蓋為止），而「旗袍」則是比較正式的服裝，也可當作晚裝（長度通常到腳踝為止）。有些裁縫師堅持這種服裝應叫「旗袍」，因為在廣東話裏，男人所穿的長袍也叫長衫。關於這種服裝該有甚麼名稱，香港的中國人一直未能達成共識。不過最近，在政治氣候的影響下，人們都接受「長衫」的叫法，使之跟大陸和台灣分別開來。當香港奮力爭取外界的關注，政治權利和自主權受到威脅時，為這種服裝命名就表達出後殖民地城市與祖國的衝突。難怪在千禧年以後，這個城市一直沉溺於民間遺產和傳統的集體保存。香港個性化的渴望體現在各種形式的本地藝術、文化和傳統當中；長衫只是其中一種而已。

Further to its stylistic variations, naming has expanded the dimension of the dress's hybridity if not politics. Hong Kong is the only Chinese region in which both terms – *cheongsam* and *qipao* – are interchangeably used to describe the dress. It is commonly understood that both terms refer to the same dress; the former Cantonese pronunciation, the latter Mandarin. However, to some, disagreement arouses when it comes to naming. Some consider the former refers to the dress in its causal form (usually reaching up to knee length), whilst the latter a more formal and evening look (usually reaching the ankle). Some tailors insisted that the dress must be called *qipao* for men's long robe shares the same name (of *cheongsam*) according to Cantonese dialect. Agreement has never been reached among the Hong Kong Chinese. Instead,

the recent political climate endures the term *cheongsam* in Hong Kong to distinct itself from the mainland and Taiwan. At a time when Hong Kong strikes to be heard, its political right and autonomy are under threat, naming of the dress underlies the conflicts between the post-colonial city and its motherland. It is not without reason that the city has indulged in a collective preservation of colloquial heritage and tradition since the millennium. The urge to withstand a distinguish Hong Kong-ness sees the revamp and recognition of many forms of local art, cultural and tradition. The *cheongsam* has merely become one of these engineering programmes.

#### Taiwanese *qipao*: Double-scored hybridity

In Taiwan, the East-West stylistic binary is complicated by the colonial Japanese influence which can be found in the exhibition, *Qipao: Memory Modernity and Fashion* in the National Taiwan Museum (2013). During the period of Japanese colonialisation, a gradual process of assimilation was enforced to inculcate Taiwan with a sense of "Japaneseness" (Kuo 2000). 1920s and 1930s saw the blend of Japanese and western styles and the fusion of tradition and modernity. Anxious of the erosion of traditional values by the colonial power, in late 1920s, the New Cultural Movement was launched by Taiwanese intellectuals to preserve the advantages of Chinese traditional culture. *Qipao* were worn on formal public occasions to assert cultural identity, some wore it as an opposition to colonialisation.

However, the trend of 1930s' fashionable *qipao* from Shanghai only came to Taiwan via Japan, same to other western imports such as Hollywood movies, western music and magazines. It is worth noting that the occidental clothes, lifestyle and consumable products first introduced to Taiwan during the colonial period, were a version already filtered by the Japanese. They became the instructor on the way occidental clothes or lifestyle could be adapted and presented. In essence, the double gaze - East (i.e. colonial Japanese power) and West (western influence via the lens of Japan) – is at play. (Ling 2018) When it comes to Taiwanese *qipao*, its aesthetics and occidental influences have much to do with its colonial past. In some cases, the visibility of colonial touch is prevalent in the making

#### 雙重混合的台灣旗袍

在台灣，日本殖民統治的影響使中西結合的旗袍變得更複雜，這在國立台灣博物館的展覽《旗麗時代：伊人、衣事、新風尚》(2013)中可見一斑。在日本殖民統治期間，台灣被灌輸了一種思想，其服飾應帶有日本的味道，逐漸同化的過程就此產生 (Kuo 2000)。1920 及 30 年代，台灣的旗袍混合了日本和西方風格，同時帶有傳統和時尚的特色。1920 年代末，台灣的知識份子為了防止傳統價值被殖民霸權侵蝕，以及保存中國傳統文化的優點，就發起了新文化運動。有些人在公開的正式場合穿旗袍是為了維護文化身份，也有人則是為了反抗殖民統治。

1930 年代，來自上海的時尚旗袍在台灣流行。不過，這也是通過日本引進台灣的。此外，上海的旗袍也打進了荷里活電影，出現在西方音樂及雜誌上。值得注意的是，在殖民時期，初次被引進台灣的西洋服裝、生活方式和消費品都已經受到日本的影響；它也決定了西洋服裝或生活方式，在當地會怎樣被改造及演繹。大體來說，台灣是同時受到東方（殖民統治者日本）和西方（通過日本被引進的西方風格）影響的 (Ling 2018)。台灣旗袍的美感和西方的影響，跟過去的殖民統治有密切關係。有時候，殖民的影響可在旗袍的製作中呈現，台灣的旗袍用的是日本花紋和布料。兩地的旗袍展覽不同的是，香港的展覽著

重展現強烈的排他性及精工細緻的剪裁；而台灣的展覽則著重展現對過去的緬懷及旗袍的自造 (Laumann 2013)，最重要的是體現帶有雙重混合特色的現代感 (Fig. 2)。

### 新加坡長衫的和諧混合

2012年，新加坡國家博物館舉辦了《旗遇》這個展覽。根據策展人鍾美娟所說，在廣東話的讀法中，「長衫」指的是1910及20年代中國男人的長袍。雖然許多說廣東話的人繼續把這種服裝叫做「長衫」，但這個名稱卻暗示着某程度上的混合，在這種情況下，指的是性別的交換。這解釋了一部分原因，為甚麼該展覽選用了《旗遇》這個題目。

可是，該展覽重點所展現的混合卻不是跟性別有關，也不能跟香港和台灣的旗袍混為一談。香港和台灣的旗袍展現的中國味，以及它所提倡的中國價值觀，跟新加坡和諧的多元文化及提倡的亞洲價值觀互相抵觸。新加坡展覽強調社會歷史及女性在社會所扮演的角色，從而看出旗袍發揮的象徵意義 (Lee and Chung 2012)。小部分展示的旗袍在製作過程中，用了蠟染的布料。此外，穿旗袍的人也不

of the dress given the use of Japanese motifs and textile. Unlike *qipao* exhibitions in Hong Kong where the focus lied in the wealth of exclusivity and sublime tailoring, the one in Taiwan drew on memories, self-dressmaking (Laumann 2013) and most of all modernity underlined by double-scored hybridity (Fig. 2).

### The hybrid harmony in Singaporean *cheongsam*

Nevertheless, Cantonese phonetic system suggests that the term *cheongsam* refers to men's long robe in 1910s and 1920s China, according to May Kheun Chung, the curator of *In the Mood for Cheongsam* (2012) at the National Museum of Singapore. While many Cantonese speakers continue to refer the dress as *cheongsam*, the name implies certain hybridity, gender exchange in this case, which partly explains its choice for the title of the exhibition.

At heart of the show is hybridity however neither is it gender related nor can it be muddled up with that of Hong Kong or Taiwan. In particular the Chineseness, with which the dress is associated, via Hong Kong and Taiwan is seemingly conflicted with Singapore's multicultural harmony and promotion of Asian rather than Chinese values. The functioning symbolism of the *qipao* is seen at work when the exhibition focused on the social history of Singapore and their women's role in society (Lee and



Fig. 2

Japanese inspired Taiwanese *qipao*  
Left: Satin *qipao* suit with machine embroidery, c. 1970 (Ms Cheng Shaun Hua made for her daughter's wedding);  
Right: Ankle-length printed *qipao* with large floral pattern design, c. 1980 (donated by Ms Lai Ha Quin).  
Courtesy of Chinese Textiles and Clothing Culture Centre, Fu Jen Catholic University

受日本服飾影響的台灣旗袍  
左：機織綢緞旗袍，約1970 (Cheng Shaun Hua女士為她女兒的婚禮製作)；  
右：大花紋設計的長款旗袍，約1980 (Lai Ha Quin女士捐贈)。  
鳴謝：台灣輔仁大學織品服裝學系中華服飾文化中心



Fig. 3

The use of batik in Singaporean *qipao*, featured in *In the Mood for Cheongsam* (2012), National Museum of Singapore. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board  
新加坡國家博物館「旗遇」(2012)展覽中展示的新加坡蠟染布旗袍。鳴謝：National Heritage Board 新加坡國家博物館

Chung 2012). A handful of dresses on display featured the incorporation of Batiks in its making. The diversity of wearers can be traced beyond Chinese women. The harmony of multicultural society was mapped in a single exhibition in which the *qipao* has been taken to address national desire given Chinese as the highest populated racial group in the country. The multicultural harmony that forms part of the national agenda in the can be found in the dress's harmony of hybridity. The selected range of hybrid *qipao*, in the Singaporean context, allows such a preconception to persist. In spite of the influx of international fashion, contemporary Singaporean designers refer to their multicultural roots. As such, multi-ethnic characteristics typified by the newly created *qipao* have its visible presence in the contemporary session of the said exhibition (Fig. 3).

### Three types of *qipao*; various kinds of Chinese sensation

To conclude, adaptability, versatility, and inclusiveness were the backbone of the *qipao*, whose popularity was facilitated by nationalism and the growing consumer culture following the collapse of the imperial power. Chinese women defeated the authorities by tactically intervening through adopting prevailing trends in the design of their *qipao*. The dress became an autonomous territory from

局限於中國女性。該展覽體現了新加坡多元文化的和諧，因華人是當地人口最多的一個民族，該展覽就用旗袍展示這個民族的渴望。旗袍的和而不同就顯示了和諧，這種和諧組成了國情的一部分。在新加坡這個背景下，展覽中多元化的旗袍獲得社會的認同。雖然面對國際時尚的湧入，當代新加坡的設計家仍然依附他們那多元文化的根源。其新製作的旗袍有着多民族的特色，這種特色在該展覽當代旗袍的部分顯而易見 (Fig. 3)。

### 三種旗袍，多重的中國韻味

總括來說，適應性、多樣化及包容性是旗袍的骨幹。隨着帝國霸權的衰落，以及國家主義的興起和消費文化的普及，旗袍備受青睞。中國女性戰勝當權者，她們靈巧地在旗袍的設計中加入時尚元素。旗袍成為一塊有自主權的領

which to discard the label of women as weak and bearers of the tradition. Style change and the inclusion of western-inspired elements have characterised the dress since the 1930s.

士，丟棄了女性作為弱者和死守傳統的標籤。自 1930 年代以來，旗袍的風格經歷了改變，也融合西方靈感的元素。

中國女性的旗袍時尚受社會文化、經濟及政治情況帶動。在中國的不同區域，她們對周圍環境的敏感性，也使得旗袍產生了不同的變化。如果用「混合」來形容旗袍的話，那當中就是多種獨特的方式來體現中國的韻味。儘管在外國人眼中，旗袍的韻味好像沒多大差別；但對中國人來說，當中的差別是很大的。旗袍一直是文化身份的象徵；而深奧的中國韻味也是中國人一直津津樂道的。

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Chinese women fashioned the *qipao* according to their socio-cultural, economical and political situations. Their sensitivity to their immediate surroundings saw further variations of the dress across different Chinese regions. If hybridity is the adjective of the dress within, which is the coexistence of numerous hybridities. All of which embody Chinese sensation in distinctive ways. Although to most foreign eyes, such sensation may seem similar, the subtle differences are huge to the Chinese. So much as the *qipao* remains a strong marker of cultural identity, the multiple Chineseness is a story that the Chinese choose to retell over and over again.

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Wessie Ling is a trained cultural historian and artist who uses academic writing and visual art practice to address issues in fashion. The discourse of cultural identities in the production of fashion and the cultural property of fashion are common themes in her work.

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