

**The meanings of *qipao* as traditional dress: Chinese and Taiwanese perspectives**

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## ABSTRACT

The development of the *qipao* as a representative, traditional Chinese symbol involves a series of complicated processes including the process of “being modern” and “being Chinese.” The researcher investigated how *qipao* is defined by and has meanings for young women from Chinese and Taiwanese cultures. The purposes of the study were 1) to explore how these women understand and interpret the *qipao* and 2) to investigate how cultural contexts play a role in the interpretation and use of *qipao*. Literature was reviewed to investigate how the *qipao* became representative Chinese dress and what were historical meanings of the *qipao*.

A sample of 14 international Chinese (P.R.C.) and Taiwanese female university students was selected (seven from each country with ages ranging from 24 to 30). All had studied in the U.S.A. less than three years. Open-ended, in-depth interviews were conducted, during which varied *qipao* photos were used as autodivers and stimuli to help respondents talk about cultural meanings and define style criteria for *qipao*. Bourdieu’s practice theory served as the framework of analysis, incorporating semiological analysis to gain understanding of the object structure and subjective interpretation to explore the multi-layered meanings of *qipao* practices.

Paradigmatic and syntagmatic codes of *qipao* were established. The results also demonstrated the fluidity and instability of traditions. How knowledge of the *qipao* has been disseminated within cultures and how individuals personally learned about the *qipao* affected respondents' definitions of traditional *qipao* and its situational usage. Taiwanese and Chinese responses had similarities in interpretations of cultural and ethnic meanings of *qipao*. Taiwanese were significantly different from Chinese in describing how the *qipao* is used as national dress; political conflicts between the two countries may be reflected in

Taiwanese reluctance to wear traditional *qipao*. Western dress codes were an influential factor in assigning meanings to *qipao*. Analyses revealed that the *qipao* is a highly gendered and sexualized object that reflects global stereotypes about Asian, particularly Chinese, women who, in turn, are self-oriented to this stereotype.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study explores *qipao* as traditional dress and looks at the changing meanings of *qipao* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, this study addresses how young Chinese and Taiwanese women perceive and interpret the *qipao*; investigates how cultural contexts play a role in the interpretation of the *qipao*; and examines the differences in interpretation between Chinese and Taiwanese after 50 years of political conflict. The literature review probes the historical background and meanings of the *qipao*. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand how young Chinese and Taiwanese women practice and experience the *qipao*. The research questions were based upon the premise that human practices are the negotiated results between individual free will and structural constraints. Also, the research questions probe the meanings and experiences of the *qipao* that affect participants' understanding and practice of the *qipao*. In this chapter, I overview the research rationale, the underling research concept behind the *qipao*, the theoretical framework of study and the outline of the dissertation.

### Research Rationale and Background

In China and Taiwan, a *qipao* is a one-piece women's garment, which has an asymmetrical front opening and is decorated with various piping, trimming, and “frog” closures (Figure 1 in Appendix D). Internationally, it is these distinct details that define *qipao* as a specifically Chinese garment.

From my previous teaching experience in Taiwan, I had heard some students remark that *qipao* as a traditional garment that makes the wearer look old and unfashionable. Conversely, however, some students viewed *qipao* as a fashionable item and felt comfortable wearing it to school. Students also expressed the idea that *qipao* was a garment designed to show off an

individual's figure, and they thought it was better not to reveal the "imperfect" body by wearing a *qipao*. These student discourses underline some interesting issues about *qipao* as Chinese traditional ethnic dress. The first issue is the seemingly binary concept of "traditional" and "fashionable modern" dress. "Traditional" and "modern" are opposite terms, and the meaning of "traditional" is often constructed through its relation to the "modern." Also, the boundary between "traditional" and "modern" is ambiguous. The global fashion industry has influenced traditional clothing styles in almost every corner of the world and firmly defines what constitutes modern dress (Maynard, 2004) by its strong relationship to rapid change and what is most current.

Fashion has also influenced *qipao* style development. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in China, the *qipao* originally had a loose silhouette with wide sleeves like a man's long robe, made of rectangular shapes (Figure 2 and 3 in Appendix D). However, the *qipao* changed along with fashion trends and became a form-fitting garment. During the 1930s through the 1950s, following Western fashion trends, the silhouette of the *qipao* changed from loosely fitted, to a little fitted, to a very fitted garment. Western design elements have also been incorporated into the *qipao* style since the late 1920s. For example, the set-in sleeve appeared in the middle 1930s, and by 1957, the *qipao* had a very narrow tapered hem, similar to the Christian Dior Y-line silhouette of that time period. A mini-*qipao* appeared when mini skirts became fashionable after the middle 1960s. From an historical perspective, the form-fitting *qipao* is a modern form of *qipao* compared to the early loosely fitted example. However, the form-fitting *qipao* seems to have been stereotyped in my students' discussions as the "traditional" style of *qipao*. If this is how it exists in the younger generation's thoughts, how has the more revealing *qipao* replaced the loose style of *qipao* as "traditional" in the current cultural context?

Second, the acceptance of wearing a form-fitting garment implicitly indicates a change in belief regarding what is considered proper social appearance in China and Taiwan. A form-fitting garment never appeared in the traditional Chinese dress system. In traditional Chinese beliefs, clothing was part of the etiquette system, and was used to express personal virtues and social status instead of displaying the body contour. Although each dynasty in China had its own regulated system of dress, the fundamental concept of this dress system was the same. It included the ideas that clothing has to be in harmony with nature and the environment and has to be equivalent to or appropriate for the wearer's status. A garment was interpreted through individual body movements, which reflected personal education, characteristics, and virtues. For example, it was thought that farmers working in the field could not maintain the motion of a garment as gracefully as could an educated person. An educated person is supposed to know how to behave appropriately and was therefore viewed as having more virtue and grace than did farmers. In other words, clothing in Chinese culture was a means to present personal inner characteristics, proper manners, and educational status rather than showing off individual body figures. My students' prototype of a traditional *qipao* shows that the form-fitted *qipao* apparently no longer fits into these "traditional" patterns of Chinese dress but has moved closer to modern fashion trends in meaning. The meaning of *qipao*, therefore, seems to have also shifted. Yet, ironically, *qipao* is still considered "old fashioned" by some of the students.

In the course of *qipao* development, *qipao* is significant not only as a traditional Chinese garment but also has been associated with various meanings related to the process of Chinese modernization. The *qipao* used to be a symbol for Chinese women pursuing gender equality in the early 1920s, and, after the 1930s, under the influence of Western fashion trends, the *qipao* symbolized urbanized and modern.

Third, a general issue emerged through my students' discussions of *qipao*. Both Chinese and Taiwanese from different political environments identify the *qipao* with Chinese culture. Communist China and democratic Taiwan have been in a hostile relationship since 1949.<sup>1</sup> Two political regimes used to compete for "who represents China." It would be interesting to investigate if the meanings of the *qipao* held by Chinese and Taiwanese after political upheaval reflect any contradictions similar to the reality of the relationship between China and Taiwan. In addition, while the *qipao* is associated with Chinese culture, what does the concept of Chinese mean to Taiwanese and Chinese? Therefore, one of my goals for this study is to explore how Chinese people from Taiwan and China perceive and interpret the *qipao* and how the relationship between the *qipao* and the identity of Chinese culture is reflected in those interpretations.

In short, then, the goals for this study include 1) exploring how young Chinese and Taiwanese women perceive and interpret the *qipao* and 2) investigating how cultural contexts play a role in the interpretation of the *qipao*. More specifically, after separation from China for fifty years, how do Chinese people from Taiwan and from China interpret the *qipao*? How have historical meanings of the *qipao* been embedded in a younger generation's perception of *qipao*? How do they use and experience the *qipao*? How do participants identify *qipao*'s ethnicity? How do they associate the *qipao* with their national identity?

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<sup>1</sup> The Republic of China (R.O.C.) was established in 1912 by Kuomintang Party (KMT Party) but was later defeated by the Communist Party in 1949. The R.O.C. retreated to Taiwan in 1949. After taking over Mainland China, the Communist Party established the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) in 1949 but adopted a closed economic policy until the late 1970s. The R.O.C. formerly held permanent member status on the United Nations Security Council, but the P.R.C. took the seat in 1971. That led to defeat of the R.O.C. in many diplomatic affairs under the issue of "who represents China." As a result, R.O.C. was not treated as an independent country but a province of P.R.C. in almost all international fairs and diplomatic negotiations since the 1980s. Political conflicts have put China and Taiwan into an awkward relationship.

### Underlying Meanings of the Chinese Term *Qipao*

*Qipao*, in Chinese, can be written as 旗袍 (Qi's *pao* or Qi's robe) or 祺袍 (robe with luck). These Chinese terms connote several messages that deserve attention in this study while investigating the cultural meaning of the *qipao*. First, the underlying message of the term Qi's *pao* deals with the concept of *qipao* as ethnic dress. According to Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1992), dress refers to an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body. Dress is a major form of material culture, and it is a coded non-verbal communication system that facilitates human interactions and constructs meanings. Ethnic dress, according to Eicher and Sumberg (1995), is worn by members of one group to distinguish themselves from members of another, and functions to not only identify a group with a common cultural background and heritage but also reflects a cohesive ethnicity (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). There are 56 ethnic groups in Mainland China, but the Han ethnic group and its culture has been the representative majority of China for several thousand years. Taiwan has a similar situation in that government records recognize 13 aboriginal ethnic groups, but the Han-oriented culture represents the majority. Qi's *pao* (Qi's robe) referred to the *pao* (long robe) donned by a minority ethnic group, *qi jen* (Qi) or Manzhu who established the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) in China. Qi's *pao* (Figure 4 and Figure 10) had a round neckline, and it was worn with a narrow rectangular shaped scarf, which looked like a collar (Figure 4 in Appendix D). Qi's *pao* was often made of silk, satin, or brocade fabric. Chinese costume historian Wang Yu Chin (1975) observed a common misleading assumption that *qipao*, when it is written as Qi's *pao* in Chinese, leads many people to think that *qipao* comes from Manzhu ethnic dress (Wang, 1975). Wang studied the Chinese robe system and strongly refuted this assumption based on two reasons. First, this assumption implies *qipao* as a heritage from the Qing dynasty and ignores the heritage from

the majority group, the Han people; their robe system has appeared in ancient Chinese books written before Chuen Qiou (771 BCE). Second, according to the developments and history of the *qipao*, the majority Han women did not adopt the *qipao* until the R.O.C. government was established (Wang, 1975; Zhao, 1993). The term Qi's *pao* also tends to ignore the fact that the desire to be modern was the main mechanism that led to *qipao*'s style changes (Guo, 1999; Wang, 1975). That is, the cultural meanings of the *qipao* embedded in history are not related to Manzhu's culture (Wang, 1975).

This misleading assumption also brings out another issue that if the *qipao* represents the minority Manzhu group and its culture, how is the *qipao* connected to the concept of Chinese ethnic dress, Chinese ethnicity and representation of Chinese culture? In previous studies (Clark, 2000; Wang, 1975; Xie, 2004; Yuan, 2000), researchers hardly paid attention to whether the ethnic group the *qipao* represented and the culture the *qipao* was associated with were concurrent. This discrepancy in time periods deserves further investigation and also provides an approach to deeply understand how *qipao*'s cultural meanings are constructed. Although previous studies did not consistently report which ethnic group was associated with the *qipao*, past findings consistently referred to the *qipao* as tightly connected to Chinese ethnicity, which is a broad and complex concept, historically oriented to Han culture. Therefore, how Chinese ethnicity is defined provides fertile ground from which to study the *qipao*.

“*Zhong Hua minzhu*” is the term used by both China and Taiwan to refer to “Chinese” as a category of ethnic group. According to the Han cultural ideology, *Zhong Hua minzhu* comprises all ethnic groups in China and Han is placed at the center. This Han-centric cultural ideology and how current Taiwanese and Chinese identify and interpret the concept of *Zhong Hua* culture (Chinese culture) is hard to catch from an etic point of view. As a

researcher bearing Chinese culture and growing up in Taiwan, I would be able to study the *qipao* cultural meanings from an emic perspective. In addition, Bourdieu's theory of practice will provide a tool to maintain objectivity while adopting an emic understanding to conduct this study.

### **Political Influence and the *Qipao***

Furthermore, for over a decade, Taiwan's political developments have led to ambiguous attitudes held among Taiwanese toward China. From one point of view, the Taiwanese seem to embody "traditional" Chinese culture, but politically many Taiwanese do not like to be called Chinese<sup>2</sup> for they think of themselves as coming from an independent country. This political ideology or national identity has affected Taiwanese attitudes toward Chinese ethnicity. This study will also explore how the national identity intertwined with cultural and ethnic identification and how it is reflected through *qipao* practices.

### **Language Issues**

Another issue surrounding the term *qipao* comes from the difference between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects. In Mainland China, each province has its own dialect. Similarly, the Taiwanese dialect is part of the Fujen province on the southern east coast of China. In contrast to modern Mandarin, Chinese dialects from different provinces often maintain a number of sounds and terms used in the past. *Qipao* in Cantonese, a dialect used in the Gwang Dong Province and Hong Kong, is called *cheongsam* (長衫; long top garment). *Sang* (衫) is an old term for the top of either one of two different lengths, over-hip or ankle

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<sup>2</sup> Based on current Taiwanese ambivalent attitudes toward China, I, therefore, follow the trend to call people from China Chinese and people from Taiwan Taiwanese even though the two groups share the same cultural heritage, up until their separation in 1949.

length. Han women have worn *sang*, *qun* (裙; skirt), and *bei zhi* (褙子; long vest) since the Ming dynasty (Zhao, 1993). According to the report in a magazine from the era, around 1926, the long vest merged with *sang* and *qun* into a one-piece garment called *qipao*. Therefore, it is understandable why Cantonese called a *qipao* “cheongsam,” a long top garment that falls to the ankle. There is still more confusion because much English literature has adopted the term *cheongsam*, but many Chinese authors have used the term *qipao*.

In this study, I will not track how and why the Cantonese term was adopted in English literature. Instead, I will use the Mandarin term and examine how the meanings of the *qipao* were constructed and divested through the process of modernization and globalization. Therefore, this study focuses on the *qipao*, not Qi’s *pao*, as it developed after the R.O.C. was established in 1912. Additionally, this era was also the period of time that China tried to eradicate feudalism and urge modernity. Therefore, the Chinese term of *qipao* used in this study refers to 旗袍, or “robe with luck.” In addition, this study adopts Hanyu Pinyin<sup>3</sup> to translate Mandarin into the English sound system, because most international institutions have accepted it as the preferred transcription system for Mandarin.

### **The Theoretical Framework for this Study**

In looking at the meanings of *qipao* in a cultural context as traditional or ethnic dress and in a modern dress context as old-fashioned or fashionable dress, the concept of culture shapes the choice of a theoretical framework related to both. Cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1994) said that culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the

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<sup>3</sup> There are variant Standard Mandarin romanization systems to translate Chinese to English, such as Hanyu Pinyin (used in China and internationally) and Tong Yong Pinyin (used in Taiwan after 2002). *Pin* means “spell” and *yin* means “sound.” Chinese translated from different Pinyin systems often creates confusion. For example, *qipao* is translated as *chipao* and Manzhou as Manchu by Tong Yong Pinyin system.

English language. This is primarily because culture has been used as an important concept in several disciplines—sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, for example. Culture in a broad sense deals with the meanings created through human actions and the interactions between individuals and the system (Williams, 1994). Various schools of thought have theorized about the concept of culture to study cultural meanings. For example, Marxism treats culture as ideology and stresses how the power system constitutes cultural meaning. Symbolic interactionism takes an actor-centered perspective on culture and says that cultural meanings are constituted through individual understanding and interpretation of individual actions. Structuralism takes a macro approach and stresses that culture is a system of codes through which human beings make sense of their world. In all of these perspectives, cultural meanings are shared and collective.

Culture has also been studied from two opposing standpoints, objectivism versus subjectivism (Ortner, 1984; Surber, 1998). Cultural objectivism pays attention to how systematic regulations and the power system shape human behaviors and use of materials (Ortner, 1984; Surber, 1998). Cultural subjectivism emphasizes the concept of human agency and believes that individuals have the ability to think, interpret and decide how to act, interact and make sense of their world (Ortner, 1984; Surber, 1998). New approaches to studying cultural meanings appeared in the late 20th century, with the purpose of trying to find a middle ground between subjectivism and objectivism, to avoid the biases that occur while taking one view or the other. This newer perspective posits that “the culture as it is” results from the complicated interactions between the cultural system and individual actions (Bourdieu, 1977; Ortner, 1984). One such perspective is provided by practice theory, which has a focus on both human actions and the system structure, and which serves as a conceptual framework to investigate the multi-dimensional cultural meanings of the *qipao* for this study.

Practice theory emphasizes a practical research method that can simultaneously investigate structural meanings and the meaning interpreted by social actors within the culture (Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, the key concepts for practice theory include cultural structure, human action/practice, and the dialectical relationship, repetitious and changing, between the two (Bourdieu, 1977). Also, practice theory seeks to explain the production, reproduction, and change in cultural meaning through a political standpoint. In applying practice theory to the study of cultural meaning, researchers can use various methodological tools such as ethnographic and historic research or structural analytic and interpretive approaches to enhance and enrich the effectiveness of each method. Within this theoretical framework, I employ objective semiological analysis to explore the structural meanings of the *qipao* and subjective interpretation to discover individual understanding, experience and practices of the *qipao*.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

Many previous researchers (Tasi, 1981; Wang, 1975; Xie, 2004) have studied *qipao* history. Few studies incorporate the *qipao* within a specific research theme, such as gender (Chen, 2001) or nationality (Finnane, 1996). None of the studies have explored *qipao*'s cultural meanings from a holistic aspect. Also, in the twenty-first century, while speedily transferred information and the compressed global space foster culture changes, the flow of culture has enhanced the fluidity of cultural meanings of traditional dress. Therefore, this study investigated the *qipao*'s meanings from a holistic approach to examine how structural environmental factors affect contemporary young Chinese and Taiwanese construct of *qipao* meanings. Also, the study examined how individual young Chinese and Taiwanese make sense of the *qipao* from their own experience and interpretations. In addition, cultural

meanings always change and are never fixed. In this study I provide an empirical example of how to study dress as part of a cultural system and how a holistic cultural theory, the theory of practice, can be applied to study the dynamic cultural meanings of dress.

In Chapter Two, I will discuss the emergence and development of the modern *qipao* and how the *qipao* was identified as traditional Chinese clothing domestically and internationally since the 1920s. The relationship between Qi's pao and *qipao*, and how past studies associated the *qipao* with Han-centered Chinese culture are also examined. In Chapter Three, I will review previous studies to discuss research concepts, propose research questions and present the research theoretical framework. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of practice theory will serve as the fundamental framework of the study. Therefore, I will also discuss the background of the theory of practice and how it can incorporate both objective semiological analysis and subjective individual interpretation. In Chapter Four I will discuss how I conducted this study, including the sampling process and interview procedures. Chapter Five presents the results organized around five major themes that emerged from the interview data. In Chapter Six, I will examine the findings in relation to subjective and objective theoretical frameworks to further understand the meanings of the *qipao*.

### A Glossary of Chinese Terminology

- cheongsam* (長衫) *Qipao* in Cantonese, a dialect used in the Gwuang Dong Province and Hong Kong. *Cheongsam* refers to the top garment over the hips or a long robe, which refers to the initial style of the *qipao*.
- qun* (裙) It means skirt.
- DPP party(民進  
黨) The Democratic Progress Party was established in 1986 in Taiwan. DPP won the president election in 2000. Taiwan independence and De-China-ization are two guiding principles for the DPP government in administration of Taiwan.
- Han dynasty (漢  
朝) One of the ancient Chinese political regimes (206 BCE- CE 220) established by the Han people.
- han fu* (漢服) One piece long robe with a cut-and-sewn line in the waist area. This garment was established in ancient China and introduced to countries around China, such as Japan, during the Han dynasty. It is called *sang yee* in the traditional Chinese clothing system. It is also named after the Han dynasty, as *han fu* means the garment worn during the Han dynasty (Figure 5 in Appendix D).
- Hanzhu or Han (漢  
族) *Han*, the name of majority ethnic group in China and Taiwan. *Zhu* means ethnic group.

- han xyu* (含蓄) *han xyu* means implicit or indirect. It has been frequently used to describe Chinese culture, Chinese literature and Chinese expressions. The expression of ideas, the *han xyu*, is similar to the way in which a symbol or a sign is signified. This process of assigning meaning is not linear but ambiguous. The signifier of *han xyu* is not limited to an object; it could be a sentence, an occasion, a story or an abstract atmosphere for a reader or observer to interpret.
- Hua jen* (華人) See *Zhong Hua minzhu*.
- jen (人) It means people. It also can refer to an ethnic group. It is alternative and interchangeable with the term “*minzhu*” and “*zhu*.”
- KMT party (國民黨) It was a party initiated in 1894 with the name “*Shin Zhong Hue*.” Dr. Sun Yat-sen reorganized the party as *Zhong Kuo Kumington* in 1919. KMT is the abbreviation. The KMT party overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China in 1912. Dr. Sun Yat-sen was the first president.
- minzhu* (民族) It means ethnic group.
- Manzhu or Man (滿族) A minority ethnic group, named Man, whose native land was in the northeastern part of China. *Man zhu* established the last Chinese dynasty in 1644. *Man zhu* is also called *Qi jen* (see *Qi jen* below).
- maijai* (馬甲) A long vest developed from Qing’s short vest (Figure 11 and 13 in Appendix D).

- min guo* (民國) R.O.C. government has its own date calendar, *min guo*. The first year of *min guo* is equivalent to Anno Domini or Common Era 1912.
- Two-piece ensemble (衫裙與衫褲) The Han women's two-piece ensemble refers to a jacket (*sang*) and a skirt (*qun*) or a jacket and pants (*ku*). In China, pants were not associated with masculinity as they once were in Western dress ideology; pants were used for women's casual wear or for working-class men and women. The two-piece attire was adopted as women's daily wear since the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE) and it lasted until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Taiwan and in China.
- Tang dynasty (唐朝) Historically, one of the Chinese dynasties, from 608-917 CE.
- pao* (袍) / *pao fu* (袍服) A traditional garment worn by Chinese for over a thousand years. It was a loosely fitted long robe, tightened with belts, and the length was adjustable according to the wearer's height and needs. Ankle length was most prevalent. There were various kinds of *pao*; therefore, *pao fu* was a general term for this item of traditional dress.
- R.O.C. (中華民國) The Republic of China, established by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1912. The R.O.C. government moved to Taiwan in 1949 after it was defeated by the Communist party.
- P.R.C.(中華人民共和國) People's Republic of China is Communist China, which was established in 1949; Mao Zedong was the first national chairman.
- Qi's *pao* (旗人的袍) Qi's *pao* (Qi's robe) referred to the *pao* (long robe) donned by a minority ethnic group, Qi *jen* (Qi) or Manzhou, who established the Qing dynasty (Figure 4 in Appendix D).

- Qi jen* (旗人) Before the *Manzhu* established the Qing dynasty in China, the leader, Nurhaichi, unified *Manzhu* tribes and divided the *Manzhu* people into eight different groups to achieve better political, military and economical management. When the Qing dynasty was established, the leader divided his people into eight groups; each group was assigned a colored banner and was named by that banner, such as “pure yellow color banner (*zheng huang qi*; 正黃旗). Therefore, *Manzhu* people in the Qing dynasty were also called *qi jen* because the sound of “banner” in Mandarin is *qi* and *jen* means “people” (Zhao, 1993). (*zheng huang qi*; 正黃旗).
- Qing dynasty (清朝) The last dynasty (1644-1912 CE) in Chinese history.
- sang* (衫) *Sang* (衫) is an old Chinese term for a top garment of either one of two different lengths, over-the hips or ankle-length.
- sang yee* (深衣) It was a one-piece ankle-length robe with a cut-and-sewn seam in the waist area. *Sang yee* had strict sartorial rules, the *chi chih wu fa* (七制五法) that were seven construction rules and five behavior rules that deeply echoed Chinese dress ideology. The rules stated that *sang yee* had to have twelve pieces cut from six pieces of full width fabric; the twelve pieces symbolized twelve months of the year and also indicated that human beings, as part of nature, must live harmoniously with the system of nature. The length of *sang yee* should not expose any body skin, but it should not be so long as to touch the earth. A straight cut-and-sewn vertical seam along the center back symbolized rules and social norms, and the back sewing line signified that a person who donned *sang yee* had to behave according to the social norms (Figure 5 in Appendix D).
- wan yue* 婉約 *Wan yue*, according to the Chinese dictionary, means gentle and humble. It is a feminine adjective and it is applied to women only.

*yin dan shi lin* (陰丹士林) *Yin dan shi lin* (陰丹士林) (Figure 19 in Appendix D), was the most popular fabric for making a *qipao*. *Yin Dan Shi Lin*, translated from the German dyestuff brand Indanthren, was a blue dye for dyeing cellulose fibers. The fabrics, cotton in most cases, applied with Indanthren were called *yin dan shi lin bu* (Indanthren fabric).

*Zhong Hua minzhu* (中華民族) The terms of *Zhong Hua*, *Hua Xia* or *Hua* had appeared in ancient China. Initially, they were the names for people living in central China. These people, later called Han, are the majority in China and Taiwan. Along the political, economic and social system developments in history, Han-centered *zhong hua* culture and the Han-centered ethnic group were established. This term also implies the Han people's ethnocentrism because they think that various ethnic groups from China are part of *Zhong Hua minzhu* but Han people are the center.

## CHAPTER 2: *QIPAO* HISTORY AND RELATED ISSUES

In this chapter, I present the history of the *qipao* as a form of dress and the meanings of the *qipao* within the concept of traditional or ethnic dress. Traditional dress is perceived as dress or dress practices inherited from the past and associated with cultural practices (Eicher *et al.*, 2000; Hendrickson, 1995), so therefore the historical background is essential for understanding *qipao* as traditional dress. The *qipao* has a long and complex history in China, and there are specific cultural meanings associated with it. There is a common understanding in China and Taiwan that the *qipao* originated from Manzhou female dress called Qi's *pao*, but this idea has been called into question by scholars.

This idea raises important issues in thinking about *qipao* and the meanings of *qipao* in a cultural context. If *qipao* were the cultural heritage of the Manzhou, how could the *qipao* have also represented the majority Han culture? Therefore, in the first part of this historical background, I discuss the cultural heritage of this idea of how the *qipao* is associated with Han-centered culture by comparing Qi's *pao* and *qipao* as specific garments worn in specific cultural contexts. Then, I discuss how *qipao* is made using tailoring techniques that combine Western patternmaking skills and Chinese handcraft techniques. Many scholars thought these techniques make the *qipao* unique from Western dress and that they were also part of *qipao* culture. In the second part of this chapter, the historical background highlights the meanings of *qipao* as modern fashionable dress and illustrates its association with national politics and political conflict in both China and Taiwan from 1912 through the end of the twentieth century.

## Historical Meanings

### *The Manzhu Qi's Pao and the Han Women's Qipao*

There are discrepancies in the literature when scholars discuss the origin of the Han women's *qipao*. The literature does not provide a consistent argument for how this one-piece robe appeared in the early twentieth century and how it became associated with the Manzhu Qi's *pao*. Clark (2000) argued that the origin of Han women's *qipao* was copied from Manzhu dress and that "the cheongsam entered China, paradoxically, as a foreign garment representative of an invading culture [the Manzhu]" (p.12). Steel and Major (1999) proposed that the origin of the *qipao* was based on more than one type of traditional garment, the Qi's robes and the Han long vest called a *maijai*. Chinese scholar, Yuan Jieying (2000), thought that both the Han's and Qi's robes were the origin of the *qipao*. Xie (2004) adopted common knowledge in Mainland China that the origin of *qipao* was from Qi's *pao* and Qi's cultural heritage. Taiwanese scholars (Shih 1979; Yang, 1981; Wang, 1975) in the 1970s and early 1980s strongly identified its origin as coming from the Han women's traditional robe. According to these Taiwanese scholars, the Han women's *qipao* and the Manzhu Qi's *pao* have historically different backgrounds and the *qipao* is not related to the Qing cultural heritage. The following discussion will provide further understanding to address the debate surrounding this idea that the *qipao* originated within the Manzhu cultural heritage. This idea of *qipao*'s Manzhu origin also provides the essential knowledge of *qipao* cultural meanings.

### *Han Women's Resistance to Wearing Qi's Pao*

Manzhu is a minority group living at the northeastern of China. Before the Manzhu established the Qing dynasty (1644-1912 CE) in China, the leader, Nurhaichi, unified

Manzhu tribes and divided the Manzhu people into eight different groups to achieve better political, military and economical management. Each group was assigned a colored banner and was named by that banner such as “pure yellow color banner (*zheng huang qi*; 正黃旗).” Therefore, Manzhu people in the Qing dynasty were also called *Qi jen* because the sound of “banner” in Mandarin is *qi* and *jen* means “people” (Zhao, 1993). Their female garment, an ankle-length long robe with curved trimmed opening at right side from the top to the hem, was called *Qi’s pao* or *qipao*. *Qi’s pao* was often made of silk satin or brocade and it had a long narrow sleeve decorated with trims or piping at the lower part of the robe and end of sleeves (Zhao, 1993) (Figures 4 and 10 in Appendix D).

According to Steel and Major (1999), Nurhaichi argued that the “wider robes with broad sleeves” of Ming China established by the Han (1368-1644 CE), the dynasty before the Qing, were unsuitable for the Manzhu. He expressed grave concern that the Manzhu might eventually lose their sense of identity and their martial spirit if they emulated the majority Han dress and customs from the Ming dynasty. Therefore, in order to establish and maintain Manzhu authority and identity, the Qing government removed Han dress regulations and ordered all men to shave their forehead and braid their hair in back. In contrast to the Han men’s pulled-up hairstyle and various kinds of headwear worn according to social status and specific occasion, the bald forehead and braided hair were symbolic of a barbarian in Han dress ideology. The Han people strongly rejected wearing the Manzhu attire (Zhao, 1993; Zhou & Gao, 1998). The government, on the one hand, sentenced violators to death. On the other hand, in order to reconcile Han anger at changes in dress, the government issued *sh cong ch bu cong* rules (the rules have to be obeyed in 10 conditions but could be disobeyed in 10 other condition; 十從十不從). For example, men had to obey the new sartorial rules but women did not. Han women were not forced to wear

Qi's *pao* so they continued to wear a two-piece ensemble, consisting of either a jacket and a skirt or a jacket and pants, which had been adopted for daily wear since Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) (Zhao, 1993; Zhou & Gao, 1998). Therefore, the Han women's maintaining their two-piece ensemble could be seen as a symbol of Han resistance to the Manchu regime (Wang, 1975; Zhao, 1993; Zhou & Gao, 1998).

#### *The Difference and Similarity between Qi's pao and Han's pao*

The differences between Han and Qi's (or Manchu's) attire included the fullness of the garment, collar type, and the size of sleeve (Zhao, 1993). Zhao mentioned that the Han women's robe had an asymmetrical straight front opening in which the left side overlapped the right and was tied with strings and secured with a belt. A contrasting wide border was attached to the front opening, and it formed a v-shape front neckline with stand collar at the back neckline. The robe had wide sleeves and was ankle-length. The Qi women's robe, called the Qi's *pao* or the banner gown, initially had a round neckline with an asymmetrical curved front opening all the way down to the hem. The opening was buttoned with frog closures from the top to the end of the side opening. The neckline, front opening and sleeve hems were decorated with contrast trim, piping, and embroidered or patterned borders (Table 1 and Table 2). To summarize the differences, Qi's *pao* did not have a collar but Han garment always had a stand collar. The Han women's jacket was wrapped, tied and belted, but Qi's *pao* was buttoned up along a side opening. The Han jacket or robe had a plain or simple decorated border along the opening but Qi's *pao* was decorated with fancy trimming or pattern along the opening. The Han women's garment often had a diagonal v-shaped front neckline, but Qi women's robes had a round neckline with curved opening (Table 2).

Studies have indicated that the Han women's two-piece ensemble during the Qing dynasty influenced Manzhou women's dress style (Wang, 1975; Zho, 1993). In the middle of the Qing dynasty, Qi women were attracted to Han women's dress and adopted a two-piece ensemble with wider sleeves as daily wear. This imitation was banned by an imperial edict (Chao, 1999; Wang, 1975; Zhao, 1993). However, such cross-cultural exchange of dress ideas never really stopped; instead, the practice became more popular by the end of the Qing dynasty. The Qi's *pao* with wider sleeves was used for non-formal situations (compare Figure 4 and 10 in Appendix D). A mandarin collar, which had appeared on the robe in the Song and Ming dynasties, was added to Qi's *pao*. From the other direction, Han women also imitated Qi's *pao* round neckline, frog buttons, and curved front opening for their upper body garment. Through these mutual imitations, by the end of the Qing dynasty, a Qi's *pao* for casual situations looked similar to the Han women's upper garment, but it was ankle-length. Since Han women's traditional daily dress had been associated with a two-piece ensemble and because of the mutual borrowing of style details between Han and Qi women, it is understandable how the assumption that the Han women's robe was an imitation of Qi's *pao* came into common use after the R.O.C. was established (Wang, 1975).

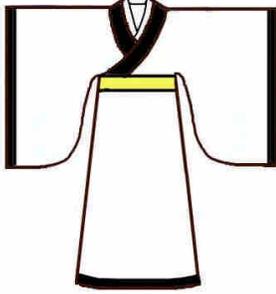
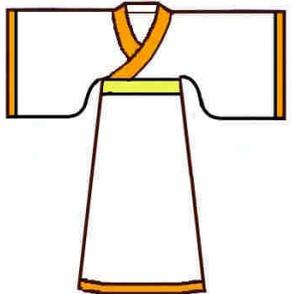
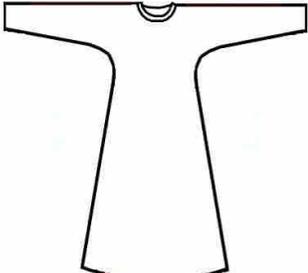
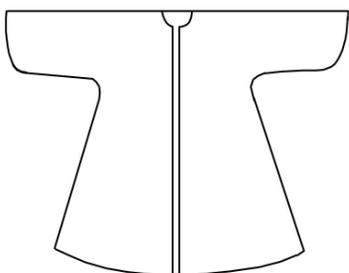
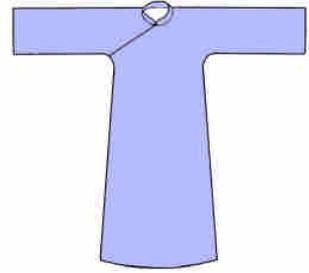
### *Qipao and Han Women's Robes*

Wang Yu-Ching, a leading figure in the field of Chinese dress history, was once the director of the National Museum of History in Taiwan. Wang has devoted his life to studying Chinese dress over several decades. In his book, *The History of the Chinese Women's Robe*, Wang examined ancient Chinese books, pottery figurines, and paintings to track down the genealogy of the Chinese women's robe and to refute the general misconception that the *qipao* comes from the cultural heritage of the Manzhou (Wang, 1975). According to Wang

(1975), the one-piece ankle-length robe had been recorded in noblewomen's formal dress since the Zhou dynasty (1058–771 BCE). This ankle-length robe was unisexual. The style, color and motifs of the robe changed and varied from dynasty to dynasty. Chinese costume scholars (Chang, 1943/2004; Garrett, 1994; Lee, 1993; Tsai, 1991; Wang, 1975; Zhao, 1993) use a general term, *pao fu* (袍服), to refer to various kinds of ankle-length robes that included *dan* (禪), *gia* (袷), *pao* (袍), *geang* (襪), *chiou* (裘), and *sang yee* (深衣).

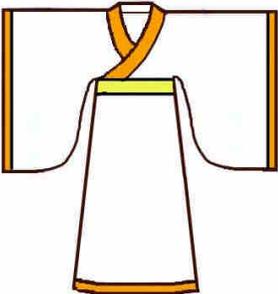
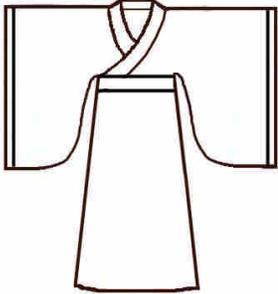
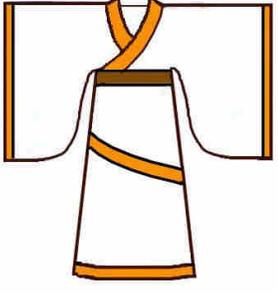
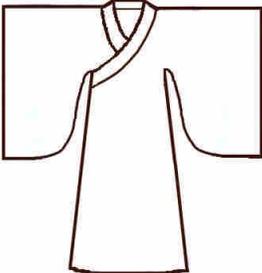
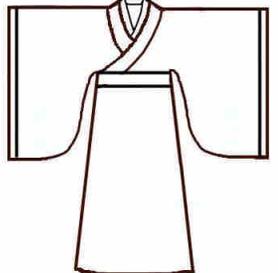
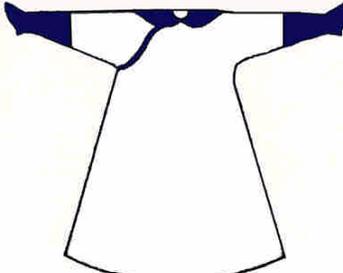
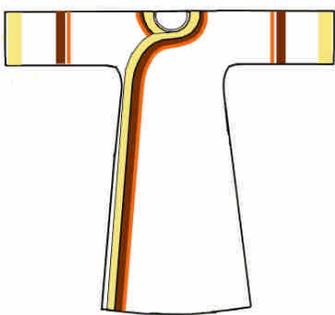
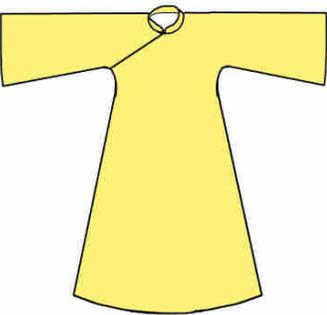
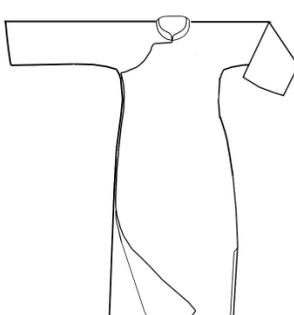
Based on Wang's study (1975), *sang yee* (深衣) was a one-piece ankle-length robe with a cut-and-sewn seam in the waist area. *Sang yee* had strict sartorial regulations, the *chi chih wu fa* (七制五法), that included seven construction rules and five behavior rules that deeply echoed Chinese dress ideology. The rules stated that *sang yee* had to have twelve pieces cut from six pieces of full width fabric; the twelve pieces symbolized twelve months of the year and also indicated that human beings, as part of nature, must live harmoniously with the system of nature. The length of *sang yee* should not expose any body skin, but it should not be so long as to touch the earth. A straight cut-and-sewn vertical seam along the center back symbolized this system of regulations, and the back sewing line signified that a person who donned *sang yee* had to behave according to the social norms. These regulations reflected the idea that clothing in the traditional Chinese dress system is an extension of the Confucian philosophy in which dress is part of the social order and a reflection of personal inner characteristics (Wang, 1975). The higher the status of the garment's wearer, the more regulations were applied to that dress practice.

Table 1 *Han and Qi Robe for Men*

Zhou Dynasty (Han)	Han Dynasty (Han)	Tang Dynasty (Han)
 <p><i>Sang Yee</i>: formal and daily wear</p>	 <p>Daily wear</p>	 <p>Formal wear</p>
Tang Dynasty (Han)	Song Dynasty (Han)	Ming Dynasty (Han)
 <p>Officers' daily and court wear</p>	 <p>Officers' daily and court wear</p>	 <p>Officers' daily and court wear</p>
Qing Dynasty (Manzhu)	Qing Dynasty (Manzhu)	After 1912; <i>Changpao</i> /long robe (Han)
 <p>Court wear</p>	 <p>Formal wear</p>	 <p>Office and daily wear</p>

*Note.* Redrawn based on the source from *中國服裝色彩史論* [The color history of Chinese costume]. By I.Q. Lee, 1993.

Table 2 *Han and Qi Robe for Women*

<b>Zhou Dynasty (Han)</b>	<b>Han Dynasty (Han)</b>	<b>Han Dynasty (Han)</b>
		
Formal wear	Formal wear	Daily wear
<b>Tang Dynasty (Han)</b>	<b>Song and Ming Dynasty (Han)</b>	<b>Qing Dynasty (Manzhu)</b>
		
Formal wear	Formal wear	Formal wear
<b>Qing Dynasty (Manzhu)</b>	<b>End of 1910s (Han)</b>	<b>Early 1920s (Han)</b>
		
Daily wear	Daily wear	Daily wear
		Daily wear

*Note.* Redrawn based on the source from *中國服裝色彩史論* [The color history of Chinese costume]. By I.Q. Lee, 1993.

According to Wang (1975), in the ancient Chinese clothing system, the *pao* had the lowest status rank compared to other types of ankle-length robes. Initially, it was made as single layer and used as a men's undergarment. However, the *pao* and its variations gradually gained status and popularity as an outer layer garment for both men and women during the Han dynasty (202 BCE - 220CE). The *pao* from the Han dynasty (what is now called *han fu*) had an asymmetrical front opening; the left front overlapped the right and sometimes the left front wrapped around the body to give a multi-layer effect (Figure 5 in Appendix D; Table 1 and Table 2). A wide stripe was attached to the front opening and it formed a v-shaped front neckline with stand collar in back when the garment was worn. The sleeves of the Han's *pao* were big and wide, but tapered into a cuff to improve the functionality for daily wear (Zhou & Gao, 1998).

The *pao* in the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) was used for both men's and women's formal wear. At the same time, it became daily and official wear for men. The men's daily and official *pao* in the Tang dynasty, as a result of contact with other ethnic groups, incorporated dress elements from other ethnic groups and changed to a non-wrapped garment with round neckline, lower calf length, narrow sleeves, and loose silhouette that just concealed the body shape (Figure 6 in Appendix D and Table 1). Since the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE), color and insignia badges, which were embroidered with animals, birds or flora patterns, were used to show rank of the imperial family, governors, officers and their wives (Zhou & Gao, 1998). Women never had their own rank but expressed their husband's rank, by adopting the proper color and badges for her formal *pao*.

In general, the style of *pao* in Chinese history had two characteristics: during the Han regimes, such as the Song and Ming dynasties, the *pao* was wide and commodious; whenever non-Han ethnic groups established a political regime in China, such as the Qing dynasty, the

*pao* was just loose enough to conceal the body shape and had narrow sleeves (Table 1 and 2). Also, *pao* was unisexual attire and used as formal dress for men and women. This history has denoted that a two-piece ensemble, the jacket and skirt (Figures 7, 8 and 9 in Appendix D), replaced the ankle-length *pao* robe as Han women's daily wear even though noblewomen still kept a one-piece long robe as court attire or as formal dress after the Tang dynasty (Wang, 1975; Zhao, 1993; Zhou & Gao, 1998).

Wang (1975) proposed that the Chinese term *qipao*, written as Qi's *pao*, was a general term for a long robe. However, this general term, *qipao*, misled people to confuse the two and associate Han women's *qipao* with the Qi's garment. To address this problem, in 1974, Wang worked with the Chinese *Qipao* Research Association, Shih Chien University, and the Chinese Television System to produce a film and hold an exhibition entitled "The History and Future of Chinese Women's Robes." Wang called for changing the term *qipao*, written as Qi's *pao* (旗袍), into *pao with luck* (祺袍) (Yang, 1975). This new Chinese name of *qipao* was a general term that accomplished two objectives: it detached the meaning of the garment as a Manchu garment, and it reconnected it to its Han heritage and the idea that *qipao* was actually developed after the R.O.C. was established.

### ***Qipao* as Chinese Handcraft: Tailoring Techniques**

A famous *qipao* tailor, Yang (1981), and a researcher, Shih (1979), supported Wang's re-classification of the *qipao* as "a *pao* with luck" by studying the detailed tailoring techniques used to assemble a *qipao*. They both reported that Chinese culture was also embedded in *qipao*'s tailoring techniques. Yang used photos to show the step-by-step processes involved in *qipao* pattern making, trimming and binding techniques, and frog button production. According to Yang (1981) and my knowledge of making *qipao*, there are

four noticeable differences between Western garment and *qipao* construction. First, to make a *qipao*, the tailor has to carefully observe the body and take 24 measurements from the body as a reference to draft the pattern. A form-fitted Western garment does not require as many measurements to draft the pattern and incorporates draping techniques to adjust the fit during construction. Second, the *qipao* binding, trimming, frog buttons and collar are supposed to be done by hand sewing. In order to manage the frog buttons and intricate trim, such as 0.2 cm trim like a leaf sprout on slippery satin fabric, the bias fabric used for binding, trimming and frog buttons needs to be stiffened with resin. Traditional tailoring tools and techniques include use of rice glue, cotton strings, an awl and tweezers to manage the details of making a *qipao*; these techniques and tools are rarely used in current Western apparel production. Third, ironing is another fundamental skill to construct a well-fitted *qipao*. A tailor has to use an iron to pull-and-push the fabric properly in order to give a 3-dimensional form to a *qipao* so the garment can perfectly fit the client's body figure. While similar techniques may be used in custom or couture tailoring, current Western garment production does not employ this pull-and-push ironing technique. Fourth, the frog buttons do not only function as closures but are also a recognizable as Chinese handcraft. In short, making a *qipao* is not just a process of cutting and sewing but also a process of crafting a piece of Chinese art.

### **The Development of *Qipao*, 1912-1990s**

#### *Background of the Origin of the Modern Qipao*

When the Republic of China overthrew the Qing dynasty in 1912, the aim of the new nation was to overthrow feudalism and establish a modern China. Rejecting Qing hairstyles and clothing and adopting new styles of dress were fundamental to the definition of the Republic (Carroll, 2003). Western dress was a source that could be used to establish a new

image for modern China, and many people changed to a more Western style of dress.

However, Western garments did not replace all indigenous Chinese garments. One possible reason for this is that the Western man's suit, with its tight fit and tailored construction, was much less comfortable than looser fitting Chinese clothing (Clark, 2000). Another possible reason was that Western clothing styles contradicted Chinese ethnocentric beliefs about dress (Zamperini, 2003).

Within the context of Chinese tradition, Han dress was seen as the marker of "civilization." Clothing in Chinese culture did not focus on issues of body shape, fit or varieties of styles; instead, clothing with a loose fit and big sleeves fully covered the body, leaving space not just for comfort but also for meeting social needs. An individual's demeanor and inner character were revealed by proper management of the space between his or her clothing and body when in motion. Chinese culture, based on the ideology of Confucianism, also emphasized that dress should harmonize with the social hierarchy in order to maintain a stable society. In addition, before Western encroachment in the nineteenth century, the Han held an ethnocentric view that they were the cultural center of the world (Feuchtwang, 1993). As contact with Western powers increased, China struggled to understand what was wrong in their cultural and political systems (Du, 1985). The Chinese began to learn and borrow the concepts of science and democracy from the West, and the birth of the R.O.C. was the result of wanting to create a democratic country (Zamperini, 2003). In the process of interacting with and learning from the West, various conflicts and contradictions occurred. To look modern or to look Chinese was one of these conflicts. A Western man's suit symbolized "the modern" but was not as comfortable as a Chinese *pao* robe and did not fit into the Chinese ideology of wearing a loosely fitted garment. Western women's dress, often associated with shoulder exposure, was improper

and “un-civilized” according to Chinese dress ideology (Zamperini, 2003).

From 1912 to 1926, Mainland China was in a chaotic situation. Various foreign military powers occupied parts of China and other parts were under Chinese imperialist authorities. In 1916, the New Cultural Movement took place. Chinese intellectuals believed that traditional values had confined Chinese progress in a modern world; therefore, they strongly promoted “democracy” and “science” to replace traditional Confucian values and governmental hierarchies (Du, 1985). Also, Chinese intellectuals introduced Vernacular Chinese to give people with little education the opportunities of more rapidly reading and learning new knowledge (Du, 1985).

In 1919, after World War I, the Treaty of Versailles decreed that Japan would take over German colonies in China. This instigated a series of student demonstrations, which became known as the May Fourth Movement (1919-1921). The initial goal of this movement was to rebel against imperialists and abolish all imperialist privileges such as foreigners' immunity in Chinese courts (Du, 1985). The movement also rebelled against traditional Chinese cultural values and supported the Vernacular Chinese literature proposed by the New Cultural Movement (Du, 1985). The May Fourth Movement marked an upsurge of Chinese nationalism and was a turning point in Chinese modernization. After the May Fourth Movement, the beliefs among Chinese intellectuals became diversified. Some intellectuals called for conservative methods to promote Chinese modernization, but others shifted towards the political left and radically revolted against traditional values and imperialism (Du, 1985). Marxism-Leninism began to take hold in Chinese intellectual thought, and the Communist Party was established in 1921 (Du, 1985). The May Fourth Movement also caused great changes in women’s roles in Chinese society, which, in turn, influenced women’s dress practices.

*The Origin of the Modern Qipao, 1912-1920s: Women's Freedom*

There is no definitive answer to the questions of when and why Han women adopted the *qipao*. Both Tsai (1991) and Wang (1975) indicate that Han and Qi women, primarily in the northeastern part of China, continued to wear their two-piece ensembles and one-piece robes in the 1910s, at the beginning of the R.O.C.. In the mid-1920s, a calf-length vest, called *maijai*, appeared in Han women's clothing fashion. *Maijai* (Figure 11 and 13 in Appendix D) was a combination of the Han women's skirt and the Qi women's short vest. The Chinese movie star, Yang Nei-Mei, adopted this long vest (Figure 11 in Appendix D) in an early film that later inspired Han women's adoption of a similar one-piece robe (Wang, 1975). In 1940, the magazine *Young Companion* also reported that a long loose *maijai* without side slits was the prototype of *qipao*. As early as 1927, then, the style development of Han women's *qipao* had already departed from the Qi's *pao*, moving toward Western fashion trends.

Guo (1999) used old photos, newspapers and writers' works to analyze when the *qipao* was adopted by Han women in Beijing City. She concluded that Han women began to adopt the *qipao*, which had wide sleeves, loose silhouette, and lower calf-length, in the early 1920s (Figure 2 in Appendix D). This early *qipao* was similar to Qi's *pao* but did not have fancy trimming, binding or a pattern on the curved opening (Table 2). There was no slit at the left side seam, but the buttons on the right side opening could be unbuttoned to form a side slit. Analyzing a photo of a famous female architect, Ms. Lin Huei Yin (林徽音) (Figure 12 in Appendix D), Guo argued that a new form of *qipao*, a long *maijai*, had appeared around 1924. Also, influenced by the 1920s Western fashion trend of a straight silhouette and boyish look, Chinese women adopted short hair, and the length of *qipao* was gradually shortened starting in 1928, to just under the knee by 1929 (Guo, 1999; Wang, 1975) (Table 3). Cut-and-sewn

sleeves appeared on *qipao* in 1929 (Unknown, 1940). This initial *qipao* with a loose fitting silhouette, close-to-the knee length, and worn with short hair, was viewed as similar to male dress, not female dress. Elder women strongly rejected women's wearing of this male-look style (Guo, 1999; Unknown, 1940; Wang, 1975).

Clark (2000) and Finnane (1996) focused on the background of why women adopted *qipao*. They both thought that the May Fourth movement created a new arena for Chinese women. Based on communist discourses, Finnane (1996) also reported that the turning point for women donning the *qipao* as daily dress was due to the communists' May Thirtieth Movement in 1925, an anti-imperialism movement following the May Fourth Movement. They both suggested that Chinese women, after social movements in the 1920s, began to look for gender equality in their daily practices including dress practices.

In traditional Chinese society, women had to comply with social norms and their domestic roles. Several Chinese sayings reflect this ideology. For instance, "Ignorance is a woman's virtue (女子無才便是德)" explicitly expresses that a woman's virtues are judged by whether or not she can express her opinions in a proper way and in proper situations, which are always defined by males. Another Chinese saying, "One neither goes outside of the front gate, nor strides toward the second (inner) gate. (大門不出、二門不邁)" was often used to describe that staying home was one good virtue for women. In fact, since the Ming dynasty (1368 -1644 CE), the upper middle class Han women were tied to the home, quite literally, by the practice of foot binding. Even though the R.O.C. government mandated the eradication of foot binding, the May Fourth Movement went further to uphold women's freedom and a new socially progressive role for women. One of their manifestos encouraged women to step out of the home and gain education, which was a big challenge to traditional Chinese society. Female students were seen as the prototype of Chinese new women. Their

choice to wear short hair and men's attire, in the form of the loose fitting long robes, later changing to knee length robes, symbolized rebellion from gender inequality (Clark, 2000; Finnane, 1996). Eileen Chang (1943/2004) had a similar comment that "women first began to wear the robe because they wanted to look like men."

The evidence of women wearing the long robe also can be found in the sartorial regulations issued by the R.O.C. government in 1929. Sartorial regulations in previous Chinese dynasties were used to regulate proper attire for noble members and government officers for various situations. The R.O.C. carried on this traditional practice and issued a set of sartorial regulations for government officers, army soldiers and citizens (Shih, 1979; Wang, 1975). In the 1929 version of the sartorial regulations, the government incorporated the prevailing practice of wearing robes and prescribed two types of women's formal dress. The first type was a lower calf-length blue robe with a mandarin collar, a left-over-right opening, and long sleeves (Wang, 1975). The fabric used in this unisex robe was domestic silk, cotton, or wool. The second type was a two-piece ensemble including a blue jacket and black skirt. In other words, a women's one-piece robe and a two-piece ensemble were both popular in the late 1920s.

In sum, scholars have proposed that the Han women's *qipao* emerged between the early to middle 1920s. The initial form of the *qipao* had wide sleeves, a very loose fit silhouette and lower calf-length. The silhouette and style of the initial *qipao* was similar to the men's long robe, the *chang pao* (Figure 3 in Appendix D). A new form of vest-type *qipao* appeared in 1924. *Qipao* style influenced by Western fashion trends could be found since 1927. Also, the initial *qipao* resonated not only with traditional Chinese dress beliefs that *pao* was unisex and androgynous but also symbolized the modern thoughts of gender equality and pursuing women's freedom.



Part of *qipao* development, from the 1930s to the early 1940s, was associated with the development of both the modern city and Western fashion. The style changes of *qipao* were significant and provided fundamental style definition for the modern, fashionable *qipao*. By gradually adopting various elements from Western garments, *qipao* shifted from the traditional Chinese square and loose garment construction to incorporate Western methods of garment construction including smaller waistline, bias-cutting and cut-and-sewn sleeves, which resulted in a more body revealing silhouette (Figures 14 and 15 in Appendix D). In addition, various fashionable styles in China at this time period were created and inspired based on *qipao*.

In the thirties, the style and design details of the *qipao* fluctuated significantly (Tsai, 1991). These major changes include: a left side slit that appeared in 1933 (Transition of the Chinese Gown, 1940), a curved side seam which provided a more curvaceous fitting silhouette (Tsai, 1991), a bias-cut *qipao* that created a more revealing body form (Carroll, 2003) (Figure 14 in Appendix D), and a sleeveless *qipao* that appeared in 1937 (Tsai, 1991). Other elements of *qipao* also changed. In 1940, the *Young Companion Pictorial* magazine provided a brief style overview of *qipao* for the 1930s (Table 4). According to the report “Transition of the Chinese Gown” (1940), the length of *qipao* dropped to lower calf again in 1931, reached to the floor in 1934 and 1935, but returned back to ankle length in 1936. Sleeve length fluctuated from wrist length to elbow length and was even sewn with ruffles at a certain period of time, such as in 1933. The height of the mandarin collar was about 1 inch in the early 1920s (Figure 2 in Appendix D) but grew to over 2.5 inches in the mid-1930s (Figures 14 and 15 in Appendix D) and decreased to 2 inches by the end of the 1930s (Table 4). The end point of the side slit fluctuated from above the middle of the thigh to one or two inches above the knees (Table 4 and Figures 15, 16, 17 and 18 in Appendix D).

Tsai (1991) indicated that the side slit reached its highest in 1934, when the end point of the slit reached around 30 cm (about 11 inches) above the knee; it soon dropped down to about two inches above the knee in the next year.

Various fabrics were used for *qipao* in the 1930s. A domestic branded cotton fabric, *yin dan shi lin* (陰丹士林) (Figure 19 in Appendix D), was the most popular for making a *qipao* (Clark, 2000; Tsai, 1991). *Yin Dan Shi Lin*, translated from the German dyestuff brand Indanthrene, was a blue dye for dyeing cellulose fibers. The fabrics, cotton in most cases, applied with Indanthrene were called *yin dan shi lin bu* (Indanthrene fabric). These domestic blue fabrics were popularly consumed by both students and middle class women because they had better colorfastness and a reasonable price. Women of higher social economic status and movie stars adopted various types of fancy fabrics, including prints, stripes, plaids, and laces that were either imported or made domestically, to create their own sophisticated and unique *qipao* (Clark 2000; Tsai, 1991) (Figure 20 in Appendix D). Gan (2004) indicated that Western-inspired textile patterns were a key feature of a modern-looking *qipao*. Furthermore, Xie (2004) mentioned that prostitutes in the city also adopted modern-looking elaborate *qipao* that were brocaded or had lavish embroidery or borders, in order to make themselves look exotic and sexually attractive to foreign businessmen. Additionally, because of the diffusion of Western fashion into China, the *qipao* was often worn with Western accessories such as capelets, fur coats, scarves, jackets, vests, socks, and high heels to give women a modern look (Tsai, 1991; Xie, 2004) and a European “flair” (Gan, 2004). *Qipao* was also used as a source of inspiration to design other styles of Chinese fashion (Table 5).

Chang (1943/2004) discussed the difference between Chinese and Western dress. She mentioned that color, silhouette, and construction from Western dress all focused on how to

feature an individual's figure or highlight a part of the body such as eye color. In contrast, traditional Chinese clothing often had many unnecessary decorations, which, in Chang's opinion, were pure ornamentation and were not useful to embellish any part of the body. Chang further stated that, in the past, the individual was secondary to the garment decoration. It was a woman's proper demeanor that helped her choose or decorate a garment, because of sartorial beliefs that women's clothing was meant to create an abstract poetic sense of line. Also a woman's social and economic status as well as social expectations of women's virtues guided selection of style (Chang, 1943/2004). Therefore, Chang commented that the meaning of the *qipao* after the mid-1930s was quite different from traditional Chinese beliefs about clothing. Before the establishment of the R.O.C., a woman's body was hidden under the loose garment and women all appeared in a similar silhouette, but in the 1930s, *qipao* made the female body figure more obvious (Chang, 1943/2004).

The *qipao* had been transformed from a traditional Chinese loose robe to a more modern East-West hybrid style. Style features such as the mandarin collar, the side opening sometimes decorated with contrast trim, and frog closures, kept *qipao* recognizable as Chinese, but the more form-fitting silhouette highlighted Western fashion ideas (Gan, 2004). Furthermore, Chang discussed that fashion trends for *qipao* did not follow Parisian haute couture fashion paths, where brand companies and designers such as Schiaparelli had the capabilities to affect the broader fashion market. Instead, she mentioned that "our tailors" were helpless before the waves of communal fancies, and followed in the wake of these changes (Chang, 1943/2004). In other words, particular individuals or groups were not responsible for *qipao* style innovation; it was the female consumers of *qipao* themselves

who created the trends. This also impacted *qipao* practices from place to place; the fashionable Shanghai *qipao* might not be fashionable in Beijing.

The modern *qipao* also appeared in advertising, adopted by Chinese calendar posters and magazines. These modern images often showed a cultivated and graceful woman with a sweet smile and disseminated the message that *qipao* symbolized modern Chinese women (Figures 19 and 21 in Appendix D). These images also showed an ideal of beauty for modern Chinese women at that time (Clark, 2000). The women in these advertisements often posed in a Western-style garment or a *qipao* in an attitude that seemed to suggest sexual availability (Stein, 2003). However, in the rural areas, women still donned a two-piece ensemble for everyday wear (Tsai, 1991). The *Young Companion* featured a report that showed a series of pictures comparing rural and urban women's daily dress, hairstyle, work environment, and leisure activities (Chen, 1934). While the city women wore modern *qipao* and played golf for their leisure activities, the rural women wore traditional two-pieces ensembles or more old-fashioned, loose-fitted robe-style *qipao* and worked in the field. The fitted modern-looking *qipao* became a symbol of urban life. In comparison with rural austerity, *qipao* came to be seen to represent city vanity.

In sum, part of the *qipao*'s development in the 1930s was associated with the development of the modern city and changes in Western fashion. First, the *qipao* became an East-West hybrid modern style. The mandarin collar, side openings with trim decoration, and frog closures ensured that the *qipao* remained Chinese, but many elements, including the bias-cut, more form-fitting silhouette, and even sleevelessness, were the results of emulating Western style. Second, the new, more form-fitting shape redefined Chinese female beauty and women's perceptions of their bodies. Ideals of beauty shifted from "personal virtues as beauty" to "the beauty from the body figure" and "the beauty of the

clothing silhouette.” Third, not every woman wore the same modern *qipao*, which was defined by the modern patterned textiles and more-body revealing form. Students adopted loose and blue *yin dan shi lin qipao* (Figures 16 and 22 in Appendix D). The middle class women selected materials and accessories much plainer than the materials and accessories used by movie stars or prostitutes. Also, the fashionable *qipao* differed from city to city. Therefore, *qipao* in the 1930s was a plain and practical daily wear for many women and it was also a symbol of urban fashion and a means to distinguish between urban and rural women. The original meanings of *qipao* as traditional dress changed to represent women's freedom after the May Fourth Movement. The new layer of meaning integrated into *qipao* in the 1930s was urban wear and modernity.

Table 4 Qipao Styles from 1930-1938

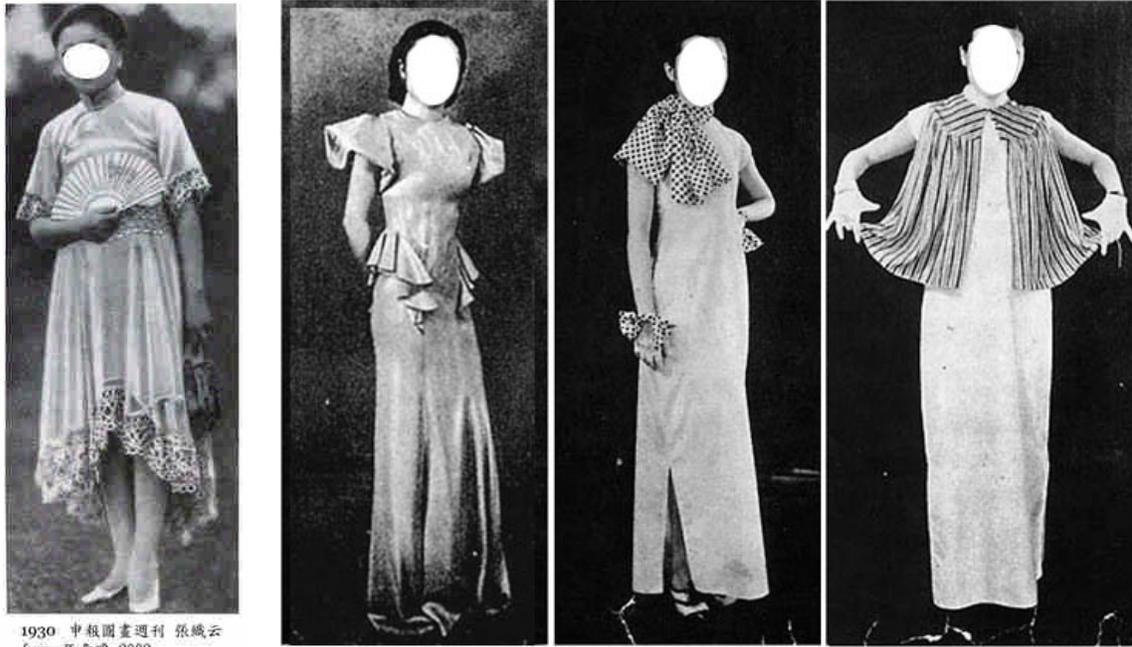
<p>1934</p>  <p>旗袍到二十三年，又加長了，而叉也開得更高了，又因為馬甲，又當行的關係，當時的腰身，就是一個重大變遷，就是腰身做得窄，更顯出全身的曲線。</p>	<p>1933</p>  <p>旗袍到二十二年，不但左襟開叉，連袖口也開起半尺長的大叉來，花邊還繼續盛行，電影明星顧梅君女士，當時穿過這樣一件時髦旗袍。</p>	<p>1932</p>  <p>當時最時髦的上海交際化薛錦園女士，可以代表盛行於二十一年的旗袍花邊運動，整個旗袍的四周，這一年都加上了花邊。</p>	<p>1931</p>  <p>旗袍高度，到二十年又向下垂，袖高也恢復了適中的階段，皮鞋款式都有進步，當年名媛許淑珍女士，她所穿的服裝，正可充作代表。</p>	<p>1930</p>  <p>短旗袍到十九年，因為適合女學生的要求，便又提高了一寸。可是袖子却完全仿照西式，這樣可以跑跳自如，象徵了當時正被解放後的新女性。</p>
<p>1938</p>  <p>旗袍高度既上升，袖子到二十七年，便被全部取消，這可以說是回到了十四年時旗袍馬甲的舊境，所不同的是光亮的玉臂，正象徵了近代女子的健美。</p>	<p>1937</p>  <p>物極必反，旗袍長度到了二十六年又向上回縮，袖長回縮的速度，更是驚人，普通在肩下二三吋，並且又盛行套開縫了。</p>	<p>1936</p>  <p>二十四年旗袍播地，到了二十五年，因為對於行路太不方便，大勢所趨，又與袖長一起縮短，但是開的叉却又提高了一寸多。</p>	<p>1935</p>  <p>開又太高了，到二十四年又起反響，兩姊妹都改穿了低叉旗袍，但是長度又發展到了頂點，簡直連鞋子都看不見。</p>	

Note. 旋律的旗袍 [Transition of the Chinese gown] (1940).

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 Table 5 *Qipao as a Design Inspiration for Fashionable Style*


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Note. Image #1, Zhang (2002); Image #2 旗袍新裝 [New design of the qipao] (1935).

*The Qipao Through Sino-Japanese Wartime, 1937-1949: National Identity and Office Wear*

While World War II began in Europe, the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) brought another wave of anti-imperialism to China. Nationalism and patriotism were prevailing all over China during the war. *Qipao* style during wartime did not change much (Figures 23 in Appendix D). Simple and practical were major concerns for the *qipao* during wartime. The binding was either simple or spare. A looser silhouette than that worn at the end of the 1930s, less tightly fitted through the waist, revealed less of the body figure (Tsai, 1991) (Figure 23 in Appendix D). After the war, *qipao* again picked up Western fashion trends and bust darts were introduced to *qipao* patterns around 1946 (Shih, 1979). A variety of synthetic fabrics, wool and cotton, were used, replacing such fabrics as *yin dan shi lin*

(Wang, 1975). A new meaning for the *qipao* was established during the Second Sino-Japanese wartime when Madam Chiang defined and disseminated *qipao* as an elegant national dress for Chinese women.

During the wartime, the national leader, Chiang Kai Sheik tried to agglomerate the Chinese to fight with Japanese as well as disseminate the concept of the modern citizen. He and his wife, Madam Chiang, initiated the New Life Movement in 1934 to promote traditional Confucian social ethics, to pursue sober traditional Chinese values, and to reject individualism and Western capitalistic values (Clark, 2000; Wang 1975). *Qipao* in solid colors, made of domestic fabrics, was promoted by the New Life Movement to highlight the virtues of industry and thrift; thus, the *qipao* in solid color became the most appropriate garment to wear during wartime.

In addition, Madam Chiang, as the first lady of China, had played an influential role in defining modern fashionable *qipao* as national dress. Raised and educated in the United States, Madam Chiang spoke fluent Chinese and English, which made her popular both domestically and abroad. She accompanied Chiang Kai Sheik to participate in various international meetings such as the Cairo Conference in 1943. On February 18, 1943, Madam Chiang became both the second woman and the first Chinese female to address the United States Congress. When in China, she donned a non-patterned or dark colored *qipao* to promote the spirit of the New Life movement. While traveling abroad, she wore a *qipao* with matching Western sweaters or coats and accessories to denote her sophisticated taste and an image of a modern cultivated Chinese woman with persistence (Steele & Major, 1999). Stein (2003) studied the appearance of three Chinese leaders and their wives. He mentioned that when Madam Chiang traveled in North America in 1943, both male and female reporters and commentators rarely missed her sartorial good taste. For example, the

front page of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* of March 20, 1943 described her navy blue embroidered Chinese garment and said that the sight of her made “brave men go limp” (Stein, 2003). Madam Chiang successfully transformed *qipao* into a sober, sophisticated, and elegant garment, and introduced modern *qipao* to the world.

Stein (2003) further argued that *qipao* symbolized women’s emancipation in the bodily sense, and, by extension, in the political and social environment too. *Qipao* could also be a provocative garment and exploited in the political environment similar to the way *qipao* was used in the 1930s commercial advertising of Shanghai posters. Stein (2003) described that “the way Meiling [Madam Chiang] used the language of clothes to structure the effect of what she actually said lies at the heart of her subsequent choice of the cheongsam [*qipao*]; she carefully posed in the dress to be attractive, even seductive, but was never languid or sexually inviting” (p. 616). Madam Chiang demonstrated how powerful *qipao* could be. While scholars study *qipao* from the 1930s with a focus on Westernization and modernization (Gan, 2004), or women’s emancipation and nationalism (Finnane, 1996), *qipao* from the 1940s involved a process of self-identification as Chinese national dress. Furthermore, through Madam Chiang’s interpretation of *qipao*, the *qipao* became popular office wear for middle class women during the 1940s (Figure 24 in Appendix D).

In sum, the focal point of *qipao* development in the 1940s was not style change but how it became associated with nationalism while the government fought intruders and increased their participation in international politics. Madam Chiang’s female role and her management of *qipao* promoted *qipao* internationally as a recognized Chinese traditional and national dress. Madam Chiang also successfully transferred the *qipao* into professional business wear for women.

*Qipao in Hong Kong, 1949-1960s: Stereotypes of the Form-Fitting Qipao*

Between 1949 and 1960, the P.R.C. attempted to take over Taiwan by firing up several military attacks such as the Da Dan War in 1950 and The 823 Cannon War in 1958 ("蔣總統與金門[President Chiang and Kinmen]," 1974). While China and Taiwan were struggling in this conflict, Hong Kong maintained peace and thrived. Therefore, Hong Kong began to lead the trends of *qipao*'s style development during this time period.

After the communists took over China in 1949, many *qipao* tailors from Shanghai moved to Hong Kong. In the 1950s, the *qipao* was continually worn as a daily outfit for urban women at work and at home in Hong Kong. Clark (2000) reports that the *qipao* as daily wear reached its peak in the 1950s in Hong Kong. Therefore, the business of custom-made *qipao* prospered (Clark, 2000). At the same time, the once loosely fitted and more functional *qipao* again became entwined with Western fashion. The tapered hem *qipao*, like the slim pencil skirt silhouette of Euro-American 1950s fashion, appeared in 1957. The garment was too narrow to pull on, so the side slit was lengthened and then partially closed with a zipper to allow easy wearing (Shih, 1979). After 1956, front and back waist darts were added to the *qipao*'s pattern. These made the *qipao*'s silhouette similar to an hourglass shape or Dior's Y-line silhouette (Figures 25 and 26 in Appendix D), which was also popular in Euro-American fashion at this time (Shih, 1979; Tsai, 1991).

When mini skirts became a hot fashion item in the 1960s, mini *qipao* also appeared in Hong Kong in the late 1960s (Clark, 2000) (Figure 27 in Appendix D). However, the mini *qipao* triggered serious public condemnations because it was thought that they were too revealing to be an acceptable form of Chinese dress (Clark, 2000; Wang 1975). The Taiwan *Xin Sheng* newspaper, in a report dated August 17, 1971, discussed how mini-*qipao* had angered the public in Hong Kong and criticized the mini-*qipao* as problematic for two

reasons. First, *qipao* with a loose-fitting silhouette from the past had been replaced by a *qipao* made of thin fabrics with a tight-fitting silhouette that showed women's bodies and therefore highlighted their sexuality. This obviously disobeyed a more traditional Chinese dress ideology in which women's sexuality is not shown. Second, the over-calf length *cheongsam* (*qipao*) was replaced by a mini-length dress, which exposed too much of a woman's leg. The newspaper reported that moral defenders and church groups initiated a "Fu Zhuan Duan Zheng" (Correct Improper Dress) movement to ask women to stop exposing so much of their body figure or skin. However, this movement did not receive the expected results (Wang, 1975).

The first Hong Kong beauty pageant was held in 1946, and all contestants wore the *qipao* as "casual wear." By the early 1950s, however, the *qipao* was required as part of formal wear for pageant contestants. In fact, the winner of Miss Hong Kong adopted the *qipao* as her Chinese ethnic dress while competing in a world beauty pageant (Clark, 2000). According to Clark, since 1973, when the annual Miss Hong Kong beauty pageant was televised to a large Chinese audience in Hong Kong and Taiwan, it reinforced the image of the *qipao* as formal dress. Also, a film played an important role in promoting the *qipao* to the world during this time. *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), tells the romantic story of an American artist who visits Hong Kong and falls in love with a mysterious prostitute, Suzie Wong. The film was shot on the streets of Hong Kong, and the actress who played Suzie donned a tightly fitting *qipao* in almost all the scenes ("The World of Suzie Wong," 1960). Finnane (1996) contended that this movie provided not only an exotic love story but created a sexualized connection between the *qipao* and prostitution.

In sum, while the military tension between the R.O.C. and the P.R.C. was still high from 1949 to 1960, Hong Kong, as the most peaceful and prosperous Chinese urban center,

automatically became the center of *qipao* fashion. Chinese women in Hong Kong continually wore the *qipao* as daily wear in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the *qipao* kept pace with Western fashion and became a tightly fitting garment that promoted the Western idea of the hourglass silhouette. The development of TV and film also began to influence the creation and distribution of the *qipao*'s image. The result of much of this change meant that the popular media helped to establish a stereotypical connection between a tightly fitting and body revealing *qipao* with sexuality and prostitution rather than its other connection as a working woman's outfit or with its longer ethnic heritage found in Chinese history.

#### *Qipao's Decline After the 1960s: Alternative Qipao in Taiwan*

Millions of Chinese citizens migrated to Taiwan in 1949 when the Communist Party took over China. Taiwan was once a Japanese colony, so women's dress in the early 1920s was influenced by Japan. Young educated Chinese women in Taiwan often adopted Western dress while others still wore traditional Han two-piece garments (Tsai, 1991). While middle class women from Mainland China in 1949 continued to wear the *qipao* for daily wear in Taiwan, middle class Taiwanese women incorporated the *qipao* as part of their wardrobes (Tasi, 1991; Wang 1975). The *qipao* style in Taiwan, much like that in Hong Kong, continually fluctuated with ideas of Western fashion in the 1960s. As the tight-fitting *qipao* gained popularity in Hong Kong, with its emphasis on the hourglass silhouette of a full bosom, tiny waist, and full hips, Taiwan's *qipao* followed.

However, according to Tasi (1991), this tight-fitting garment erased all aspects of function and comfort embedded in the traditional Chinese loose robe. These factors were prominent in Taiwan, which is located in the subtropical zone. Wearing tight-fitting garments with high stand collars in high humidity and heat can be uncomfortable. In

addition, Yang (1981) mentions that custom-made tight-fitted *qipao* required detailed measurements and sophisticated fitting skills that caused higher labor fees than those involved in making many Western garments. The complicated binding and trimming on *qipao* also demanded higher labor costs. Because the tightly fitting *qipao* were seen as uncomfortable and expensive, young women gradually abandoned the *qipao* as daily wear but continued to use the garment as formal wear in the late 1960s (Tasi, 1991).

Aware of the decline of the *qipao*, several Taiwanese *qipao* tailors created alternative *qipao* in the early 1970s (Yang, 1981). These *qipao* kept the traditional recognizable *qipao* elements of an asymmetrical curved opening, binding and piping around all neckline and opening, and side slits but incorporated a long zipper at the center back and adopted a looser fit. These alternative *qipao* still kept the pace with fashion trends such as adding shoulder pads, popular in the 1980s, and emphasized the need for correct fit and functionality for movement. For alternative *qipao*, the fit had to be adjusted based on the wearer's age and body figure (Shih, 1979). Older women could select a *qipao* with more ample ease for more comfortable movement and fit, while young women could choose a tighter fit for formal situations or a looser fit for non-formal usage. Therefore, materials, sleeve lengths, side slits, and collar heights were based on individual needs and selection (Tsai, 1991). However, in Taiwan *qipao* has never re-gained popularity for daily wear. Most women today wear a *qipao* for jobs requiring uniforms, for example, as a flight attendant aboard China Airlines, or for attending or participating in special occasions such as weddings.

In sum, the *qipao* in Taiwan shifted away from daily wear because it could be expensive and uncomfortable to wear. Alternative *qipao*, from the 1970s to today, provided more comfortable designs in comparison with the *qipao* in the 1950s, but it has been nearly impossible to find Taiwanese literature related to *qipao* practices after the end of the 1980s.

The *qipao* seems have been forgotten in Taiwan not only for daily wear, but also as a subject of academic study. Does the *qipao* still represent traditional dress for the Taiwanese? If the *qipao* had been used as a means of expressing Chinese identity before, how do Taiwanese perceive *qipao* after the 1980s? These questions pose interesting issues and ideas that remain to be explored.

### *Qipao in Mainland China, 1949-Current: The Communist Perspectives*

In 1949, the Communist Party established the Peoples of Republic of China (P.R.C.). The P.R.C. political ideology significantly influenced people's dress practices. According to Zhang (2002), Chinese women's clothing from 1949 to 1978 bore two characteristics: simplification and isolation. Simplification means that the variety of dress styles developed since the 1910s were gradually disregarded from daily dress practice except the *zhong shan* suit, or Mao suit as it is known in the West, for men, and the *chun qiu* shirt for women. The *chun qiu* shirt was a Western shirt with a center front opening, roll-over collar and long sleeves. Because the shirt is suitable for spring and fall time, it is called *chun* (spring) *qiu* (fall) shirt. Isolation meant that Chinese men's and women's dress had to represent the new ideology of communist socialism; China pursued their own dress system instead of following the capitalist fashion system.

Following this ideology, *bulaji* ("dress" in Russian) (Figure 28 in Appendix D), replaced *qipao* as more appropriate for women's daily wear in the 1950s (Zhang, 2002). Ironically, the *bulaji* was the same type of garment as a fashionable Western garment in the 1950s (Figure 29 in Appendix D). The legitimacy of the *bulaij* was determined by the ideology of socialism and anti-capitalism. If information or products came from capitalist countries, they were considered improper and backward (Zhang, 2002). However, if

information and products came from Russia, the leading communist country, they were treated as morally proper to follow and were also viewed as social progress (Zhang, 2002). Furthermore, several articles (Sun, 1956; Yu, 1956) in the magazine, *Young Chinese*, discussed the issue that women wearing garments with fancy patterns or prints carried a capitalist ideology. These articles proposed a pervasive idea that it was more socially progressive for peasants to follow Chinese leaders' dress styles and wear garments of a black or navy color. These articles also argued that women should wear more colorful dress to bring out the beauty of women because "capitalist ideology" was presented through personal behaviors not personal appearance (Yu, 1956). The debate over whether it is proper to wear patterned or printed garments was easily found in 1950s China but after the 1950s, according to Zhang (2002), Chinese women's dress was isolated from Western fashion influence and gradually simplified into limited styles and colors to present the ideas of the new communist socialism.

In the early 1950s, modern city women in China continued to wear *qipao* as daily wear, but after the end of the 1950s, the *qipao* gradually disappeared from Chinese everyday life (Clark, 2000; Zhang 2002). In the 1960s, the *qipao* occasionally was adopted by the wives of government officials when they traveled overseas or hosted visitors from foreign lands (Finnane, 1996; Zhang, 2002). For example, the wife of Liu Shaoqi, the vice president in the early P.R.C. regime, donned *qipao* on her visit to Indonesia (Stein, 2003). However, during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the *qipao* was viewed as representative of the "old," a product of capitalism and a symbol of the bourgeoisie; therefore, the *qipao* was classified as "bizarre" clothing, which was decadent and intolerable (Clark, 2000). The wife of Liu Shaoqi was criticized during the Cultural Revolution for wearing *qipao*. Liu Shaoqi was eventually removed from power (Finnane, 1996). At that

time, many other fashion items fell into this category including women's dresses, men's suits, jewelry, cosmetics, high-heeled shoes, and hosiery. As a result, the *qipao* became taboo and literally disappeared from communist China (Clark, 2000; Zhang, 2002).

*Qipao* and Western fashionable dress were no longer taboo after China reopened its market to the world in 1978. Through the consumer market and the upsurge of clothing manufacturing in the 1980s, Chinese re-discovered Western styles, and women's wear in China diversified in the early 1990s. In addition, *qipao* was promoted by the government to represent China again. In 1985, for example, the government selected a team to participate in the *prêt-a-porter* fashion shows in Paris for the first time. The major line that these Chinese designers brought to the ready-to-wear runway was a series of designs based on Chinese ethnic dress (Zhang, 2002). Chinese designers used *qipao* as a basic garment but incorporated embroidery and binding techniques from various minority ethnic groups such as the Miao, Tai, Sa Ni and so on. *Qipao* had regained its status as both ethnic and national dress in Mainland China after the end of 1980s (Finnane, 1996; Zhang, 2002). However, *qipao* never regained the status of women's daily wear. *Qipao* in China was adopted either as a waitress uniform or a bride's wedding party garment. According to Yuan (2000), in 1998, global China-chic fashion stimulated a fad of wearing *qipao* in Shanghai. Both Yuan (2000) and Zhang (2002) indicated that when Western designers adopt *qipao* or other Chinese dress elements as their design inspiration, this is proof of the East influencing West fashion, and the West giving value to the East's traditions.

In sum, based on the previous studies, several meanings of *qipao* can be generated. First, the Chinese term "*qipao*" entered common knowledge and this association led many scholars in the West and in China to associate the *qipao* with Qi's *pao*, a relationship that has been called into question. Han women rejected wearing Qi's *pao* during the Qing

dynasty. Studies also showed that the origin of the *qipao* came from the needs of China as it moved toward modernization and constructed a modern image of China. Therefore, the term *qipao* is a general term that reflected women wearing a one-piece robe that looked like the Manzhu women wearing Qi's *pao*. Second, some studies have tried to connect *qipao* with the Han long robe (*pao*) and Han culture. However, the long *pao* and the culture that wore it are far removed from the current young generation. *Qipao* as traditional dress has a physical form that is very different from the traditional *pao*, so understanding how the modern form-fitted *qipao* is connected to Chinese dress culture provides a good approach to analyze the cultural meanings of *qipao*. Third, the *qipao* history has provided evidence that the cultural meanings can be inherited from history but they are in constant flux. Therefore, while the historical meanings of the *qipao* serve as essential knowledge to understand *qipao* it is the young generation's *qipao* practices that are the key to constructing the contemporary cultural meanings of *qipao*.

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH CONCEPTS, QUESTIONS, AND FRAMEWORK**

This chapter includes two parts. First, I review previous studies and discuss the concepts of culture, tradition, ethnic dress and Chinese ethnicity, postmodernism and propose research questions based on the literature review. Second, I introduce Bourdieu's practice theory, which serves as the theoretical frame for this study. Semiological analysis is also incorporated into Bourdieu's concept of practices as a tool for data analysis. The research framework is presented at the end of this chapter.

#### **Research Concepts and Questions**

Dress is a form of communication that transmits messages reflecting society and culture. Dress refers to an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). There are various approaches to studying the meanings of dress. From a cognitive perspective, the meanings of dress are stimulated by the cues in social context (Damhorst, 1984-85), perceivers' perceptions of dress elements (Rowold, 1984), and the influence of the surrounding "*gestalt*" and effects of social stereotypes (DeLong et al., 1986). The meanings of dress also are generated through the process of social interactions. Kaiser (1995, 1997) has contributed important discussions on this topic from a symbolic interaction approach.

Anthropologists primarily studied culture from the categories of family, kinship, marriage, and ritual, but did not pay much attention to dress as part of the cultural system until the 1950s (Eicher, 2000). In the past, fieldwork-based ethnography was a fundamental approach for anthropologists studying dress and its cultural meanings. However, along with the development of theoretical perspectives in the 1960s and 1970s, a variety of other approaches have appeared, such as structural-functional, semiotic, and material culture

analysis. In the 1990s, two trends in the study of dress in anthropology appeared: dress as part of material culture and dress in globally connected cultures (Eicher, 2000).

Dress, as a means of nonverbal communication, belongs to sign systems that can be analyzed and understood from a semiological approach, which focuses on “what the nature of meanings is” and how signs acquire meanings (Mick, 1986). In addition, nonverbal signs are unlike a verbal language, in that dress does not denote linear and unidimensional messages (Damhorst, 1990). Especially in the postmodern arena, an individual often actively creates and presents his or her dress and meanings based on individual knowledge and interpretation (Barnard, 1996). Several studies (Henderson & DeLong, 2000; Kaiser et al., 1991) have emphasized that ambiguities and tensions among individual, fashion, and cultural identities are essential to studying dress meanings in the postmodern era. In order to understand the multi-dimensional cultural meanings of the *qipao*, practice theory served as the framework for my research.

### *What Is Culture?*

“Culture” is one of the two or three most complicated English words to define (William, 1994). Although culture ubiquitously exists in daily life, culture as a concept is very abstract and not easy to describe. Scholars have offered various definitions of culture. E.B Tylor defined culture as a complex whole, which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society (Tylor, 1871). Spradley and McCurdy (2003) defined culture as the knowledge inherited and learned from the system in which people live. Scupin (1998) proposed that culture includes both abstract and concrete components. The abstract components include

the meanings of symbols, events, activities, or an action, and how the meanings are created and selected, while the concrete components include the forms of an action, a behavior, an event, an activity, or an artifact. In general, the definition of culture explains that culture is learned and outlines the components of culture but it does not provide the explanation of how culture is created and changed.

William (1999) proposed that culture is a complex organism that is autonomous and variable. Human beings create culture based on their needs. Culture, therefore, changes when environments and needs change. Sub-fields of anthropology such as cultural ecology believed that the mechanism of cultural change relied on “adaptation.” They proposed that culture developed in evolutionary stages similar to evolutionary stages in the natural sciences; therefore, adaptation was the key to analyzing the dynamic relations between internal and external factors during culture change (Ortner, 1984).

Symbolic anthropology and structuralism both view culture as a system of symbols and meanings. These two schools of thought distinguish the cultural system from the social system and engage in cultural analysis to abstract the meaningful aspects of human action from the flow of concrete interactions (William, 1999). In addition, symbolic anthropology and structuralism believe that cultural meanings exist in the system of symbols. The meanings of symbols are determined by their network of relations with other symbols (William, 1999). Therefore, they assumed that cultural meanings are logically consistent, highly integrated, neatly coherent and clearly bounded in a specific geographic area. In other words, symbolic anthropology and structuralism are more or less synchronic (William, 1999) and believe that cultural meanings can be discovered through a systematic analysis of events or phenomena (see Geertz, 1973).

However, culture is permeable and always changeable, especially in the current global

arena; compressed space, time and technology have sped up information exchange worldwide. Cultures are not confined within specific geographic areas. They are the result of the complicated interactions among historical, social, political and economic systems across multiple cultures.

The terms “practice,” “resistance,” “history,” or “political” have appeared in cultural theory since the 1980s (Ortner, 1984; William, 1999). The central idea underlying these terms is that human agency is a part of culture; culture is practice. The main theorems of culture as practice include: culture is closely aligned with history and social structure; culture is a sphere of practical activity attempted through will, action, power relations, struggle, contradiction and change (William, 1999); cultural meanings are not coherent but always contradictory and conflicted; and, finally, human agency and institutional practices are keys to maintain and reproduce the cultural system (Ortner, 1984; William, 1999).

Bourdieu’s term “practice” was adopted by Sherry Ortner (1984) to reflect the shift from thinking of culture as system to culture as practice. According to William (1999), some scholars think that the concepts of culture as system and as practice are incompatible, but Bourdieu had different thoughts. In his argument on the theory of practice, Bourdieu explicated that past cultural theories often swing between two irreconcilable perspectives, objectivist (the system) and subjectivist (the practice). Therefore, in his book, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu attempted to bridge the gap between subjectivist and objectivist knowledge and focus on the question of how the structuralized system legitimizes individual actions, how individual actions reproduce and maintain the cultural system, and how institutional agents create, reproduce or maintain the cultural system.

*Qipao* has gone through different stages of social and political development. In each stage of development, *qipao*’s meanings are embodied in structural constraints and

reproduced through practices in the different time period. Therefore, to investigate the practices of *qipao* is a good start to understand *qipao*'s cultural meanings among the current young generation. From investigating how the current young generation identifies, understands and uses the *qipao*, the researcher will be able to discover subjective aspects of cultural meanings. In addition, an objective analysis of the sign system of the *qipao*, the semiological analysis, will facilitate understanding of the structural properties of the *qipao* as a communication medium.

### *Tradition and Traditional Dress*

Tradition does not have a concrete definition. Gyekey (1997) offers three different definitions in his book. First, tradition is a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and accepted as authoritative, or deferred to, without argument. Second, tradition is anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to present. Third, tradition is a set of customs passed down over the generations, and a set of beliefs and values endorsing those customs. All three definitions have in common the idea that tradition is treated as an object which can be passed down from the previous generations. That is, tradition has to be connected to the past and it has certain formats (beliefs, norms) or elements that can be passed through generations. From this sense, tradition contains an essential identity, which persists through time. However, this does not mean that tradition is a static "object" or an essential identity transferred from past to present without changes.

Hobsbawm (1983) adopted a constructivist perspective and proposed that tradition is created or "invented" for human needs. He believed that each society has to maintain an invariant system. When a society encounters changes, invented tradition carries the characteristics from the past and functions as a bridge to replace the gap between past and

current changes (Hobsbawm, 1983). In other words, traditions can be deliberately invented and constructed by a single initiator. For example, the Boy Scouts were invented by Baden Powell but are now accepted as a traditional method to help boys learn socially acceptable behaviors. Tradition can also be remodeled or invented according to institutional and state needs. Examples of this include national flags or symbols such as the Nazi Swastika. The tradition is always changing albeit slowly at times.

Other scholars agree with Hobsbawm's concept of invented traditions that change along with the environmental or cultural changes but Gyekey (1997) emphasized historical contents of the tradition more than the process of tradition formation. Gyekey stated that even though the new tradition is constituted according to current individual, social or institutional needs, the tradition has to be established and transferred from the past. Any new invention that appears in order to meet current needs without historical content could never be perceived as a tradition. Therefore, the temporal factor (when the tradition was created), the historical contents (the format) and how the tradition was constituted all become fundamental in discussing and defining a specific tradition. In addition, Handler and Linnekin (1984) emphasized that tradition is a symbolic process. It is not an objective property of phenomena but a process of assigning meaning. Tradition, associated with culture, is embedded in daily life and it has to be understood as a process of symbolic construction. In short, from these discussions of the concept, tradition should be understood and investigated based on three attributes: the temporal factor, the historical content and the reasons and meanings for it, and investigating the process of tradition formation.

Following these ideas, traditional dress has at least three characteristics. First, traditional dress is based on invention and use in the past. Second, traditional dress has a certain format that can be passed through generations. Third, the meanings of traditional

dress, as a symbol, are socially-, culturally- and institutionally-situated. Previous studies have documented the styles and background of the *qipao*'s development and how it related to Han women's traditional robes. However, the relationship between tradition and the *qipao* has by no means been confined to the style changes or how it is associated with the past. Instead, tradition is a process of assigning meaning (Linnekin, 1983). There is no linear process of assigning meaning. History has associated a variety of meanings and definitions to the *qipao*, but history does not provide a guarantee that these meanings can be exactly reproduced in contemporary cultural practice. In the process of modernization, some meanings have been divested and forgotten or changed. How the cultural meanings of the *qipao* have been selected or transferred through the modernization process requires investigation of the interactions between internal self-identification, such as ethnic identity, and external stimulations, such as global fashion influences (Gyekey, 1997). As Niessen, Leshkovich and Carla (2003) argued, traditional dress is continually modernized, reinvented, and updated so that its meaning remains pertinent to evolving social/historical circumstances.

The circumstances for current *qipao* practices and meanings have greatly changed in comparison to the environment of the early twentieth century. To re-examine the *qipao* as a form of traditional dress from both internal factors and external stimulations is critical. The Chinese diaspora, beginning in 1949, meant that Chinese and Taiwanese experienced different cultural practices for over fifty years. The Chinese and Taiwanese may not understand the concepts of the traditional *qipao* or modern *qipao* in the same way. Therefore, part of my study focuses on the meanings of traditional *qipao* and how these meanings differ today not only between the two groups but how they may differ from historical meanings. Furthermore, because details of *qipao* styles, including silhouette,

materials and designs, have fluctuated closely with Western fashion trends, it would be interesting to investigate which elements of style have been maintained in Chinese and Taiwanese perceptions as traditional *qipao*.

### *Fashion and Ethnic Dress*

Many scholars contend that fashion is the product of Western culture that can be traced back to the late fifteenth century (Hollander, 1994). Fashion has been defined and studied from many different aspects, but it is commonly defined as changes that happen in a specific geographical and cultural area (Entwistle, 2000). For example, Wilson states that the key feature in fashion is the rapid and continual changing of style; fashion, in a sense, is change (1985). Davis's (1992) description of fashion is similar. He states, "any definition of fashion seeking to grasp what distinguishes it from style, custom, conventional or acceptable dress, or prevalent modes must place its emphasis on the element of change we often associate with the term" (Davis, 1992, p. 4). Social mobility has been identified as an important motivation for people to adopt changes and follow fashion. According to the trickle down theory of fashion change, for example, people tend to imitate styles of the upper classes so that they can appear to have higher social class (Simmel, 1971; Veblen, 1953). In this sense, it might be assumed that fashion does not exist in tribal or classless societies (Simmel 1957, p. 541).

Another perspective to consider is the idea of fashion as a system of dress provision; that is, the emergence of fashion has to rely on a complicated set of relationships among production, marketing, and consumption (Entwistle, 2000). From this point of view, fashion is commonly linked to capitalistic logic; that is, producing clothing in the less developed "peripheral" countries with cheap labor and shipping to more advanced capitalized "central"

countries—a widely found phenomenon today in the garment industry and one central to China's current economy (Maynard, 2004). At the same time, this central-peripheral point of view says that the innovations and changes in fashion have been initiated in the “central” or “fashion-driven” cities such as Paris or London for centuries. Overall, then, according to Skov (2003) and Entwistle (2000), the concept of fashion is developed from an empirical phenomena based in Western society and it is a phenomenon developed originally by Western modernity. Fashion is a system of change in dress found in societies where social mobility is possible; it has its own particular relationships of production and consumption and is characterized by a logic of systemic change.

Ethnic dress, according to Eicher and Sumberg (1995), is worn by members of one group to distinguish themselves from members of other groups. It is closely bound to “traditional dress,” which is associated with the past and tends to be seen as fixed in a stereotypical image of garments, materials, colors, and accessories. Ethnic dress is often viewed as either unchanging or slowly developing (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Therefore, studies of ethnic dress often center on the issue of how dress is associated with tradition and how group members identify themselves through the dress (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). That is, tradition and ethnicity cannot be separated while a researcher studies ethnic dress. For example, Hendrickson (1995) studied Mayan dress, particularly women’s *traje*, in Tecpán, Guatemala. She examined *traje* in three dimensions, as part of the enduring images of the “Indian,” as an indicator of role change in the human life cycle, and as a medium for innovation and creative expression. Hendrickson has claimed that, no matter whether the *traje* was adopted for political expression, religious celebrations, cultural activities, the tourist market, or a map of the personal life course, *traje* is more than “mere cloth.” It has played an active role in the construction and expression of ethnicity, gender, politics, and

nationality for Mayans and non-Mayans. From her analysis, *traje* and the wearer were both bound to tradition and place but also both actively reflect the wider world (Hendrickson, 1995).

In discussing the relationship between fashion and ethnic dress, it is common to find ethnic dress as a practice placed in opposition to the world of fashion because fashion is oriented to Western cultural and production systems but ethnic dress is embedded in local cultural systems. Fashion changes endlessly, but ethnic dress is often assumed not to change (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995; Subbaraman, 1999). Several scholars (Baizerman et al., 1993; Craik, 1994) have challenged the notion that fashion change only occurs in Western dress practices. These scholars criticize fashion theorists, such as Simmel and Blumer (Niessen et al., 2003), who limit fashion as a unique product from modern society and define ethnic dress as coming from “non-changing” traditions. Some scholars such as Craik (1994) and Eicher and Sumberg (1995), do not agree with fashion theories that put Western fashion and ethnic dress into binary relationships: West/East, modern/traditional, and changing/fixed, because these binary concepts show a Eurocentric bias. Craik (1994) posited that general fashion discourses connected to capitalism and Western society are also ethnocentric. She explained that capitalism may direct the production and consumption of fashion, but not its operation. Capitalism does not determine the social practice of fashion, that is, the ideas, the styles or the elements. Styles introduced by capitalist systems do not become fashion without individual clothing practices. Therefore, from Craik’s point of view, fashion practice is part of daily life that is experienced by people in different classes, affiliations, occupations, and ethnic groups. Fashion is also a technique of acculturation, a means by which individuals learn to be visually similar to others in a culture. Furthermore, fashion provides “raw material” that can be used as a means to conform to, negotiate with, or reject structural norms

and aesthetics (Entwistle, 2000).

Several scholars (Craik, 1994; Eicher & Sumberg, 1995; Maynard, 2004) have indicated that Eurocentric bias appears not only in the definition of fashion but also in the daily practice of selection in fashion and ethnic dress. Western dress elements have been introduced to the non-Western world through European colonialism and the global fashion system. Western dress was viewed as superior and civilized in comparison with non-Western ethnic dress (Subbaraman, 1999). For example, Emma Tarlo's study (1996) argued that British colonial rule and, later, Indian nationalism used Western masculine dress as a strategy to exclude the traditional Indian *dhoti*. She described how British colonials viewed the *dhoti* as a symbol of backward and effeminate Indian men, because the *dhoti* left the torso and leg unclad as among "savages," and such draped fabric was only used for European women's dress. In other words, Indian men were compelled to accept Western dress codes as symbols of modernity and superiority, by rejecting the "feminine" ethnic dress. Many African countries also appeared to abandon traditional indigenous forms of dress in favor of Western dress as their daily wear when Western influence was added to their life (Maynard, 2004). In other cases, indigenous dress has been reformed to include the "efficient" elements from Western dress (Niessen et al., 2003). Western fashion or dress was viewed as superior or efficient because it defined what was modern.

However, such interactions between fashion and non-fashion and the selection or adoption of Western, ethnic, or traditional dress is not a linear hierarchical relationship but a dynamic process of creating identities and meaning-making (Maynard, 2004). To adopt fashionable dress does not mean becoming homogenously Westernized and no longer interacting with local dress practices. Maynard explores "underlined variance" (p. 12) in global homogenous Western styles from various perspectives such as political, ethnic, and

alternative dress. To do so, she viewed dress as a tool for human agency and a tool used to establish ethnicity or nationality. Individuals from different cultures and economic political environments adopt different strategies in their daily dress selection. States and nations also express their uniqueness through national dress; in other words, to establish national dress involves both political ideology and identification (Eicher et al. 2000). Maynard (2004) discussed how African countries express their nationality through dress reform that began after de-colonization. To combine Western and indigenous dress is the most common way to establish a national identity. Political figures from non-Western countries often choose elements from traditional ethnic dress either to present the spirit of the country or to make a political statement. For example, Yasser Arafat combined khaki military uniform elements (Western style) and Saudi- or Syrian-style headwear in white and black checked fabric, the *kaffiyeh*, to denote himself as a freedom fighter for Palestinian people (Maynard, 2004). Therefore, Maynard believes that adopting Western dress or fashionable dress is not a simple give-and-take process but it involves individual dress selection and practices based on local cultural dispositions.

In contrast to fashion changes, ethnic dress symbolizes cultural heritage, and maintaining certain formats or style elements is critical to be defined as ethnic dress. In this sense, ethnic dress can be viewed as a competitor to the fashion system. The interactions between fashion and ethnic dress could be seen as the process of resisting the West both in physical forms and cultural practices. That is, keeping ethnic dress from becoming Westernized in order to maintain separateness. Nation-states often play an important role in this process. For example, Gandhi strongly promoted Indian domestic textiles, the sari and the dhoti, as Indian tradition and identity in order to distinguish India from the West (Banerjee & Miller, 2003).

In sum, Western fashion and ethnic dress emerge from two macro structural conditions. The fashion system is grounded in Western culture and develops along the lines of Western industrialization and capitalism. Ethnic dress, in opposition, is grounded in local culture and is primarily affected by local economic and political development in addition to the fashion system. The selections between fashion and ethnic dress involve processes of conforming and resisting between local and non-local or Western fashion cultures. Ethnic dress often encounters a dilemma, whether incorporating modern Western elements to present a modern look or keeping original style elements as authentic. It should not simply be concluded that adopting Western dress results from Western fashion dominating over ethnic dress. In actuality, ethnic dress is an important human agency to present cultural identity and it competes and integrates with Western fashion culture.

#### *Qipao and Chinese Ethnicity*

Ethnicity, according to Eicher et al (2000), was initially used to understand political processes of conflict among different ethnic groups within a larger society. An ethnic group is a group of people that shares a common cultural background (Eicher et al., 2000). In this sense, the concept of ethnicity involves multi-dimensional aspects such as origin or ancestry, culture, identity, language, customs and beliefs.

Chinese ethnicity is a broad and complex concept. “Chinese” (*zhuang kuo jen*), as an ethnic concept in English, is often first associated with the citizens of the P.R.C. (China). Chinese means people from the country of China. It is also a general English term that refers to people who carry Chinese cultural heritage; in this sense, Chinese is the name of an ethnic group. In Mandarin, there are various terms that correspond to the ethnic term “Chinese,” including *Zhong Hua minzhu*, *Hua Xia minzhu*, *Huajen* or *Hanzhu*. *Minzhu* means ethnic

group, *jen* means people and *Zhong Hua*, Hua or Han is the name for the majority ethnic group both in China and Taiwan. These Mandarin terms carry the ideology that Chinese ethnicity is grounded in Han culture, and the concept of ethnic Chinese has been conflated with Chinese citizens as a Han-oriented pan-ethnic group (Brown, 2004). Therefore, it might easily confuse a foreigner when someone says, “I am Chinese but not from China” because culturally, the term “Chinese” as an ethnic designation refers to the *Zhong Hua* group. “I am Chinese” may refer to someone who inherits *Zhong Hua* culture. However, “Chinese” as a political or national designation also refers to people from Communist China. So Chinese is also a political term. In fact, “cultural Chinese” is not always congruent with “political Chinese.”

The emergence of “Chinese” as an ethnic group involved a long history of migrations and assimilations. The original Chinese ethnic group was located in central northern China, approximately Hunan province today. They established three ancient dynasties, Xia (1875-1550 BCE), Shang (1550-1050 BCE) and Zhou (1050-256 BCE), in which a state system and hierarchical social relationships had been well formed. This group of people, later called Han, built on these to form a group identity and differentiate themselves from other groups (“民族問題 [Ethnic Issue of Chinese]”, 2005). The first name used for this group was the *hua xia*, as explained in an ancient Chinese book *Zuo Zhuan* (左傳). *Hua* refers to the group having a beautiful dress system, and *xia* refers to the group having an integral etiquette system.<sup>4</sup> The terms of *zhong kuo* (China in Mandarin) and *Zhong Hua* also appeared in the Zhou dynasty with the meaning that “the dynasty established by *Hua Xia* people was the center (*zhong*) country (*kuo*) of the world.” In comparison with nomadic groups in the area,

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<sup>4</sup> The original Chinese is from 左傳 “有服章之美謂之華，有禮儀之大謂之夏”。

the *Hua Xia* people viewed themselves as a more civilized people because they had established an agricultural society and a well-organized political economic and dress system (Chao, 1999; Feuchtwang, 1993). The *Hua Xia* people wore a commodious garment with a front panel overlapping left over right and a hair bun on the top of the head to distinguish themselves from what they called the “barbarian” nomadic groups (Zhou & Gao, 1998). In short, *Hua Xia*'s garment style and dress system were used to create social distance and a hierarchical relationship to other groups.

The history of *Hua Xia* or *Zhong Hua* cultural development involved various interactions with other ethnic groups, including conflicts, mutual learning and imitation. Numerous assimilations and acculturations occurred as a result of these group interactions. People living close to the *Hua Xia* people were assimilated into *hua xia* culture and life style through choice. Therefore, the terms of *Hua Xia*, *Zhong Hua* and *zhong kou* initially reflected the assumption that the *zhong hua* group with central political, economic and etiquette systems was superior to other groups, but later the terms evolved to imply cultural superiority (“民族問題 [Ethnic Issue of Chinese],” 2005).

According to Chao (1999), the Qin dynasty (256-221 BCE) was the first political regime in Chinese history to unite and integrate various ethnic groups into one dynasty. Chinese written language was unified during the Qin dynasty and that contributed to subsequent *Zhong Hua* cultural development in the following Han dynasty (220-206 BCE). Chinese written characters were adopted by Japan, Korea and Vietnam in the late Han dynasty (Chao, 1999). The Chinese dress system also became a prototype dress system for the neighboring countries, such as Japan and Korea. The term of “*han jen*” or “*han zhu*” emerged in the late Han dynasty because *Hua Xia* people were proud of the Han dynasty, which had distributed and spread Chinese culture to other countries (Chao, 1999). On the other hand, the term Han

itself reinforced the ethnocentric idea that *Zhong Hua* culture represented civilization and the center of the world. European ethnocentrism began to appear in the late Middle Ages (Horvath, 1972), but Chinese ethnocentrism had appeared thousands of years before and was embraced along with the development of *Zhong Hua* culture (Feuchtwang, 1993). This Chinese cultural superiority was not challenged until the middle of the nineteenth century when extensive Western contact occurred China (Feuchtwang, 1993).

Based on historical developments, three issues deserve attention in studying Chinese ethnicity. First, the term Chinese is ethnically and culturally conflated with *Zhong Hua*. *Zhong Hua* culture is oriented within the Han cultural discourse that Han culture is the center and the culture of other groups is a subset of *Zhong Hua* culture. *Zhong Hua* is a representative and general term that includes the diversities of culture in China. Second, Chinese ethnicity involves the interpretation and identification of those groups who became the political heirs of the *hua xia*, *Zhong Hua* or *han* culture. The third issue is the question of how the modern *hua xia*, *Zhong Hua* or *han* culture should be defined.

As in the past, Han cultural or ethnic and Chinese national identities are conflated together in Mainland China today (Brown, 2004). According to Brown (2004), this conflation can be easily seen linguistically. The term *Zhong Hua minzhu* refers to all the people of the Chinese nation, including overseas Chinese, no matter to which of the 56 officially recorded ethnic groups they belong to in China. The official language, Mandarin Chinese, is *hanyu* (Han's language). All ethnic groups are frequently mentioned as brother and sister in the officially multi-ethnic P.R.C., but Han people are called the big brothers who lead the way and offer guidance. According to Confucian principles, siblings in Han kinship are not equal; both sisters and younger brothers are subject to the authority of the oldest brother (Brown, 2004). Both R.O.C. and P.R.C. governments support the hegemony of "the oldest brother" by

promoting the Han cultural model for the Chinese nation (Brown, 2004).

When the R.O.C. government moved to Taiwan in 1949, it clearly positioned itself as the heir of *Zhong Hua* culture because the Communist Party in China was viewed as the renegade of traditional Chinese culture (Government, 2000a; Koumintang, 2000). The KMT government promoted Taiwan as a democratic modernized country embedded within *Zhong Hua* culture. Under this ideology, Confucian discourses became a fundamental part of the cultural curriculum in high schools. Taiwan soon significantly achieved the goal of economic development and modernization. The young generation, fostered by education modernization, propelled modern thinking and existentialism into the popular ideology (Government, 2000c). Therefore, while the Cultural Revolution occurred in Mainland China beginning in 1967, the R.O.C. initiated the *Zhong Hua* Cultural Renaissance Movements and tried to juxtapose traditional Chinese culture with the process of modernization and national development.

Since the early 1960s, while both the P.R.C. and R.O.C. claimed to espouse the “one China policy,” the R.O.C. began to face the question of who represented China in international diplomatic relations (Brown, 2004; Government, 2000b). After the P.R.C. replaced the R.O.C. in the United Nations Security Council in 1971, Taiwan gradually lost official diplomatic relations with many countries because the P.R.C. gained international recognition as the “legitimate” China; Taiwan was seen as part of China. As a result, Taiwan had to revise how to position itself in the world and locally from a cultural perspective. The cultural ideology of *Zhong Hua* culture centered in China also shifted to “*Zhong Hua* culture grounded in Taiwan.” (Government, 2000b).

In the 1990s, the ideas of “*Zhong Hua* culture grounded in Taiwan” quickly shifted to “Taiwan-oriented Han culture.” Cultural activities such as arts, literature, dance, music and folk theatre intensively reflected the innovations rooted in Taiwanese culture; in other words,

art groups tried to localize Han culture in Taiwan more than before. Meanwhile, localization was also a big trend in Taiwan's political activities. For example, in 1988, the government tried to promote more Taiwanese intellectuals by issuing a "localized policy" that increased the availability of government jobs for the earlier Chinese immigrants (*ben sheng jen*) at the expense of those who migrated with the R.O.C. government in 1949 (called *wai sheng jen*) (Brown, 2004). Former President Lee was the beneficiary of this policy. During his presidency, Lee actively claimed that Taiwan should go its own way instead of competing for representation of China. His famous attitude toward China was "state to state," that is, Taiwan is an independent country not a Chinese province (Brown, 2004). Lee issued a policy of "no rush but patient"<sup>5</sup> to restrain businessmen from investing in Mainland China (Myers, 1996).

The Democratic Progress Party (DPP) won the Taiwan presidential election in 2000. DPP not only had a long term relationship with the Taiwan Independent Movements (TIM) but also supports Lee's policy of remaining closed to China (Myers, 1996). In 2006, President Chen and the DPP party implicitly supported TIM and explicitly promoted "de-China-ization" through a series of political actions. For example, the government has replaced the term "Chinese history" with "national history" in high school history textbooks that treated "Chinese history" as part of world history rather than as part of Taiwan's history. In 2007, the government changed the names of all state-run institutions containing the term "China" to Taiwanese names (Osno, 2007). In one example, the post office went from *Zhong Hua* Post to Taiwan Post, even though 55% of Taiwanese did not support this change and the post office labor union also protested it (TVBS, 2007). The government insisted on

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<sup>5</sup> The original Chinese of "No rush but patient" is 借急用忍

such change despite the high expense, showing how important it was to the DPP government to eliminate the Taiwanese historical connection to China.

By re-interpreting Taiwanese history, the DPP government are promoting “Taiwanese” as a new ethnic group with its own political regime and cultural history, thereby promoting Taiwan’s complete independence from Mainland China. Overall, while the political conflicts and TIM ideology have created a division between the Taiwanese and Chinese ethnicities, in reality Taiwanese identity remains ambiguous and inconsistent.

Dress is one important means used to express ethnicity but scholars have rarely discussed the relationship between the *qipao* and Chinese ethnicity. *Qipao* is often assumed by researchers (Bao, 1998; Clark, 2000; Tsai, 1991; Wang, 1975; Xie, 2004; Yuan, 2000) to be a form of pan-Chinese ethnic dress without any further discussion of Chinese ethnicity. They proposed that the ethnic heritage of *qipao* came from the Qing or Manchu dynasty without discussing how a Manchu form of dress became a Han-oriented Chinese ethnic dress. From an ethnic perspective, *qipao* was significant because it was easily distinguishable as Chinese to foreigners, although Western style elements had been incorporated. The ethnicity of the *qipao* seems coherent when used to distinguish Chinese from non-Chinese. However, ethnicity is a fluid concept that involves a process of self-identification in addition to differentiation from others (Bon & Kiong, 1993). With this in mind, and considering the historical development of the *qipao* in a context of ethnic and political change, the question whether Chinese and Taiwanese identify with the *qipao* in the same way becomes very interesting.

In sum, Chinese ethnicity, rooted in the *zhong hua* culture, has been re-interpreted and redefined in both China and Taiwan. Political developments significantly impacted ethnic and cultural identification. In Mainland China, Chinese ethnicity is conflated with national

identity. In Taiwan, Chinese ethnicity has been redefined as “Taiwan-oriented Han culture” through a policy of “de-China-ization.” Some Taiwanese scholars have claimed that Taiwan’s history has enriched Taiwanese Han culture with ideas from other cultures, including the Netherlands, Japan and the Taiwanese native ethnic groups, thereby making Han Taiwanese more different from Han Chinese (Guao, 2004). They also contend that the Taiwanese language, a dialect of southeastern China, was the authentic Han language (Guao, 2004). Taiwanese identity has become ambivalent because as the Taiwanese interpret themselves to be the “authentic” heirs of Han culture (Guao, 2004) the political ideology creates differentiation from Mainland Chinese who are also heirs of Han culture. Cultural and ethnic identity relies on people’s self-identification, interpretation and negotiation with others, and identity is never fixed as solid. Therefore, it would be interesting to explore if the interpretation of the *qipao*, as ethnic dress and symbol of Chinese culture, reflects this ambivalent identity created by cultural and political influences.

### *Qipao, Political Influence and Nationalism*

Finnane (1996) selected Chinese female dress after 1912 to study the relationship between national politics and women’s fashion. She argued that Chinese women, in any clothes, have been a relatively subdued presence among symbols of the nation in China. The *qipao* in China, which appeared in the 1920s, was prohibited by Mao Zedong’s dress policy in the 1950s but was revitalized in the post-Mao 1980s, and Finnane uses this case to illustrate her arguments. She credits the New Cultural Movement and the May Fourth Movement with changing ideas of gender equality and challenging the idea of the traditional Confucian hierarchical female morality, which includes three states of women’s dependence and four female virtues (三從四德). According to Finnane, the early *qipao*

carried the meanings of this ideology yet appeared to be an androgynous form. Finnane also states that the 1930s *qipao* with a curved side seam was a result of the New Life Movement, which re-emphasized traditional female morality. The New Life Movement played a role in “redefining the boundary between male and female [and] was part of the process of sorting out the chaos into which Chinese society had descended” (Finnane, 1996, p.117).

Finnane (1996) also distinguished between folk dress (the two-piece garment worn in rural areas) and *qipao*, arguing that the R.O.C. government promoted the *qipao* as a national modern image but marginalized the folk dress of the underprivileged. In other words, according to Finnane, the R.O.C. government defined the proper image for the nation. Furthermore, Finnane argued that the Mao suit, as part of Mao Zedong’s sartorial policies, was similar in meaning to *qipao* in the 1920s because they both emphasized gender equality and resistance to foreign ideologies. Ironically, in the late 1970s, China opened its market, and the rapid development of the textiles industry created the need for fashion and clothes to represent China. The *qipao*, forbidden under Mao, was selected as national dress again (Zhang, 2002). Significantly, political powers played an important role in directing, eradicating, and revitalizing *qipao* practices. Therefore, Finnane concluded that a woman’s body is a metaphor for representing both tradition and nation.

Finnane’s (1996) study demonstrated the case that nationalism was an important factor affecting *qipao* practice and meanings but overlooked how political power has affected the Chinese dress system for centuries. Entwistle (2000) cited Bell’s study that compared European dress since the fourteenth century with traditional dress in China. Bell (1976) argued that there must have been variations in dress from dynasty to dynasty but that these would not be as dramatic as in Europe where fashionable dress was characterized by the logic of “change for change’s sake”(Entwistle, 2000, p.46). In actuality, the driving force of

Chinese dress change was mainly political concerns (Lee, 1993). New dynasties were initiated and announced with new clothing regulations and colors, *gai fu yi se* (改服易色) (Zhou & Gao, 1998). This system of change differs from the West's fashion logic and had long existed in Chinese history. Therefore, even though as China encountered the Western world and was defeated by Western military powers in the late nineteenth century, political ideology and nationalism continued to play a major role in the Chinese process of self-identification through dress.

Political powers have mediated Chinese gendered dress and women's appearance for centuries. However, even as the Chinese government promotes *qipao* to represent Chinese culture, young *qipao* wearers from China may be representing a different reality. Under the influence of Western fashion trends and after they have been alienated from this "old" culture for decades, do they really care about the traditional Chinese or Han-oriented cultural meanings embedded in the *qipao*? Have they unconsciously transferred the P.R.C. government's national discourse to their *qipao* practice?

### *Postmodern Expression Using Dress*

Postmodern theory is another perspective to use in examining the *qipao* in current globally fashionable dress practice. Postmodern aesthetic discourses promote the ideas of "play" and "pastiche" and introduce two artistic techniques, "bricolage" and "decentering" (Morgado, 1996). The purpose of "play" is for fun, not for any certain purpose. "Pastiche" refers to black parody; that is, an attempted parody, but one that is lacking in the subtle twist of meaning that provides the substance of genuine parody (Morgado, 1996). "Bricolage" refers to the integration of incongruous elements and making do with unconnected elements available (Morgado, 1996). "Decentering" is employed to challenge modernist assumptions

of the hierarchies (Morgado, 1996). Therefore, postmodern aesthetic expressions, in general, do not emphasize the hierarchy difference between the “high” and “low.” Instead, every aesthetic form has its own uniqueness and values. In addition, the pastiche or bricolage techniques have broken the modern coding system. The relationships between objects and meanings become ambiguous or ambivalent because the initial meanings of an object become unclear after the object is mixed with other elements (Harvey, 1990).

For several years, postmodern bricolage can be easily found in fashion design trends. While investigating *qipao* practices in daily life, the researcher cannot ignore this trend and its influence on an individual’s strategy of adopting the *qipao* for daily activities. This would help address the following questions: Do individual Chinese or Taiwanese participants adopt a postmodern expression strategy to present the *qipao*? If yes, what meanings are generated through the postmodern expression of the *qipao*?

### *Statement of Questions*

As this literature review has shown, the historical background and style development of the *qipao* has been well-recorded and -discussed. However, previous studies tended to focus on the *qipao*’s history in one specific area: Taiwanese researchers have focused on *qipao* history in Taiwan, Chinese researchers never mention the *qipao* in Taiwan, and foreign researchers have had a tendency to adopt information coming primarily from Hong Kong.

Previous studies have scarcely touched on *qipao*’s cultural meanings from a human agency point of view. From the time of the Chinese diaspora in the 1950s, Chinese and Taiwanese people have each encountered different political, economic, and social environments, and *qipao* in these two areas also faced different fates. Researchers have

indicated that the *qipao* has close connections to the process of Chinese modernization and the creation of nation-states, for example *qipao* was prohibited as the Communist party dismantled the traditional Chinese value system in establishing a new China.. While the trends of globalization and participation in the Western fashion system are demanding new images of China, the nation-state again played an important role in reactivating the more contemporary *qipao*. Conversely, wearing a *qipao* daily gradually faded out in Taiwan because of intensive labor involvement, high production costs and the discomfort of wearing such a garment. However, global fashion is an undeniable factor affecting *qipao* practice and so, more recently, fashion trends have seemingly brought the *qipao* back to Taiwan..

While the complexity of global interactions and the re-emergence of the *qipao* in China and Taiwan may share some common factors with the general revival of *qipao*, the question that remained to be answered was if young Chinese and Taiwanese, with different cultural trajectories, appear to interpret the *qipao* differently. Therefore, this study was designed to explore how cultural structure might impact the interpretations of *qipao* by young Chinese and Taiwanese in the United States.. The research questions are listed below:

1. How do participants perceive the *qipao* as daily wear? What are participants' experiences with wearing a *qipao* and learning about *qipao*?
2. How do participants define *qipao* styles? What is "traditional *qipao*" in participants' minds?
3. How have historical meanings of the *qipao* been embedded in the young generation's perceptions of *qipao*? Do they know the historical meanings? Do the two groups (Chinese and Taiwanese) have different understanding of *qipao*?
4. How do participants identify *qipao*'s ethnicity?

5. How do migrant Chinese and Taiwanese students in the United States associate the *qipao* with their national identity?
6. How do the two groups (Chinese and Taiwanese) of participants perceive the concept of “*qipao* chic” created by Western fashion designers?

### **Background of the Theory of Practice and Questions of Validity**

In order to discover the multi-dimensional cultural meanings of the *qipao*, this study adopted Bourdieu's theory of practice to investigate *qipao* from a systematic perspective and look at *qipao* as an agent. The study also examined how the individual practices of the *qipao* are situated in the structural system.

Bourdieu (1989) proposed his theory of practice from criticizing traditional social science that often oscillates between two seemingly incompatible points of view: objectivism and subjectivism. Bourdieu criticized both subjectivist and objectivist perspectives for not providing sufficient explanation of social reality (Bourdieu, 1977). Subjectivist knowledge, in Bourdieu's sense, refers to a broad range of micro perspectives, including Sartre's free will, as an approach to the problem of practice, and micro approaches to the study of human interaction, such as ethnomethodology and phenomenology (Bourdieu, 1977; 1989). Bourdieu (1977) refuted phenomenological knowledge because it is based on the truth of primary experience using a series of common-sense constructs and because subjectivist scholars pre-select and pre-interpret the world based on their daily life experience. Thus, the constructs of subjectivist social science are constructs of the second degree made by the actors in the social scene (Bourdieu 1989).

Following this logic, Bourdieu criticized traditional informant-centered and observation approaches in anthropology. He first argued that the researcher as an observer has no place in the system he observes and has no need to make a place there; therefore, the subjectivist researcher is inclined to adopt a hermeneutic representation of practices. This approach leads the researcher to reduce all social relations to communicative relationships, and more precisely, to the decoding operation (Bourdieu, 1977). For the informant-centered ethnomethodological approach, Bourdieu doubts that the informant is able to provide all the

detailed information for which the researcher is looking. Informants tend to either provide information matched to normative constructs or provide information matched to researcher's expectations. Therefore, the truth is really constructed through language interpretation between informants and researchers. A researcher easily falls into the hermeneutic circle. The only ways out of this circle would be to find simple data on which everyone agrees, to invent a neutral language to describe the data, or to do both (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1987).

Rabinow and Sullivan (1987) maintain a similar argument regarding interpretive perspectives. They contend that a good research explanation is one that makes sense of behavior. What makes sense is a function of one's readings of behaviors based on one's understanding. Subjectivist approaches focus too narrowly on actors' accounts but overlook the idea that individuals construct their understanding of the social world from particular positions in a structural social space (Bourdieu, 1977). Since there is an unequal distribution of resources for reality construction, not all actors are equally situated to understand and act upon the world in a similar way (Swartz, 1997). However, Bourdieu still thinks that subjectivism is useful because it draws attention to the ways in which agents, at an every day level, negotiate with structural norms or beliefs and decide how to think and behave.

The most well-known objectivist perspective is structuralism, which contains structuralism and semiotics in a broad sense as they share common assumptions that there are structural laws of signification governing all forms of human cultural production, interaction and communication (Surber, 1998). Structuralists believe that cultural meanings are systematically determined. Meaning cannot be uncovered unless a researcher uses a scientific analysis of a sign system, such as a language model. Structuralism is useful in understanding how the cultural and social structure influences people to make sense of their

world; it is also helpful for understanding the structure of an object that makes it meaningful to users of the object within culture.

Bourdieu took three insights from structuralism that influenced his notion of cultural field and habitus (Webb et al., 2002). First, structuralist approaches to practice begin with the premise that people more or less reproduce the objective structures of the society, culture, or community in which they live. These reproductions are often articulated in ideas, values, rituals, and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1977; Webb et al., 2002). Second, a sign system determines how people perceive the world, which means that the reality is both produced and delimited by whatever sign system a society has (Webb et al., 2002). For example, in contemporary society, the computer has become a common instrument which people in the early twentieth century could never have imagined. In the contemporary virtual world, young people are accustomed to reading, thinking, and writing electronically, which influences their perception of the real world. Third, Bourdieu also borrowed the notion of relational thinking from structuralism (Swartz, 1997). This means that signs do not have meanings until they are placed in relationships with their own or other sign systems. In other words, reality is not substantial and fixed but is instead fluid and dependent on the relational conditions of people and sign systems (Bourdieu, 1989; Swartz, 1997). For example, people understand Coca-Cola is a different drink from Welch's grape juice, but we also know that Coca-Cola and Pepsi offer the same type of drink in different brands.

Several drawbacks to using the subjectivist approach do exist; for instance, the approach puts too much emphasis on structural meaning and overlooks individual actors' intentions and actions (Ortner, 1984). Similarly, the approach reduces the complexity of culture into categorical concepts (Schwandt, 1994) and ignores where the structure comes from and how the structure is maintained (Ortner, 1984). In addition, applying a language

model of linear signifier and signified relation to analyze the cultural meaning of dress is problematic because the meaning of dress is not unidimensional and static (Davis, 1994; McCracken, 1986). Traditional dress cannot be meaningful without actors' practices, which involve individual knowledge and selection of that traditional dress and the feedback of using that dress gained from social interactions. Therefore, as Hall (1997) described, objects have their own systems of representation because they use some element to stand for or represent what we want to say, to express or to communicate a thought, concept or feeling. But this does not mean that the meaning of the object, or the *qipao*, is represented after the style is formed. Instead, the multi-dimensional meanings of the *qipao* are produced or constructed through the interactions between daily practice and systematic constraints.

In order to think beyond the subjectivist and objectivist perspectives, Bourdieu creates the concepts of "habitus" and "field." Habitus is a system of values and dispositions that are learned from culture and which stay with social actors across contexts. "Field" is a structured social or cultural setting in which habitus operates (Bourdieu, 1989). Society contains many fields, such as the education field or sport field, and each field has its own structural constraints and individual interpretations. From Bourdieu's perspective, the field of fashion has its own players, responsible for making, marketing or merchandising clothing. This field can be mapped out in terms of relations between particular key institutions and agents (Lipovetsky, 2002). *Qipao* is situated in historical and cultural trajectories, but it cannot be excluded from the modern fashion system and fashion practice. Therefore, I studied the cultural meanings of the *qipao* from practice theory's point of view.

## Theory of Practice

The fundamental concept of practice theory is to study culture from a dynamic relationship between “how the structure or the system constrains human practices” and “how the practice impacts the system” (Ortner, 1984, p. 153). There are various approaches to the theory of practice. Symbolic interaction theory in sociology (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959) is one example. Symbolic interactionism is built on the claims that “social organization is a framework inside of which acting units develop their action. Structural features such as culture, social system, social stratification or social roles set conditions for their action but do not determine their action” (Blumer, 1962, p.152). However, the newer practice theory based on Bourdieu’s ideas contends that “the system” has very powerful, even determining, effects upon human action and the shaping of events (Bourdieu, 1977; Ortner, 1984). Therefore, according to Ortner (1984), the main interest of practice theory is not only to emphasize individual perceptions and practice but also to incorporate certain questions—Where does the system come from? How is the system produced and reproduced? How has the system changed in the past or will be changed in the future?

Practice theory assumes that social actors are constrained by the structure and that these constraints will unconsciously shape their actions. The actors’ actions/practices will in return reinforce the structure. This is what Bourdieu calls the “logic of practice” (Bourdieu, 1977). To explore this logic of practice, Bourdieu uses the term “habitus” to discuss the relationship between the structure and practice. “Habitus” is a system of values and dispositions that are learned from culture and which stay with social actors across contexts. A habitus is durable and transportable (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu believes that knowledge, thoughts, and actions are constructed through habitus. Social actors carry certain attitudes as well as values from their cultural and social dispositions, and these dispositions constrain

and naturalize their practices. In other words, the regularity provides evidence of reasonableness and common sense. For example, Americans eat meats such as beef, pork, chicken, and turkey, but they do not normally eat dogs or cats. Most will not eat dog meat even if they travel to an Asian country, because Americans carry the habitus that dogs and cats are close friends to humans and do not belong to the meat category. Therefore, practice theory is not an alternative objectivist approach to inquiry about social reality but incorporates the key concepts of structure and human action or practice and the dialectical relationship, repetitious and changing, between the two.

Practice theory also emphasizes how human practices reproduce and maintain the cultural system (William, 1999). In Bourdieu's mind (1989), habitus is not an innate capacity but derives from the class-specific experience of socialization in family and peer groups. Habitus results from early socialization experience in which the objective external structures are internalized and transferred into individual subjective dispositions. While social actors acquire actions or practices, the habitus sets structural limits or the reason of actions, and reproduces the objective structure.

However, the social actor does not always passively consume habitus. Habitus can be re-oriented toward practice. The process of change or modification of habitus is often slow and gradual. Some habitus are more durable than others. For example, in the middle nineteenth century, Victorian fashion used to be the standard for women's beauty in North America and Europe. Wearing tight corsets and heavy long skirts was perceived as proper and modest, even though tight corsets and heavy skirts were a disadvantage to women's mobility and health. This practice in America was first challenged by a feminist group in 1851 (Fischer, 2001). However, it took many decades (over a half century) for women to abandon wearing corsets as daily wear (Fischer, 2001). In a similar logic, the cultural

meanings of the *qipao* cannot be alienated from the habitus or the pre-dispositions of the *qipao* that are established through historical development and national operations.

Bourdieu (1989) further discussed the dynamic relationship between habitus, practices and structure by introducing the concept of “field.” Field is a structured social setting in which habitus operates (Bourdieu, 1989). Instead of using population, groups, organizations, or any other properties to define the field, the concept of field is based on a relational mode of reasoning (Bourdieu, 1989; Swartz, 1997). The field can be thought of as a structural space in which each individual occupies a certain space or position and access to certain resources or capital. When individuals share more common properties, individuals have similar capital, so the relationships among these individuals in the social sphere are closer than with those who do not share common properties (Bourdieu, 1989). The field also denotes arenas of production, circulation, and appropriation of goods such as knowledge, status, or competitive positions held by individuals (Swartz, 1997). For example, the intellectual field refers to a system of institutions, organizations, and markets in which symbolic producers, such as writers and academics, compete for symbolic capital (Swartz, 1997). In a similar sense, the field of fashion includes a structural system, including designers, models, fashion institution, media, social actors and the rules of the game. For Bourdieu, the fashion field can be characterized by the struggle between dominating and dominated actors and new entrants (Bourdieu, 1993). The struggle for domination functions as the "motor" of the field with an outcome of gaining the symbolic power to legitimate norms, in the case of the fashion field, the norms that determine the realm of aesthetic appropriateness and logic (Bourdieu, 1993).

Bourdieu conceptualizes modern society as an array of relatively autonomous but structurally homologous fields of production, circulation, and consumption of various forms

of cultural and material resources (Swartz, 1997, p. 9). Field analysis pays attention to the institutional aspects of individual and group action. Therefore, analyzing practice means a researcher cannot avoid the analysis of field, which should be viewed as a whole and integrated structure without division, such as superstructure and base. Meanwhile, through the analysis of habitus and field, Bourdieu emphasizes the inequality of structure and resources (capital) of the field that causes significant hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1977).

Consequently, in field analysis the researcher does not just interpret the social background or context but also pays attention to the social conditions of struggle that shape cultural production (Swartz, 1997).

For example, the sport field values competition and fair play. However, two scholars (Warner, 1997; Webb et al., 2002) have examined the rules, designations, conventions and institutions in the sports field and find that individuals with more capital in the sports field often transform their values into institutional regulation, part of the structure of the field, and this constrains the practices. Warner (1997) studied women participating in the 1900-1920 Olympic games. She reported that the number of women athletes was much fewer than the number of male athletes attending Olympic games in the early twentieth century. Two major reasons for this was the social habitus that women would lose their femininity while attending a serious sport competition, and that women did not have proper wear for public sport competition, especially in water sports and gymnastics competition. Warner (1997) explained that while women stepped into water in the mid-nineteenth century, the problem of wet cloth clinging to the female body had troubled society (p. 58). That is, society viewed that revealing a woman's body figure was immodest, but it was acceptable for men to wear a brief garment to enter the swimming competition. Therefore, the modesty factor played a key role in America to constrain women from entering swimming

competitions. Sport institutions such as the American Athletic Union (AAU) and the U.S. Olympics Committee not only did not vote for or support female athletes registering for the competition but also limited other sport clubs from holding women's swimming competitions. James E. Sullivan, the secretary and later president of AAU, with his power in the field, strongly guarded this regulation without any compromise until 1914 when he died. After his death, one sport club held a 50-yard women's race exhibition without AAU support. Women finally were allowed to enter swimming competition.

Applying field analysis to restate this example, female and male athletes held different positions in the sport field. Female athletes had much less sport capital than the male athletes. A male AAU president had the power to determine that female athletes could not participate in the swimming competition. When the structure of the American sport field changed after Sullivan's death, female athletes finally were allowed to enter the competition. The habitus, that women's swimsuits must have skirts to maintain modesty, also gradually transformed. Warner quoted a 90-year-old female Olympic swimmer, Aileen Riggins, after she visited the Olympia swimming trials in 1996. Riggins reported "I wrote down a list of 50 things that swimmers have today that we didn't, everything from starting blocks to weights to suits (Warner, 1997, p. 66).

To summarize, the key concepts of practice theory include field structures, actors' positions and power relationships. Practice theory also seeks to explain the genesis, reproduction, and change of form and meaning of a given social/cultural whole (Ortner, 1984). Even though practice theory has an immense range of scope to study, the major approach is to study human practice from a political standpoint. Following this logic, the cultural meanings of the *qipao* have to be discovered through an analysis between the

“individual practice of wearing or choosing *qipao*” and “what has constrained individual understanding of the *qipao*.”

### **Semiological Analysis of Cultural Meanings**

The objective semiological analysis was adopted as an analysis tool for this study. The current trend of postmodern dress expression was considered while analyzing individual selection or wearing the *qipao*. The roots of semiology and semiotics can be traced back to the Swiss linguist Saussure and the American philosopher Pierce, who published their works in the twentieth century. Saussure claimed that semiology is the study of “the life of signs within society” (Kurzweil, 1996). Semiology takes the model of language as its departure and expands to a system of symbols which include image, dress, artifact, and commodity (Surber, 1998). Semiologists view signs or symbols as communication vehicles. Culture is a pan-linguistic phenomenon and is structured, just as language is structured. Therefore, cultural meanings can be uncovered through systematic analysis of rule-bearing signs.

Semiology has evolved in various ways. Traditional semiology, influenced by Saussure (1916/1974), assumes first that all human activities involve the use of signs. Signs are the union of the signified (a concept) and signifier through which that concept is manifested (Barnard, 1996; Surber, 1998). Second, the relation between signifier and signified is not natural, but is arbitrarily connected. The regulated rule to link the signifier and signified is a code that is a set of shared rules systematically constituted (Barnard, 1996; Mick, 1986). For example, in America, the color pink (signifier) is for baby girls (signified) and blue (signifier) for baby boys (signified). Pink and blue have no natural association with gender, but the culturally-constituted code makes people link a baby’s gender to these colors. Third,

although the relation between signifier and signified is completely arbitrary, specific signs can have a determinate meaning by virtue of the stable structural features of the semiotic system to which they belong (Surber, 1998). For example, in the Christian world, both baby boys and girls wear white gowns during the baptismal ceremony. Baptism is thought of as a process of purification, which is represented through the white gown (signifier) with the meaning of purity (signified). In this case, religious belief determines the meaning of a white gown. People from a non-Christian culture may not understand why a boy would wear a white gown.

Roland Barthes (1972), building on Saussure, proposed the concept of the tiered sign system. Barthes explained that the relation between signifier and signified was fundamental for the first level of the sign system, the surface meaning or denotation. A secondary system is built on the first system, and it implicitly connotes additional meanings informally associated with a sign or (Barthes, 1972; "Fitting," 2004; Surber, 1998). More importantly, Barthes emphasized the relationships between the tiered sign system and hidden ideology. He proposed that cultural value, status or ideology was situated in the second or higher level of sign systems.

Barthes, in his *Mythologies*, used a tripartite matrix and several examples to discuss how the system of signs works (1972). One of his examples was an image from the cover of a French magazine. The photo showed an African soldier saluting a French flag. The lines, colors and shapes of the picture served as signifier denoting the first level of meaning in the sense of national allegiance. The whole picture, with signs embedded in signs, also served as a signifier and connoted the patriotic notion that France was a great empire and all her sons, without any color discrimination, faithfully served under her flag (Barthes, 1972). But, from Barthes' point of view, the most relevant thing about the photo was the sign of

allegiance by an African in the French army. This sign bore many connotations of colonial subservience and imperialism. In other words, the picture, as a mythology, encapsulated the “colonialism message,” but all its connotations appeared as nationalism or patriotism. Overall, the main points of Barthes analysis of the picture can be summarized thus: 1) a mythology is a second-level semiological system; 2) a mythology is linked to the ideological system of a society or culture; and 3) the ideology is uncovered through a systematic connotation analysis. For the *qipao*, the style elements of the *qipao* function as signs. This study investigate if there was any code system guiding Chinese and Taiwanese’s perceptions of the *qipao* that might reflect *qipao*’s structural meanings at denotational and connotational levels.

Barnard (1996) applied Saussure’s concepts of “syntagmatic difference” and “paradigmatic difference” to analyze the structure of dress as a communication system. Barnard (1996) explained that syntagmatic difference has to do with the signifying sequences or wholes that can be constructed using signs, while paradigmatic difference has to do with the sets from which signs are selected in order to form those sequences or wholes (p.89). A restaurant menu is a useful example to understand these two types of difference. The syntagmatic difference is the difference among courses, while the paradigmatic difference is the possible selection of items within a course. Western Europeans often start their meal with soup while the Chinese like to have soup at the end. This difference is syntagmatic and it is culturally structured. In Western culture, one can have soup or a salad as an appetizer but have a dessert at the end of a meal. This is a paradigmatic difference. *Qipao* may have elements of design with both syntagmatic and paradigmatic functions.

### **Conceptual Framework for this Study**

Based on the literature review, we can say that the cultural field of the *qipao* is constructed by individual actors, historical heritage, the fashion system, and the operations of nationality or Chinese ethnicity. Individual practice of the *qipao* is a synthetical result of how the *qipao* has been defined historically, what *qipao* knowledge the individual has, and how the *qipao* meets the individual's current daily fashionable aesthetic. Individual decisions related to *qipao* selection reflect the individual clothing habitus which exists in both appearance management through social interaction and in the individual desires for showing individuality. Therefore, through the analysis of an individual selection or lack of selection of *qipao* for daily wear, we can understand how the fashion system interacts with individual perceptions or meanings of the *qipao* as traditional ethnic dress. We can also understand the reasons for the selection or lack of selection in current society. In addition, semiological analysis will be a useful method to discover the structured *qipao* meanings inherited from the past and those shaped by the present. Semiological analysis will make the unconscious habitus apparent from systematical analysis of *qipao* style elements (the signs).

In short, this study investigated the cultural meanings of the *qipao* first from the analysis of the individual practice of selecting or not selecting *qipao* as part of daily wear. According to practice theory, each element in the field is always dependent on the others. Therefore, in analyzing the individual practice of *qipao* selection, this study also attempted to de-construct the structural influences related to how participants assign meaning to the *qipao*. Finally, this study also investigated the dynamic relationships or presence of any dominant relationships among elements. The diagram below shows the conceptual framework for this study.

## The Cultural Field of *Qipao*

<b>Habitus discovered from semiological analysis</b>	Cultural meanings carried from history: How has <i>qipao</i> historical knowledge been embedded into the individual's <i>qipao</i> knowledge? Or how does an individual incorporate pre-existing knowledge to select <i>qipao</i> ?
	Social constraints: What is the proper situation for wearing <i>qipao</i> ?
	National identity: What is the relationship between <i>qipao</i> and nationality?
	Fashion system: How is an individual's practice of <i>qipao</i> influenced by the global fashion trend?

## Individual Practice of the *Qipao*

Identify, select and use the *qipao*

## CHAPTER 4: METHOD

In-depth interviews were conducted to examine *qipao* meanings generated by social actors. Along with the analysis of actor-centered meaning from interview data, the researcher also incorporated a structural analysis of the Chinese and Taiwanese cultural environments to reflect the multi-dimensional meanings of the *qipao*.

The goal of in-depth interviews is to explore a topic and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (Esterberg, 2002). Therefore, the central purpose of the interview is to engage in dialogue with participants to elicit their descriptions of, experiences with, and interpretations of the *qipao*. During the interviews, the researcher listened carefully to the participants' responses and followed their lead. The researcher maintained a neutral role and encouraged participants to express their thoughts in their own words. However, the researcher gave an overall direction to the interview with a set of semi-structured questions and three sets of pictures to guide the respondent to important issues. The researcher probed and followed up relevant topics based on each interviewee's responses.

### Participants

The target participants were Chinese and Taiwanese women who were born after 1976, the year after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) ended in Mainland China (the P.R.C.). Because childhood environments and education affect people's cultural capital and perceptions of the world, the target participants were women under the age of 30, who were working on or had earned bachelor's degrees. Chinese and Taiwanese students studying in the U.S.A. have similar educational backgrounds and may share similar worldviews because they have chosen the same country for their overseas studies. Therefore, international

students from China and Taiwan provided a convenience sample.

A snowball sampling strategy was used to recruit participants. The researcher also posted a notice asking for volunteers from both the Chinese and the Taiwanese student associations on websites at a Midwestern university in the U.S.A. Fourteen students agreed to be interviewed: seven Chinese and seven Taiwanese. One of the Taiwanese participants had left Taiwan for Canada when she was in high school, so she had limited knowledge of the *qipao*. Her long-term overseas study experience did not meet the criteria of the study that the participant was born and earned a bachelor's degree in Taiwan or China. Therefore, interview data from seven Chinese students and only six Taiwanese students were valid for further data analysis.

The participants ranged in age from 24 to 30 years old (Table 6). Five participants were married; two planned to get married within a month after the interview, and the other six were single. All participants had earned a bachelors degree from their home country. Thirteen participants were graduate students, while two Taiwanese participants were attending an English program and one Chinese participant had just been accepted into a graduate program. To keep the data confidential, the researcher assigned a fictitious name to all participants starting with the letter C or T to indicate participants from China or Taiwan.

All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese and tape recorded. Most of the interviews were held on campus while two interviews were held in participants' homes and one interview was conducted off campus. Each interview was 70 to 105 minutes long.

Table 6 Demographic Information of Participants

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Degree/Major
Chinese	Clu	27	M Graduate/Communication
	Cgao	24	U Graduate/Biology Engineer
	Cwu	26	U/M Graduate/Chemistry
	Cch	26	M Graduate/Sociology
	Cgu	27	U Graduate/Industrial and manufacturing systems
	Cwei	25	U Graduate/Landscape architecture
	Czh	26	M Just enrolled in Graduate/Textiles and Clothing
Taiwanese	Tch	30	M Graduate/Hotel Management
	Twu	26	M Bachelor/ESL program
	Tlin	28	U Graduate/Material Science and Engineering
	Tpo	28	U Bachelor/ESL program
	Tlo	26	U Graduate/Textiles and Clothing
	Than	28	U/M Graduate/Architecture

Marital status: M= married U= unmarried U/M= married after the interview

### Interview Questions

The interview questions are organized according to three larger themes (Appendix A). The first theme is the participants' perceptions of the *qipao*'s stylistic elements and design motifs and their purchases and wearing of the *qipao*. The second theme is the participants' cultural knowledge of the *qipao*: its history, traditional style, and its association with Chinese culture. The third theme probes the participant's perspectives of western-designed *qipao* and their opinions of Western women who wear *qipao*. These three themes were covered in order, as much as participant responses allowed, during the interviews.

Three sets of images were used to facilitate data collection (see Table 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 20 in Chapter 5). The images printed in this dissertation have been modified using Photoshop to mask identity of models for copyright purposes. Except for the first set of 12 images which were shown to participants with faces and backgrounds masked, the full images with facial details unmasked were shown to the participants during the interviews.

The first set of images (see Table 9, 9-1, 9-2, 10, 10-2 and 10-2, Chapter 5, pp.129-137) is of women from different historical time periods wearing *qipao*. These images enabled the researcher to investigate a participant's perception of the *qipao*'s silhouette and how they distinguished a traditional from a modern *qipao*. Twelve *qipao* made of different kinds of fabric were included in the first set of images. Among the 12 images of historic *qipao* was one calf-length *qipao*. The *qipao* dated from the late 1910s is an ankle-length *qipao*. The *qipao* from the 1920s covers the knees and shows Western elements, including a leaf-shaped hemline and set-in sleeves. The *qipao* from the early 1930s has a silhouette similar to the *qipao* from the late 1920s, but the length reaches to top of the calf, and the bodice has flared sleeves. Two *qipao* from the mid-1930s are floor length; one is loosely fitted with a curved waistline and the other has a looser waistline. The loose silhouette was the most popular

silhouette in the 1940s. The *qipao* from the late 1950s is calf-length with a form-fitted silhouette, and the *qipao* from the early 1960s has a form-fitted silhouette with tapered hemline at knee length. A loosely fitted *qipao* with figure showing and above-calf length was the popular daily wear *qipao* in Taiwan in the 1970s. Another *qipao* from 1980s Taiwan is knee-length and has a form-fitted silhouette. Two current *qipao* collected from the Dong Fang *Qipao* website in China have a form-fitted silhouette; one is ankle length and the other has a miniskirt.

The first set of images was modified by Photoshop software to erase the background and facial features to make them neutral contributions to the stimuli. This group of images was not shown to participants until they had answered the first set of questions. These 12 images were mounted separately and randomly assigned numbers. The images were shown to participants all at one time while they talked about their definition and perceptions of the *qipao*. The 12 images were shown to participants in different random orders for each participant so that they would pay attention to the silhouette and not evaluate the silhouette based on historical ordering. The random ordering also eliminated order effects across participants.

Another 12 *qipao* images showing various fabrics and patterns then were shown to participants all at one time while they talked about their definition and perceptions of the *qipao* fabric type and pattern and when and where it was proper to wear particular *qipao* (situational appropriateness).

The second set of images is of women wearing *qipao*, collected from magazines or websites. Four images showed American and European celebrities wearing *qipao*, while ten images were of Chinese celebrities and eight images of unknown women wearing *qipao*. Images showing *qipao* used for different occasions, uniforms, performances and for fun are

also included in this set. All images were shown to participants in different random orders to elicit their comments.

The third set of images is of *qipao* selected from four European designer collections. According to Leshkowich and Jones (2003) and the website *Style.com/Online Home of Vogue & W* (Mower, 2002a, 2002b, 2004; “Runway Review for Christian Dior Fa97,” 1997), John Galliano used *qipao* from 1930s Shanghai as design inspiration for his 1997 fall collection. Roberto Cavalli and Miu Miu’s designer, Miuccia Prada, mixed *qipao* elements to create part of their 2003 spring collection. Yves Saint Laurent’s designer, Tom Ford, used the theme of chinoiserie for his 2004 fall collection. Therefore, four to six *qipao*-like garments and a one-piece garment with at least one *qipao* style element were selected from each of the five designer collections to investigate the participants’ perception of Western-designed *qipao*.

### **Analysis and Trustworthiness**

All interviews were conducted in Chinese. The research questions were translated into Chinese and were cross-translated for accuracy by a Taiwanese doctoral student who is fluent in both Mandarin and English. All interview data were transcribed in Mandarin and then translated into English. A doctoral student who is proficient in both Mandarin and English proofread the translated transcriptions. When a transcript included Chinese slang or other cultural idioms or sayings, such as “black earth,” then it was double-checked by a member of the research committee who is proficient in both languages.

To analyze the data, the researcher followed the grounded theory analysis strategy proposed by Strauss (1987). At first, the researcher randomly selected two transcriptions from both the Chinese and Taiwanese groups and searched them for themes or concepts that

emerged from the data (Strauss, 1987). These concepts or themes were organized into major themes, and a taxonomy was then created to develop a coding guide (Appendix C). These provisional themes were expanded as more interview transcripts were examined, and the coding guide was revised accordingly.

At the second stage, the researcher applied the thematic codes to all transcripts. During this process, the researcher continually revised the coding guide to encompass all emergent themes or concepts. To enhance trustworthiness, a second coder who was a doctoral candidate from the Textiles and Clothing program checked half of the coded transcripts for agreement. Six transcripts, three from the Chinese and three from the Taiwanese groups, were checked. According to Holsti (1969), inter-coder reliability is calculated as percentage of agreements or the number of agreements divided by the sum of the number of agreements plus the number of disagreements. A total of 952 codes were examined; the second coder disagreed with 45 coding decisions made by the researcher. Therefore, the inter-coder reliability is  $(952-45)/952 = 95.27\%$ . The two coders negotiated the disagreements and resolved the discrepancies.

In the next stage of analysis, the researcher examined the connections among concept categories to achieve a larger sense of thematic relationships. Then the researcher compared these themes across all participants to find similarities and differences. At this stage, the researcher used binary comparison schemes to examine post hoc concepts and to compare differences across groups (Taiwanese vs. Chinese).

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Several themes have emerged from the data analysis. In this chapter, I report the general information about *qipao* usage: the numbers of the participants who had worn *qipao* before, the numbers of *qipao* owned and when or for what situations the *qipao* was worn. Then, I discuss what *qipao* means to participants. The meanings of the *qipao* can be found in how the concept of “Chinese” is associated with *qipao*, how participants differentiate the *qipao* from other types of garments, how participants use and perceive the *qipao* in daily activities, and how the embedded political and cultural ideology affects the presentation and meanings of *qipao*.

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section reports how participants perceive *qipao* as traditional, ethnic and national dress. The second section discusses how participants differentiate *qipao* from other types of dress, how they define *qipao* based on its physical characteristics, and the relationship between women’s bodies and *qipao*. The third section covers how participants use *qipao* in daily or social activities and why participants are not willing to wear *qipao* on a daily basis. The final section discusses how cultural ideology shapes *qipao* practices, as reflected through participants’ use of Chinese adjectives, and how participants discuss *qipao* based on their learned *qipao* knowledge.

### The Numbers of Wearers and *Qipao* Purchases

One of the Chinese and two of the Taiwanese participants had never worn *qipao*, while one Taiwanese participant only tried on a *qipao* in a store (Table 7 and Table 7-1). About 86% of Chinese participants had worn *qipao*, but only 50% of Taiwanese participants had. One Taiwanese and one Chinese participant had worn *qipao* before coming to the U.S.A. for a school or class activity, while the other five Chinese and two Taiwanese participants had

worn *qipao* to a wedding or other social occasion. The two Chinese participants who were married and the one who was engaged had worn or planned to wear *qipao* for their wedding ceremony or party, but the two married and one engaged Taiwanese participants did not or would not wear it for their weddings. None of the Taiwanese participants had purchased a custom-made *qipao*, in contrast to four Chinese participants (57%) who had made such a purchase. Conversely, none of Chinese participants had received *qipao* as a gift from an elder member of the family, such as a mother or grandmother, while two Taiwanese participants had inherited *qipao* from their mother or grandmother. Chinese participants owned an average of two *qipao*, but Taiwanese participants own less than one on average. One Chinese participant, Cgao, is an impulse *qipao* buyer. She bought a *qipao* without thinking about when she would wear it or if she even needed it. She buys them because they are pretty, and she owns at least five. Cwu from China thought that every woman should have at least one *qipao*.

Table 7 Wearing the Qipao –Chinese Group

Participant		Wear <i>qipao</i> before?		At what occasion	# of <i>qipao</i> owned	Purchase, gift or borrowing <i>qipao</i>
		Y	N			
Chinese	Clu	1		Wedding party in China; CMCE	1	CM <i>qipao</i>
	Cgao	1		Birthday party/Cultural event; CMCE	5	Impulsive <i>qipao</i> buyer; One CM and four RTW <i>qipao</i>
	Cwu	1		Social party in U.S.A.; Go out for shopping in Shanghai; CMCE; Wedding banquet in U.S.A.	Over 5	All CM <i>qipao</i>
	Cch		1	Only wear a <i>qipao</i> -like garment	0	Would consider buying a CM <i>qipao</i> if the cost is less than U.S.\$100
	Cgu	1		Cultural event	0	Borrow from a friend
	Cwe	1		School activity	0	Borrow from the school
	Czh	1		Wedding; Cultural event	3	CM <i>qipao</i>
	<b>Sub tot</b>	<b>6</b> <b>86%</b>	<b>1</b> <b>14%</b>			

\*CMCE =Chinese Model team performing for a Cultural Event, such as Chinese New Year.

\*RTW = Ready-to-wear

\*CM= Custom-made

Table 7-1 *Wearing the Qipao-Taiwanese Group*

Participant		Wear <i>qipao</i> before?		At what occasion	#of <i>qipao</i> owned	Purchase, gift or borrowing <i>qipao</i>
		Y	N			
Taiwanese	Tch	1		Cultural event	0	Borrow from a friend
	Twu	1		Class activity	2	One inherited from mother; asked a friend to buy a RTW <i>qipao</i> from China but turned into a gift from the friend
	Tlin	1		Halloween party	2	Gift from grandmother
	Tpo		1		0	
	Tlo		1	Try on <i>qipao</i> at the store while accompanying a friend to purchase <i>qipao</i>	0	
	THan		1		0	
	<b>Sub tot</b>	<b>3</b> (50%)	<b>3</b> (50%)			

\*CMCE =Chinese Model team performing for a Cultural Event, such as Chinese New Year.

\*RTW = Ready-to-wear

\*CM= Custom-made

## Part I: Chinese as a Cultural and Political Concept

### *Qipao as Traditional, Ethnic, and National Dress*

In this section, I will report how participants consider *qipao* as traditional, ethnic or national dress. Seven Chinese participants and four Taiwanese stated that *qipao* began from Qi's garment (Qing dynasty), so it was Qi's (or Manzhu) ethnic dress. One Taiwanese participant associated the initial *qipao* with the early *min guo* (early R.O.C.), so it was Han ethnic dress. The other two Taiwanese stated that they didn't know the history of *qipao*, so they didn't know which ethnic group the *qipao* represented.

The Chinese participants consistently viewed *qipao* as Manzhu ethnic dress that represented *Zhong hua* or Han culture. That is, the ethnic group to which the wearers of the *qipao* belonged was not that from which the *qipao* came. This conflict makes the *qipao* incompatible with the definition of ethnic dress. However, the Chinese have a way to make sense of this discrepancy. They said that Manzhu and Hanzhu belong to the same family of *Zhong Hua minzhu*, like a sister and brother (Cwu ). Therefore, it was not critical who initiated the *qipao*, but the *qipao* had been revised and worn by Han people since the 1930s. This concept reflected the assumption that Han culture was central and that other cultures were always acculturated into it. Cgao stated that:

We discuss what Chinese look like? We are both major in biology. So, we think that jelly, used a lot in my labs, is the best object to describe Chinese. The textures of the jelly are resilient, soft but tenacious, and these characteristics can be found in Chinese.....In many situations, you don't really know what a Chinese really means, and you have to feel and catch the meaning sympathetically by yourself. It is a reversed way to express ideas.....When all vagueness is intertwined together, it creates Chinese complicated but comprehensive culture. ....There is saying that no matter

how strong the intruders were, intruders were all digested [acculturated] into Chinese culture.

I think *qipao* is a Manzhu ethnic dress. It is a traditional Chinese dress too. To me, the Han people and Man people have blended together through cross marriage. Even though *qipao* is not Han's ethnic dress. *Qipao* has appeared in the history so it is a Chinese traditional dress. (Clu)

Chinese participants believed when the Han people adopted and revised Manzhu dress, the *qipao* had been acculturated into Han culture and became representative ethnic dress of the *Zhong Hua minzhu*. Following this logic, Chinese participants proposed that the authentic ethnic dress for Han people was *han fu* [the *sang yee* from Han dynasty, one kind of Chinese *pao*]. Three Chinese participants mentioned that *han fu*, has been chosen to represent Han people/Chinese traditional dress in Mainland China for the past couple of years. The Chinese participants believed that *qipao* was *Man*'s not "authentic" Han's ethnic dress. Cgu said that her hometown *Chu Ceng* (楚城) in *He Bei* province had adopted *han fu* as ritual dress when the city government held the coming-of-age ceremony for people reaching 20 years of age.

However, Chinese participants still thought that the *qipao* was the best representative traditional dress for all Chinese (or for China), for three reasons. *Qipao* is internationally well known as Chinese traditional dress. In addition, *han fu* was the prototype for Japanese kimono but was not as well known to the world as kimono, and this association can be confusing. Finally, *qipao* has incorporated many elements from Western dress, so it is more practical and functional for current social activities than more historical versions.

Similar discourses were also found in the Taiwanese group. Most participants had a vague idea of how the *qipao* was developed. Four of them specified that *qipao* was Manzhu

ethnic dress while one thought of *qipao* as Hanzhu ethnic dress. One of the participants mentioned that the initial *qipao* was from a non-Han group, while another one did not know. For the Taiwanese participants, *Zhong Hua minzhu* or Han's traditional dress was determined by the politically dominant group. Taiwanese participants assumed that only minority groups had ethnic dress, and that the majority Han group did not. This concept also carried the Han-centric ideology that Han people, as the major group, have no need to identify themselves through their clothes. Tlin stated that:

Every group, such as Japan, Korea and China has its own ethnic dress. People in Taiwan, in actual[ity], were from Mainland China.... I distinguish ethnic difference between Japan, Korea and China but I did not further divide group difference inside China [Chinese], such as Miao ethnic group.

Tlin implied that *qipao* represents all of the Chinese instead of a specific ethnic group within Chinese. Therefore, Tlin also believed that:

I am not sure about Singapore. They have many Chinese, but I don't know if they carry Chinese tradition to wear a *qipao*. I know Chinese immigrants in Thailand also wear a *qipao*. So, I think that *qipao* as an ethnic dress originally comes from China. It is possible and reasonable that Chinese from many countries [Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan] share the same traditional dress, *qipao*.

Taiwanese participants also saw *qipao* as traditional dress for *Zhong Hua minzhu* or Hanzhu. In addition, two Taiwanese participants proposed that the traditional Han women's two-piece ensemble is another type of traditional dress to use when they choose to distinguish themselves from the Chinese.

Overall, as both the literature review and the participants' interpretations showed, a discrepancy exists between the concepts that *qipao* is Han traditional dress yet is often

recognized as Manzhu ethnic dress. The findings of this study provide reasonable answers to this discrepancy. First, participants thought of *qipao* as traditional Chinese dress because historically it was daily wear for Chinese women. Although participants proposed other types of Chinese traditional dress, *qipao* is the most representative and best-known to the world. Second, *qipao* is *Zhong Hua minzhu*'s ethnic dress based on the results that no matter in which ethnic group it originated, *qipao* represents "Chinese" culturally and *Zhong Hua minzhu* is the term to bridge the discrepancy between the embedded culture and the associated ethnic group of the *qipao*. This term also reflects the Han-centric cultural ideology or idea of "Han-centered Chinese." That is, "Chinese" is a monolithic cultural concept to insiders and a monolithic ethnic concept to outsiders. Both Chinese and Taiwanese participant groups instinctively used the term "Chinese" to refer to *Zhong Hua* people or culture. The Taiwanese participants frequently used the terms "we Chinese" and "we are different from Chinese" at the same time. "We Chinese" refers to the inheritance of Chinese culture (*Zhong Hua* or Han culture), but because Taiwanese are from Taiwan, they are also "different from Chinese."

Several previous studies reported that *qipao*, as Manzhu ethnic dress, represented Han-centered traditional dress without a doubt because Hancertricism has made the researchers unaware of the discrepancy. In addition, it is also interesting that Taiwanese participants used the terms "Chinese culture" whenever they made comparisons to Western culture; however, they specifically mentioned "Taiwan" or "Taiwanese" when they compared themselves to Chinese. From participants' usage of the language, the term "Chinese" as a cultural and an ethnic concept has permeated the minds of both the Chinese and Taiwanese groups.

*National Dress*

Just as *qipao* functions as ethnic dress in representing Chinese culture, *qipao* also functions as national dress to represent China. However, the Chinese participants disagreed that *qipao* is national dress because there are other examples of ethnic dress that represent China and, as Cwu mentioned, “national dress would have to get official status and be accepted by all Chinese citizens.”

For the Taiwanese group, there is no national dress in Taiwan. Fifty percent of Taiwanese participants were uncomfortable wearing *qipao* at events where the Chinese were also wearing *qipao* because they did not want to be perceived as agreeing that Taiwan was part of China. These Taiwanese thought that foreigners would assume they were Chinese if they wore *qipao*, as Chinese people at the same event did. Such reactions by participants show that the political ideologies of Taiwan independence and de-Chinaization have affected Taiwanese self-identification.

In contrast, 50 percent of the Taiwanese participants were confident about wearing *qipao* around Chinese students because they believed their way of presenting *qipao* was superior. These participants commented that most Chinese students in the U.S.A. show bad taste in dress. As Tlin and Tlo both stated:

Taiwanese students definitely have a different way than Chinese in dressing. The way Taiwanese dress themselves, no matter how they dress, they always look okay and normal [keep pace with fashion trends] compared to Chinese students. Some Chinese, I notice that they are fashion followers but the way they dress is bizarre. For example, I am so astonished to see how they turn down Gap clothes through their way of mixing and matching with other garments. The Gap clothes do not look “like the Gap” any more. I have seen a Chinese girl wearing a tacky orange dress on campus. Later, that

girl appeared in a bar in a tennis-dress. I cannot stand her taste. (Tlin)

I believed that we [Taiwanese] can present the *qipao* differently than Chinese. I felt they often dress bad and look tacky...oops! I seem to have a bad mouth...but I learned it from seeing Chinese students' daily wear. (Tlo)

Based on Taiwanese reactions, several themes appeared. First, Tlin and Tlo's comments reflect that Taiwanese participants preferred to dress with *qipao* in a more fashionable way. The Taiwanese adopted Western sartorial codes much earlier than the Chinese did; Chinese citizens were not allowed to dress "fashionably" until China reformed and opened its market in the 1970s (Chen, 2001). Therefore, these three Taiwanese participants did not worry about looking Chinese. Instead, their knowledge of world fashion was a means to distinguish themselves from Chinese. I will discuss this concept further in the section "dressing-up the *qipao*."

In order to distinguish themselves from the Chinese at a cultural event, two Taiwanese participants would select traditional Han women's two-piece attire, and one participant did not know what she would wear. From a cultural perspective, the two-piece attire has a longer history than *qipao*, and it is also connected to Chinese Han culture. Therefore, the two-piece Han women's attire would also not work to culturally distinguish Taiwanese from Chinese.

Cultural and ethnic identity relies on people's self-identification, self-interpretation and negotiation with others. Taiwanese bear "Chinese culture:" the R.O.C. used to represent China, and the Taiwanese used to call themselves Chinese, but now "Chinese" has become "the other" for many young Taiwanese. This "other" is not created through cultural or ethnic difference but political conflict. The current political ideology and national identity of an independent Taiwan motivates Taiwanese to distinguish themselves from Chinese, at least by presenting differences in appearance. *Qipao*, therefore, becomes a unique case in which

*qipao* is traditional dress for both China and Taiwan, but the thought of Chinese as “the other” interferes with Taiwanese willingness to wear a *qipao*. It may not be correct, then, that *qipao* represents the R.O.C. in Taiwan as national dress for the younger generation. For them, this selection process is stimulated by cultural insiders who belong to a different country with different political standpoints. Based on this phenomenon, national identity strongly manipulates the cultural and ethnic identity.

The traditional two-piece attire had a less modern appearance than the *qipao*, but it would be considered more traditional than the *qipao* if time were the only factor used to define traditional dress. Taiwanese reactions demonstrate that time is not as critical a factor in defining traditional dress as are individual perceptions and knowledge of the *qipao*.

Chinese culture is very similar to Taiwanese culture. Both Chinese and Taiwanese responded to the question “Do you feel any cultural difference between Chinese and Taiwanese?” by not recognizing many big differences. “We are culturally similar” was the most common comment given by all participants. From a Chinese perspective, Taiwanese is more Westernized and urbanized than Chinese. As Clu and Cgu stated, Taiwan has maintained a more traditional Chinese culture than has China:

C: Do you see any cultural difference between people from Mainland China and Taiwan?

A: Yes, I think these are some differences. I think Taiwan’s economic development is faster than China's. So, the way of thinking and ideology are different [from Chinese]. I think Taiwanese girls are more open because they have contacted Western ideas and thoughts much earlier than have Mainland girls. But, this also depends on where the girl comes from. If the girl is from a big city in China, the girl would look very similar to a girl from Taiwan. I would be able to distinguish the difference. (Clu)

I think that Taiwan and China inherit and share the same culture but Taiwan has kept more culture [Chinese culture] than China has. I also feel that Taiwanese girls are more open, more active and agile. (Cgu)

From Taiwanese perspectives, the Chinese are more conservative, industrious and persistent. China is also seen as aggressive because of the perception that the Cultural Revolution hurt the Chinese culture. Two Taiwanese participants thought that Chinese is part of “our group.” However, the Taiwanese often commented on Chinese taste, such as their ways of dressing and their lifestyle.

I feel that China has lost something... I don't know how to describe it. They seem not to keep the good Chinese cultural characteristics as what I have learned from the book. (Tpo)

I feel that Chinese students have a tight social network, and they have close relationships with each other. If they knew you are Chinese including Taiwanese, they would have helped you more. Americans may not help you, but Chinese always take care of Chinese. They are like your sisters and brothers. So, I feel they are nice and friendly. In comparison with Taiwanese students, we have less interaction but distance. (Tlin)

In short, for both Chinese and Taiwanese groups of participants, *qipao* represents China and the Chinese culture, but it is not thought of as national dress in both groups. From investigating the concept of “*qipao* as national dress,” results of this study show that *qipao* is thought of differently between Chinese and Taiwanese as a cultural or political concept. Culturally, Taiwanese and Chinese are similar and close. *Qipao* is traditional dress for both groups. Politically, Taiwan government's promotion of de-Chinaization has impacted Taiwanese perceptions that Taiwanese is not the same as Chinese.

## Part II: The Boundary between the *Qipao* and Western Dress

*Qipao* has historically been influenced by Western fashion trends. *Qipao* could be loose or tailored, sleeved or sleeveless, or could have a flared skirt (Table 5). No matter how the style has changed, there was a stylistic or symbolic order to distinguish the *qipao* from Western dress. A mandarin collar, side opening that operates either as an opening or only as decoration, frog buttons, side slits and Chinese-style fabric characterize a *qipao*. The meaning of *qipao*, therefore, starts with how the participants make sense of *qipao*: how they distinguish it from Western dress and how participants categorize *qipao*. The first and most obvious distinction is the *qipao*'s appearance. The appearance of *qipao* functions as a symbol that carries multi-dimensional meanings based upon participants' knowledge of *qipao* history, their experience with *qipao*, and the message that the *qipao* conveys. This section will focus on *qipao*'s physical characteristics and the way in which participants identify and differentiate the *qipao* from other pieces of clothing and categorize *qipao* and its style code system.

The participants cited six criteria to determine whether or not a garment is a *qipao*: mandarin collar, frog buttons, side opening, side slits, a form-fitting silhouette, and the type of fabric. Only three participants mentioned the bound trim decoration. Participants' reactions to the images in Table 8 reveal their definitions of *qipao*. Three images from the first set of interview images were selected from an on-line product catalog of a famous Chinese garment company, Long Deed, in Taiwan. All three garments form-fitting silhouette. The first garment includes a stand-up collar that is not a separate piece from the bodice. This collar looks like but is not a mandarin collar. The second garment has a mandarin collar, cap sleeves, side slits and frog buttons, but it has an olive-shaped hole on the side

opening. The last garment has a round neckline and side opening with frog buttons, and the shell is made of a sheer fabric. While participants reviewed these three styles, four (31%) thought that the first garment was a modified *qipao* and eight (62%) thought that it was a Western garment. Three participants (23%) described the second garment as a *qipao*, and seven (54%) viewed it as a modified *qipao*; that is, 77% of participants agreed that the garment is, to some extent, a *qipao*. Six (46%) of participants thought that the third garment was a modified *qipao*, while another 54% thought that it was not a *qipao*.

Table 8 *Current Qipao Style*

		
2003; Long Deed Chinese garment, Taiwan	2004 Long Deed Chinese garment, Taiwan	2004 Long Deed Chinese garment, Taiwan

*Note.* Image #1, Long Deed *Qipao* (2003); Image #2 and 3, Long Deed *Qipao* (2004).

Most participants did not view the first garment as a *qipao* because it does not have many of *qipao*'s style elements, although the silhouette and the collar are similar. The participants evaluated the second *qipao* as a modified *qipao* mainly because the white and

black fabric does not look like the fabric used in traditional *qipao*, although the pattern is inspired by traditional Chinese calligraphic painting (*shun mo hua hue*). Also, the olive-shaped hole gives the second *qipao* a modern look that makes it a little different from what participants expected in a *qipao*. Participants commented that sheer fabric used in the third example gives the garment a modern look, even though it has some of a *qipao*'s design elements, such as a side opening and frog buttons. It was still reviewed as not a *qipao* by over half of the participants. Overall, the mandarin collar and side opening were critical elements for defining the *qipao*. The other four style elements, the silhouette, the frog buttons, fabric type and pattern, and side slits affect but do not determine participants' evaluation of whether examples are *qipao* or not. In short, participants believed that the *qipao* has unique style elements. Tlin stated:

C: If the custom-made technique brings out *qipao*'s beauty, don't you think that a custom-made Western dress would create the similar effect?

A: It could be. I don't know. But, the issue is that Western dress does not have focal designs, such as the collar, side slits or side opening. Also, I feel the way of *qipao* fitting at the waist area is not the same as in a Western dress. I think these three elements make *qipao* different from Western dress.

If a garment is missing some of the style elements or is made of the wrong fabric, the *qipao* tends to be seen as a modified or altered *qipao*, or as a *qipao*-inspired garment.

#### *Sartorial Code of the Qipao*

Style elements also function as a code system for participants to distinguish *qipao* type and usage. Some codes are consistently associated with the same meaning, but some codes are not. Generally, participants viewed that a loose-fitting *qipao* with the body figure only

slightly revealed and elbow-length sleeves was a *qipao* for older or more mature women. In contrast, the ideal *qipao* for women in general had to be form-fitting, longer than knee level, and short sleeved or sleeveless. The following are the findings of how participants evaluated and assigned meanings to *qipao*'s style elements.

### The Length

Length here refers to sleeve length, garment length and side slit height. Participants agreed that a traditional or an authentic *qipao* had to cover the knees. The mini *qipao* was never qualified as a traditional or an authentic *qipao* but was often perceived as a *qipao*-inspired Western garment or a fashionable *qipao*. *Qipao* #12 (Table 9-2 and 10-2) is one example of a mini *qipao*, as classified by participants. The length of the *qipao* also determined its usage; an ankle-length *qipao* is worn on the most formal occasions, like a Western evening gown. A shorter *qipao*, at or below the knee, is used for less formal or daily wear. A mini *qipao* is considered fashionable *qipao* or modern dress. According to a Chinese participant, Cgu,

I would select a long *qipao* for a formal occasion. I think that *qipao* length would create distance from other people, so the selection of the *qipao* length should depend on the social setting. If I went out for a casual dinner with my friend, I would like to give my friend an easy-going atmosphere, so I avoid the long *qipao*. However, in a formal occasion, I do want to make a good impression on other people, then, I would select a long *qipao*; otherwise, why should I wear a *qipao*?

Sleeve length is an important part of a traditional *qipao*. A sleeveless *qipao* was seen as a current or fashionable *qipao*. Elbow-length sleeves are considered appropriate for older women or for the *qipao* from the past.

All participants agreed that the side slit had to reach above the knee, but Chinese and Taiwanese participants had different perceptions of how high the slits should go. Most Chinese participants thought that the side slit had to reach half way up the thigh, while all Taiwanese thought that side slit should be 12 cm. (about 4 1/2 inches) above the knee. To the Taiwanese, the side slits are designed for easy movement:

I did not like to wear a skirt when I was little. After growing up and wearing the uniform skirt, I finally understand that the side slit [of the *qipao*] is necessary for easily walking when you wear a narrow bottomed skirt. (Than)

*Qipao* is a long garment and fit tightly, so it should have a slit reaching above the knee to help with walking. I think the slit height is about here [Participant points to about 12 cm. above the knee]. (Tchen)

In contrast, Chinese participants tended to view the side slit as a symbol of women's emancipation and a means of showing sexiness. Cwu and Cwei, both Chinese, mentioned that the top part of the *qipao* was very conservative because, in the past, Chinese society was very conservative. Also, Chinese women used to have lower social status than men. Chinese participants thought that side slits showing the leg symbolized that Chinese women had struggled to free themselves from traditional constraints and had gained equality after China reformed and opened its market to the world. Cwu, therefore, stated that the change in *qipao* style from a loose-fitting to a form-fitting garment with side slits demonstrated the progress of women in the new Chinese society. This kind of discourse also can be easily found on websites generated from Mainland China, such as the World Executive Network ("History of *Qipao*'s Side Slits [旗袍开衩的文化史]," 2005).

Wilson (2002) commented that the modern *qipao* style was combined with the urban aesthetic of the 1930s and 1940s with Western ideas of female sexuality. The side slits

revealing the legs symbolized women's physical emancipation and, by extension, their political and social emancipation. The *qipao* could be a provocative garment and was exploited as such by advertisers in Shanghai who depicted women posing in *qipao* in positions and mannerisms that seemed to suggest their sexual availability. The only difference between participants' and Wilson's comments is the time period in which they were made. Chinese participants referred to the end of the 1970s when China opened its markets, but Wilson was referring to the early years of the R.O.C. This shows a political influence on the interpretation of *qipao*. The P.R.C. government always treats the R.O.C. government as an exiling rebel. It is understandable that Communist ideology constrained Chinese participants' toward attributing women's progress to the P.R.C. instead of R.O.C. government. In short, Chinese discourse on side slits showed that the *qipao* reflected dichotomies: conservative against liberal and past against present.

In the Taiwanese group, Tch used a similar metaphor for the characteristics of Chinese culture instead of applying the metaphor to the side slits of the *qipao*. Tch said that the conservative *qipao* style was consistent with conservative Chinese culture. The side slits symbolize that Chinese culture is open to other cultures. Interestingly, some Taiwanese participants had a strong dislike for a *qipao* image in which the slit rose above mid-thigh. Twu and Tlin said that it was "disgusting" and "slutty" to put an "extra" high side slit onto a *qipao*. Than mentioned that *qipao* should not be sexy but modest, elegant and dignified; the only purpose of the side slit is to enable a woman to walk comfortable, not to flaunt her body. Chinese participants also agreed that *qipao* is a simple and somber garment, but none of them talked about the function of the slits.

*Qipao*, after the 1930s, changed to a sexier dress. It adopted sleeveless, high side slits and a form-fit silhouette. (Cgu)

One feature of the *qipao* is ... I think that *qipao* is a sexy garment. A woman's sexiness can be reflected from three of its parts. First, the *qipao* shows a curvy hip line. Second, the *qipao* well covers the skin but the side slit reveals the leg while walking. Third, when you wear a *qipao*, you wear a high heel. All three make the *qipao* a sexy garment. (Cwu)

Both the Chinese and Taiwanese groups said that the side slit on a casual *qipao* is shorter than it is on the formal *qipao*. This is reasonable because a side slit looks much longer when it extends from above the knee to the ankle than when it extends from above the knee to the knee.

#### The Fit and Silhouette

In history, the *qipao* silhouette has been influenced by Western fashion trends and developed from a loose into a form-fitted garment. This history was fixed in participants' minds while they reviewed the *qipao* silhouette. All participants thought that the current *qipao* is a form-fitted garment (Tables 9-1, 9-2, 9-1, 10-2; # 6, 7, and 10). Whenever the *qipao* fits loosely (Tables 9, 9-2, 10, and 10-2; # 1, 2, and 8), it is perceived as a *qipao* from the past or for older women. Participants also preferred a form-fitted *qipao* (Table 11). A form-fitted *qipao*, according to all participants, had to fit the figure properly (Tables 9-1, 9-2, 10-1 and 10-2). When the *qipao* fits the body snugly or has a tapered hem, a garment such as #5 in Tables 9-1 and 10-1 looks strange when it is too tight. While six participants (about 50%) said that this silhouette was not the right *qipao* silhouette, three did not comment on this silhouette. Cwu stated that *qipao* should fit the body just right. Cwu thought that the #5 garment was too tight; it looked like Elizabeth Taylor's body contour, which was not right for Chinese women. Tch also stated that *qipao* displays the figure nicely. It fits snugly, but

it is not as tight as the current fashionable evening gown.

#### Body Figure as the Context of the *Qipao* Silhouette

Objectively, a form-fitted *qipao* has a very similar silhouette to a form-fitted Western garment. DeLong and Wu (2003) stated that the *qipao* incorporated the fitted silhouette of the Western evening gown. However, participants indicated that the silhouette of the *qipao* was specifically designed for Chinese women. They believed that the *qipao* could accentuate the good and minimize the flaws of Chinese women's figures. A *qipao* uniquely fits Chinese women for two reasons. First, a well-fit *qipao* gives a Chinese woman a unique silhouette. In other words, the figure, not the garment itself, makes the *qipao* unique. Three Taiwanese and four Chinese participants (over 50%) stated that *qipao* was not suitable for Western women because they have a larger bone structure than do Chinese women. More than 80% of the participants thought that the *qipao* did not look right or good on Venus Williams because either she was too muscular or her bone structure was too big. When participants saw Kate Moss wearing a *qipao*, they agreed that she wears the *qipao* nicely because she is thin and has a small bone structure. Following this logic, women's figures play an important role in the interpretation of a *qipao*. The Chinese woman's figure makes the *qipao* unique.

Table 9 Taiwanese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao

Taiwanese Participants	Randomly assign # 4	Randomly assign # 2	Randomly assign # 1	Randomly assign #3
				
	Original <i>qipao</i>	end of 1910s	end 1920s	early 1930s
Tch	It looks like a robe, a sleeping garment. <i>Qipao</i> should look like # 6 or # 10.	I am not aware that this is a <i>qipao</i> .	These are <i>qipao</i> with some alterations.	These are <i>qipao</i> with some alterations.
Tlin	I saw my great-grand mom wear this type of <i>qipao</i> in the photo. So, it is a traditional <i>qipao</i>	My great-grand mom seemed to wear this type of <i>qipao</i> too; it is a traditional <i>qipao</i>	This is similar to the <i>qipao</i> that grandmother passed on to me. It is a casual <i>qipao</i> .	This is from great-grandmother's time period
Twu	This is the most traditional <i>qipao</i>	This is the most traditional <i>qipao</i>	The blue is an old <i>qipao</i> and the orange one [leaf-shape hem] is not a <i>qipao</i>	These two do not look like the <i>qipao</i> . They may be modified from the <i>qipao</i> in the early times.
Than	This is not the traditional <i>qipao</i> in my mind	This is not the traditional <i>qipao</i> in my mind either		This may be the modified <i>qipao</i> from the past
Tlo	This is from early <i>min guo</i> (early R.O.C.) because it has a big sleeve and it is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is from early <i>min guo</i> because it has a big sleeve and it is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	The silhouette looks like a traditional <i>qipao</i> but the color is a modern color	The silhouette looks like a traditional <i>qipao</i> but the color is a modern color
Tpo	I did not see this kind of <i>qipao</i> before. Is this the original <i>qipao</i> ?	I did not see this kind of <i>qipao</i> before. Is this the original <i>qipao</i> ?	This is the <i>qipao</i> from early <i>min guo</i> . It may be the same time as the novel <i>Red and White Rose</i> [a famous novel about a romance in the 1950s and early 1960s]	Early <i>min guo</i> ? Not sure. Probably closer to current time.

Note. Image #1, Clark (2000); Image #2, 3 and 4. Shou.com (2004).

Table 9-1 *Taiwanese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao*

Taiwanese Participants	Randomly assign #9	Randomly assign #11	Randomly assign #7	Randomly assign #5
				
	1935/1940s	1935	1950s	1960s
Tch	Traditional <i>qipao</i>	To me, this may not be a <i>qipao</i>	Traditional <i>qipao</i>	No comments
Tlin	I have not seen this style before, so I have no idea.	I have not seen this kind of <i>qipao</i> before, so I don't know.	I see some of grandmother's <i>qipao</i> like this one.	No comments
Twu	This style looks strange. I don't know.	I am not sure about this style.		The <i>qipao</i> looks to be from old times, but it is sleeveless. So, I guess it is the <i>qipao</i> for prostitutes from old times.
Than	This is too long. The hem is too wide.		This is the traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is too modern. It is closer to a Western formal dress...a mixture with foreign formal dress. The collar and side opening looks like a <i>qipao</i> but the tapered hem is too narrow that does not look like a traditional <i>qipao</i> .
Tlo	I am not sure about this one. It is so long, looks so big and loose. It does not fit well, so I would say this is a modified current <i>qipao</i> .	I did not see this kind of sleeve on <i>qipao</i> before, so I think it should be a modified <i>qipao</i> .	This is a modified traditional <i>qipao</i> . It was the <i>qipao</i> during Sino-Japanese war and the time when R.O.C. just transferred to Taiwan.	
Tpo	This one is similar to #11.	This matches to the <i>qipao</i> , I thought, because it is a combination between traditional and modern <i>qipao</i>	This one looks like the <i>qipao</i> worn by early movie star, Ryan, Lin Yu.	

Note. Image #5 and #7, Clark (2000); Image #9 and #11, Fashion show in Shanghai (1935)

Table 9-2 Taiwanese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao

Taiwanese Participants	Randomly assign #8 	Randomly assign #6 	Randomly assign #10 	Randomly assign #12 
	end of 1970s	end 1980s	2004	2004
Tch	This is grandmother's <i>qipao</i> because of the solid color and plain style. It looks like grandmother's <i>qipao</i> . I think that <i>qipao</i> needs some focal design or sort of fashion look.	This may be a traditional <i>qipao</i> . It has a focal trim design.	Traditional <i>qipao</i>	I think it is too fashionable. I called this current <i>qipao</i> .
Tlin	I have seen my great-grandmom wear this type of <i>qipao</i> in the photos, so it is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is a current <i>qipao</i> .	This is similar to the <i>qipao</i> that grandmother gave to me.	This is a current <i>qipao</i> .
Twu	The length is just over the knee so it is not the <i>qipao</i> from the early time. It does not show the curvy waistline... so, it is the <i>qipao</i> between current and the past.	No comments	This is the <i>qipao</i> for the beauty competition. My mother's <i>qipao</i> looks like this one.	This is the most recent <i>qipao</i> .
Than	This style is too loose. It is a <i>qipao</i> but it is not the traditional <i>qipao</i> in my mind.	This is kind of traditional <i>qipao</i> although it is a little loose.	This is the traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is definitely not a traditional <i>qipao</i> .
Tlo	This is a mixed style. It looks like a current <i>qipao</i> , but it also looks like a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is a mixed style. It looks like a current <i>qipao</i> , but it also looks like a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is a modified traditional <i>qipao</i> . It is very easy to find this type of <i>qipao</i> for the past decade.	It looks like a modified <i>qipao</i> .
Tpo	This style is for older women.	This is a modified traditional <i>qipao</i>	I see this kind of <i>qipao</i> before	This is a fashionable <i>qipao</i> because it is shorter than the knees. The fit of this <i>qipao</i> matches what I have described "the double S curve line."

Note. Image # 8, Yang (1981); Image #6, Yi Qian *Qipao* (1990); Image #10 and #12, Dong Fang *Qipao* (2004).

Table 10 Chinese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao

Chinese Participants	Randomly assign # 4 	Randomly assign # 2 	Randomly assign # 1 	Randomly assign #3 
	Original <i>qipao</i>	end of 1910s	end 1920s	early 1930s
Clu	# 4 looks like student <i>qipao</i> from the 1920s and 1930s. I am not sure if this is a traditional <i>qipao</i> . If traditional <i>qipao</i> is categorized based on the time. This definitely is a traditional <i>qipao</i> . I am unable to define if this is a traditional <i>qipao</i> or not based on the style	# 2, This one looks like a <i>qipao</i> from the end of the Qing dynasty; In my memory, it seems that <i>qipao</i> in the Qing dynasty had this kind of wide sleeve.	I think it is hard to give a definition of the traditional <i>qipao</i> . Like this one [# 3], it has a leaf-shaped hem. This style has incorporated the elements from modern Western dress.	The sleeve is flared and made of sheer fabric [organza], plus the pattern on the fabric. I think there is a little bit of modification, not a typical traditional <i>qipao</i>
Cgao	# 4, I guess it is the <i>qipao</i> from the time of the May Fourth movement, but I am not sure.	# 2 is a bell-shaped <i>qipao</i> , which does not match my perception of the <i>qipao</i> . I think it looks like a <i>pao fu</i> [Chinese traditional loose garment], which gives female and male a similar silhouette.	<i>Qipao</i> from 1930s Shanghai commercial ads; it had higher side slits, which is a little bit over-exposure according to the social norm at that time. #3 and #1 are similar to 1930s' <i>qipao</i> but have a more modern look than the <i>qipao</i> from that time.	<i>Qipao</i> from 1930s Shanghai commercial ads. # 3 and #1 are similar to 1930s' <i>qipao</i> but have more modern look than the <i>qipao</i> from that time.
Cwu	# 4 and # 2 are very conservative. These two do not show any of the figure.	# 4 and # 2 have long sleeves. # 2 has a better fit than # 4 that would show the figure a little. However, the long sleeves give you a hint that the <i>qipao</i> is a conservative one. °		

Note. For sources of the pictures, see note with Table 9.

Table 10 Chinese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao (Continued)

Chinese Participants	Randomly assign # 4	Randomly assign # 2	Randomly assign # 1	Randomly assign #3
				
	Original <i>qipao</i>	end of 1910s	end 1920s	early 1930s
Cch	I know people wore this kind of <i>qipao</i> before.	I know people wore this kind of <i>qipao</i> before.	This style often appeared in the movies, 20s, 30s, 40s or 50s? The <i>qipao</i> was made of cotton and was often worn with a jade bracelet; The leaf-shape hem does not look neat.	The fabric is too noisy. It is good for movie attire. The sleeves look strange, not neat.
Cwei	This is a very old <i>qipao</i> , from long time ago.	This is a very old <i>qipao</i> , from long time ago.	It is an old <i>qipao</i> .	This style looks nice but it is not a <i>qipao</i> .
Czh	This is an old <i>qipao</i> , probably from the end of the Qing dynasty. It is a citizen <i>qipao</i> because the fabric is solid.	This is an old <i>qipao</i> , probably from the end of the Qing dynasty. However this is the <i>qipao</i> for landowner (wealthy people).	This is a modified <i>qipao</i> from 1930s Shanghai.	This is a modified <i>qipao</i> from 1930s Shanghai.
Cgu	# 4 is a typical Qi's dress. This is not a <i>qipao</i> .	# 2 is also a Qi's dress because it has big sleeves and trimming. I estimate that is from the end of the Qing dynasty, but the style is closer to modern dress.	This is a <i>qipao</i> revised for daily life. It is a <i>qipao</i> for a student or un-married girl, about 25 years old.	This <i>qipao</i> is after 1930s Shanghai <i>qipao</i> because it has a curvy waistline. The style seems to be for movie stars because the sleeve is not the regular <i>qipao</i> sleeve. It incorporates sheer fabric. However, I think past students may have worn it.

*Note.* For sources of the pictures, see note with Table 9.

Table 10-1 *Chinese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao*

Chinese Participants	Randomly assign #9 	Randomly assign #11 	Randomly assign #7 	Randomly assign #5 
	1935/1940s	1935	1950s; HK	1960s; HK
Clu	This is a traditional <i>qipao</i> but is a little bit loose. Also, it has cap sleeves that are not like the sleeves I have seen before. Maybe these sleeves were used for <i>qipao</i> before, but I have not seen this type of sleeve on a <i>qipao</i> before.	This is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	Madam Chiang's <i>qipao</i>	In my memory, the <i>qipao</i> I have seen all have straight down side seams not like mermaid shape. But, I think mermaid shape looks very nice. Chest area seems different from the <i>qipao</i> I know.
Cgao	#s 9 and 11 present the flowing beauty that I have mentioned. This <i>qipao</i> would show women's soft and rhythmical body movement/beauty while walking	The style of # 7 and 11, compared to the marketed <i>qipao</i> , is closer to traditional <i>qipao</i> .	The style of # 7 and 11, compared to the marketed <i>qipao</i> , is closer to traditional <i>qipao</i> .	# 5 has a beautiful contour, especially, the pose of # 5 looks like Venus. These two <i>qipao</i> present a brisk and energetic beauty. This kind of beauty is not the same as traditional soft beauty. These two <i>qipao</i> carry a feeling of toughness, which is not right for a traditional <i>qipao</i> .
Cwu			This is a formal <i>qipao</i> . A formal <i>qipao</i> is different from a traditional <i>qipao</i> . A formal <i>qipao</i> does not have to have a conservative style.	<i>Qipao</i> should fit the body just right. It should not be too loose or too tight. # 5 fits the body too tightly and it is Elizabeth Taylor's body contour, not Chinese women's body contour.

Note. The sources of the pictures see Table 9-1.

Table 10-1 *Chinese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao (Continued)*

Chinese Participants	Randomly assign #9	Randomly assign#11	Randomly assign #7	Randomly assign #5
				
	1935/1940s	1935	1950s; HK	1960s; HK
Cch	No comments	No comments	This is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	I think this one is a modern silhouette. The cut is too curvy and does not match the traditional <i>qipao</i> silhouette in my mind. It looks too modern.
Cwei	Not a current <i>qipao</i>	Not a current <i>qipao</i>	This is a <i>qipao</i> from old times.	This is too tight, so it looks strange and improper.
Czh	This is a 1930s revised Shanghai <i>qipao</i> .	This is a 1930s revised Shanghai <i>qipao</i> .	Current <i>qipao</i>	This is a 1930s revised Shanghai <i>qipao</i> .
Cgu	This <i>qipao</i> is an ancient <i>qipao</i> . It looks like Qi's dress but without sleeves.	This <i>qipao</i> is an ancient <i>qipao</i> . It looks like Qi's dress but without sleeves. It has modern flair. It seems to be from the 1920s when Chinese were trying to but had not altered the Qi's dress. The collar is a from very classic Qing dress.	This is the <i>qipao</i> for display purpose. The silhouette shows women's curvy lines, so it is only suitable for women with good figures. The material is a shiny satin.	This <i>qipao</i> is after 1930s Shanghai <i>qipao</i> . It clearly shows the figure, and it has a tapered hem so it required the wearer to have a good figure. It is the second of four types of the <i>qipao</i> I just mentioned.

*Note.* For sources of the pictures, see note with Table 9-1.

Table 10-2 Chinese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao

Chinese Participants	Randomly assign #8 	Randomly assign #6 	Randomly assign #10 	Randomly assign #12 
	end of 1970s	end 1980s	2004	2004
Clu	I think this is a traditional <i>qipao</i> because it has a side opening, elbow-length sleeves.	Even though the dress has a Chinese trimming, the silhouette of the dress does not show the characteristic of a <i>qipao</i> . It is a little bit loose.	#9, 10 and 11 are traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This one [#12], the designs, such as collar, sleeves and fabric, and overall it is close to my idea of traditional <i>qipao</i> but the length is too short. (brocade fabric, standard mandarin collar, side opening and frog buttons)
Cgao	#8 gives me a casual feeling. It is a casual <i>qipao</i> and very suitable for private leisure time. It looks very comfortable.	#6 is a revised <i>qipao</i> , but it is not a pretty style.	#10 and #12 are very popular in Mainland China. I call these two styles marketed <i>qipao</i> because you can easily find this kind of <i>qipao</i> on the market.	#10 and #12 are very popular in Mainland China. I call these two styles marketed <i>qipao</i> because you can easily find this kind of <i>qipao</i> on the market.
Cwu	The sleeve is a little bit long so it looks conservative and it is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is a traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is a formal <i>qipao</i> .	This is not a formal <i>qipao</i> , but it looks nice. Even though it is made of a traditional fabric, I think the style has priority to the material to decide what kind of <i>qipao</i> it is.

Note. For sources of the pictures, see note with Table 9-2.

Table 10-2 Chinese Participants' Perceptions of Qipao (Continued)

Chinese Participants	Randomly assign #8	Randomly assign #6	Randomly assign #10	Randomly assign #12
				
	end of 1970s	end 1980s	2004	2004
Cch	It looks like <i>qipao</i> from the 1950s, the time period when P.R.C. was established.	It shows a curvy waistline but it is not so obvious. It looks comfortable and nice. It is a current <i>qipao</i> .	This best fits my idea of traditional <i>qipao</i> .	This is too short.
Cwei	This is the most seen current <i>qipao</i> . It is similar to #10 but shorter, and this one is suitable for middle aged women.	Color is little bit old. It gives me a feeling of <i>qong iao</i> [a famous romantic novel published in Taiwan in the 1980s].	This is the most seen current <i>qipao</i> .	This <i>qipao</i> has been revised.
Czh	Current <i>qipao</i> , but it is loosely fit so it is suitable for elder women who have gained weight and body shape change.	Current <i>qipao</i>	This is the most traditional <i>qipao</i>	This is a Western dress with <i>qipao</i> elements.
Cgu	This is the third of the four types of <i>qipao</i> that I have mentioned. It has a simple style and is suitable for daily wear. It is a revised Qi's dress.	This is a typical common <i>qipao</i> (the third type in participant's category) that is used for daily wear.	This <i>qipao</i> is used for display. The wearer has to have a good body figure. It has a high side slit.	This <i>qipao</i> is not a daily wear <i>qipao</i> . It is a mini version of the traditional <i>qipao</i> .

Note. For sources of the pictures, see note with Table 9-2.

What figure best presents a *qipao* silhouette? The results indicated that women who wear a *qipao* should not be too fat or too slender (Table 11; Clu and Tch's comments), and with a curvy but not too curvy shape (Table 11; Cgao's comments). This kind of discourse actually is not unfamiliar to most Chinese. For example, an ancient Chinese literary romance, *Lo River Goddess* (洛神), was well known for its rhetoric of describing a beautiful

fairy. This work appeared in China around CE 230. It described a fairy as “*nong qian de zhuang, xiu duan he du* [濃纖得衷, 修短合度] and *jian ruo xiao chen, iao ru ue su* [肩若削成, 腰如約素].” This means that the fairy would be too plump if she gained a little bit of weight, but she would be too thin if she lost any. She had good proportions. She was not too tall or short and did not have a figure that was too curvy or too straight. She had a rounded, slightly sloped shoulder, and her waist was small and as soft as a white fabric. If there were a standard of the right figure for wearing a *qipao*, Lo River Goddess embodied it.

This abstract metaphorical way of defining a women’s figure underpinned participants’ evaluations of the ideal *qipao* figure based on Western criteria, involving the size and proportion of the bust, waist, and hips (B/W/H). Participants’ comments (Table 11) indicate that they followed Western criteria to define the best figure for wearing the *qipao*, but their interpretations implicitly reflected traditional ideas of Chinese beauty. Participants stated that the women who look best in a *qipao* are taller (Ggu), small-waisted and well-proportioned. Similar comments are found on the websites (“Who can wear the *qipao* more beautifully?”). The information listed on the website indicates that the best figure to correctly present a *qipao* is defined by height around 160-170 cm., a round sloped shoulder, small waist, round and full hips, medium-sized chest, and long neck. In short, the results of the study reflected that participants unconsciously combined the Chinese ideal women’s figure with Western criteria, while they interpreted and differentiated *qipao*’s silhouette from Western dress.

Another interesting finding is that Western women’s bodies were the standard by which participants compared and defined the right figure for a *qipao*. Participants did not differentiate Chinese/Taiwanese women from other Asian women. This indicates that the West is the “other.” The West used to be the symbol of modernity. The *qipao* was the

product of incorporation and negotiation between Chinese dress and Western fashion. The unique Chinese female figure cannot be formulated without the comparison between the West and Chinese.

In addition, the relationship between figure and *qipao* silhouette is complicated and interactive. Several participants are not willing to wear the *qipao* because they don't have a "good body figure." In other words, they don't feel confident showing their figure. Kaiser (1997) advised that the consciousness of the body is the center of appearance management and extension of self. Individual awareness of one's body also reflects a socially constructed aesthetic. The wearer hesitates to adopt the *qipao* because her body does not fit the structural concept of a good figure. In other words, the form-fitting *qipao* easily raises the wearer's consciousness of her figure, and that affects the selection of the *qipao*. The *qipao* is considered traditional but is tightly connected with modern body ideology.

#### The Techniques of a Good Fit

The techniques of making *qipao* also produce a good-fitting *qipao* and silhouette. According to researchers (Shih, 1979; Yang, 1981), the measurements of the intended wearer are pre-requested to make a *qipao* pattern. Clu, Czh and Cwu all had a similar experience when they purchased a custom-made *qipao*. They stated that the tailor took "a lot" of body measurements. Below is an excerpt from Clu's experience.

C: How about the fit?

A: It fits my body very well. I had to wear underwear while the tailor took my body measurements. He explained that it is critical to give a proper wearing ease for a *qipao*. In order to avoid adding too much or little garment ease, he needed to take detailed measurements without extra clothes. He took many measurements; shoulder, chest,

waist. ....after all, he took a lot of measurements. Later, when I tried on that *qipao*, it fit perfectly. It did not need further alteration either....That *qipao* fits me perfectly. I mean when you look at the silhouette of that *qipao*, it well follows my figure without any extra puckers or extra ease. I don't feel at all uncomfortable with that *qipao*.

Cgao also purchased a custom-made *qipao*. However, she was not happy with it because the tailor did not fit the *qipao* well to her figure. She was upset and thought that the custom-made *qipao* had not been worth the money. She stated:

C: Did the tailor take over 10 measurements from you?

G: no

C: Then, did he give you a try on?

G: Yes, but it did not fit me.

C: Did he make revision?

G: Yes.

C: How long did that tailor give you a try on after he took the measurements?

G: About one week

C: How long did you wait for the tailor to fix to fit you?

G: It only took me an hour

C: Did the final one fit you well?

G: A little bit better but still not good. It did not fit me well. That's why I think, next time, I would buy a ready-to-wear *qipao* rather than a made-to-order *qipao* from that market.

Czh had majored in fashion design before she accompanied her husband to the U.S.A. Czh learned how to make a *qipao* in school, and she said that the difference between making the pattern for a *qipao* and for a Western garment is the number of measurements

taken. In addition to the detailed measurements for making a *qipao* pattern, ironing skills help to sculpt a *qipao* shape. According to Yang (1981) and Shih (1979), to build a three-dimensional *qipao*, a tailor has to apply pull-and-push ironing techniques on the curved waist-hip side seam. The tailor pulls out the curve-in the waistline and transfers the space to the bust area to make room for the bust. The tailor also pushes the curve out on the hip side to form a space for the hip. Through the pull-and-push ironing technique, the curvy waist and hip side seam is transformed into a kind of straight line and then glued together with a thin woven tape to hold the shape before sewing. Yang (1981) stated that the pull-and-push skill creates a three-dimensional space to provide the right fit, and makes the wearer feel comfortable. The findings agree with Yang's comments.

Table 11 Summary of Participants' Perceptions of Qipao Fit and Body Figure

TWN	Perceptions of <i>qipao</i> silhouette and body figure	CHN	Perceptions of <i>qipao</i> silhouette and body figure
Tlin	I think <i>qipao</i> has been designed specifically for Chinese women's figures. It fits well but does not expose the skin. Custom-made <i>qipao</i> can be made according to individual body characteristics and preferences to bring out individual beauty, such as to emphasize the fullness of the chest, the small waist, to have a higher side slit and so on.	Cwu	I think that the <i>qipao</i> is a conservative garment but it can accentuate Chinese women body figure. Especially, the <i>qipao</i> make the hip look round and prominent. No matter you are a Chinese or a foreigner, <i>qipao</i> suits for a person with smaller bone structure. If a person had wider bone structure, the person would not looks good while donning a <i>qipao</i>
Twu	<i>Qipao</i> can make the women's body figures looking better. However, if you do not have a good figure, <i>qipao</i> will expose the imperfect part. In the opposite, if you have a good figure, <i>qipao</i> will accentuate the good figure and catch other people's eyes.	Cgao	The initial <i>qipao</i> looked like a bell without showing any figure. It actually looked ugly. I personally like the fitted long traditional not the initial <i>qipao</i> . I don't think that <i>qipao</i> is suitable for foreigners. <i>Qipao</i> is good for eastern women. Europeans and Americans have bigger bone structure than we have. European and American women generally have bigger chests, curvier backs (sway back) and fuller hips than Chinese women do. Western women's figure is so curvy that the <i>qipao</i> does not look good on them.
Than	My mother said that <i>qipao</i> is only suitable for people having a good body figure. I agree with her that a good body figure is antecedent to wear a <i>qipao</i> .	Clu	This is just my personal opinion. I like to see <i>qipao</i> worn by women with medium figures, not too thin showing the bone structure or too chubby. A woman with a medium frame and figure can wear <i>qipao</i> better.

Note. TWN = Taiwan; CHN = China

Table 11 Summary of participants' perceptions of qipao fit and body figure (continued)

TWN	Perceptions of <i>qipao</i> silhouette and body figure	CHN	Perceptions of <i>qipao</i> silhouette and body figure
Tlo	I think that <i>qipao</i> has been designed based on women's figures. So, it can accentuate women's figures, such as the chest looks fuller, the waist looks thinner and the woman looks taller. It is not just suitable for eastern women but brings out the good part of a woman's figure. Western women have larger circumference that gives a feeling of "strong" in comparison with Chinese women's "soft" and smaller circumference.	Cch	Asian women have small and petite figures. <i>Qipao</i> is suitable for petite women. A woman does not have to be tall but she definitely cannot be fat. Thinner women can present the <i>qipao</i> better. ... The height is not a critical issue, you can always wear a high heel to enhance your height.
Tch	When a dress loosely fits without showing any figure it is not a <i>qipao</i> . I think that <i>qipao</i> can well present a woman's figure. I don't think that thinness or fatness affects the aesthetic or the presentation of the <i>qipao</i> . However, a proportional shape is an essential element to present a <i>qipao</i> well. A woman does not have to be tall or slender, but she should have a good proportion to wear the <i>qipao</i> well.	Cgu	In the 1930s, in order to show off the figure, women from higher social status in Shanghai began to adopt a fitted <i>qipao</i> . Some kinds of <i>qipao</i> cannot be well presented unless the wear has a good figure.. The ideal figure for the <i>qipao</i> is.. she should be tall, at least 165 cm., not too fat and have a small waist.
Tpo	<i>Qipao</i> is a fitted garment so it is very feminine. The feminine, I mean, that <i>qipao</i> can well present a woman's double S curve, a front view of a woman's figure [the front S curve] and a side view of a woman's figure [the side S curve] .I think women having big bone structures should not wear the <i>qipao</i> . Also, black people may not be suitable for wearing a <i>qipao</i> because their skin is too dark. I wouldn't wear a <i>qipao</i> until I lost weight and felt confident about my figure.	Czh	A woman with a thin figure can present a <i>qipao</i> better than a woman who is a little bit overweight. The ideal figure for wearing a <i>qipao</i> nicely is having some "fat" and rounded sloped shoulders...I don't mean that the shoulder is very sloped but...just not like Western women's flat shoulders.
		Cwei	<i>Qipao</i> can show off a woman's figure. To wear a <i>qipao</i> well, the wearer has to be thin.

Note. TWN = Taiwan; CHN = China

### The Fabrics, Colors and Design Motifs

From participants' reactions to the images, three types of fabrics (satin, brocade and prints), and three fabric contents (silk, cotton and silk blends) were the most-mentioned materials for a *qipao*. The fabric depended on the formality of the occasion. Silk or synthetic satin with painted graphic or embroidery and brocade were the fabrics for a formal occasion, while cotton fabric was better for casual or daily wear *qipao*. Among participants' selections, flowers and leaves were the favorite patterns. The dragon has long been the imperial symbol in Chinese culture. While participants saw that Western designers had decorated *qipao* with small dragons (Image 5; Table 13), participants did not have comments about it. However, when the dragon was placed at the center of a *qipao*, such as the long garment with the large dragon motif centered in the design from YSL FA04 ready-to wear collection (Image 1 and 2; Table 13), participants associated the garment with the traditional dragon robe or said that this *qipao* was better for a "strong" woman. The size and the location of the dragon affected participants' perception of the *qipao*. Cgao made these comments while she saw the yellow YSL garment.

The embroidery and the color (gold) remind me of a dragon robe (emperor's robe).

Nicole's [Nicole Kidman] facial expression is straightforward, harsh and dominant.

However, these expressions do not make Nicole suitable for the traditional *qipao*, but closer to the feeling of a dragon robe. After all, Nicole is a "strong" woman. (Cgao)

Images #1 to #5 in Table 12 show the most-mentioned textiles. The fabric affected the participant's perception of a *qipao*. When a *qipao* is made of a modern fabric, (such as #6 in Table 12), participants were hesitant to call it *qipao* despite its mandarin collar and left side front opening. Yves Saint Laurent presented several pieces inspired by Chinese design and symbol elements for his 2004 fall collection. He combined Chinese elements with new

materials (YSL example in Table 13). Four of the Taiwanese participants thought that the garment did not look like a *qipao* because of the fabric and color. They thought that the fabric and color looked like the material used for a car-racing uniform or for a wetsuit. The surface looks like plastic, which presents the design theme of “technology” instead of “Chinese.” Two Chinese participants had similar comments on the fabric. One thought that the fabric looked like a rain-resistant fabric used for a racecar driver while the other thought the fabric too “cheap” to go with the printed “noble dragon.”

A *qipao* can be any color. The selection of the color depends on the occasion and wearer’s intentions. The most popular colors for a traditional *qipao* are red, blue, yellow or gold. A *qipao* would be appropriate for a uniform or in the workplace. A Taiwanese participant, Tlin, mentioned:

When *qipao* is used for a uniform, the color should be dark, white or solid as the other kinds of uniforms. When you work, you don’t want to use a shiny color, such as red or orange color, to draw attention. The attention should be put on the customers or the work. The mid-tone purple color worn by China Airline flight attendants looks good. Also, the purple was an elegant color, so it is a good selection for a uniform. From the material aspect, this uniform has a light fabric [material in the light color] so it is very good for work or to go with other garments, such as an apron or a sweater. . . .The fancy *qipao* you had shown me earlier are not proper for a working environment. I think color affects the look. In a working environment, a professional color is important.

Table 12 *Qipao Fabrics*

 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	 <p>3</p>
Silk satin painted with flowers	Silk brocade with botanical pattern	Satin with embroidery
 <p>4</p>	 <p>5</p>	 <p>6</p>
Print cotton with flower pattern	Solid cotton	Fabric with modern pattern

*Note.* Image #1 and 2 Dong Fang *Qipao*, (2004); Image #3, Yang (2005); Image# 4; Yi Qian *Qipao* (1990); Image 5, Yang (1981); Image #6 Tam (2005).

Table 13 *Color and Textiles Pattern*

<p>1. YSL FA04 collection with dragon motif and high tech fabric</p> 	<p>2. YSL FA04 collection with dragon motif</p> 	<p>3. Gong Li red garment</p> 
<p>4. Cavalli SP03</p> 	<p>5. Cavalli SP03</p> 	<p>6. Gong Li attend Frence Film Festival</p> 

*Note.* Image # 1, and 2 Style.com (2003); Image #3, Qianglong.com (2003); Image #4 and 5 Styke.com (2002); Image #6, Cannes Film Festival kick-off (2004).

In China, red is associated with good luck and happiness; therefore, red is the primary color for a wedding *qipao*. According to tradition, a bride has to wear red from top to toe

and inside out so the red can bring luck to the marriage. Two Chinese participants had followed this custom in their weddings, but none of the Taiwanese mentioned having done so. Two married Taiwanese and one engaged participant did not or would not select *qipao* for a wedding dress. As red is also the symbol of China, the color is often selected for occasions that celebrate Chinese culture. For example, two Chinese participants wore their red wedding dresses to cultural events in the U.S.A. Czh stated that

I decided to wear my red wedding dress in the [student-organized] parade because the red and embroidery clearly showed my Chinese culture. Also, I requested the tailor to incorporate the high stand collar from the early *qipao*...

According to Chinese participants, in China, hotel ushers, restaurant servers, and receptionists for the national party also wear a red *qipao*. However, red is not the color for a daily wear or a casual *qipao* because it is so eye-catching and too flashy for daily social interactions. A Chinese participant, Clu, stated:

A: No, I think that color [red] is too shiny [for a social event].

C: The red is too shiny, then, what would you select?

A: I would select something in a light color with embroidery. I personally like pale colors, light blue or white.

C: You like the light colors?

A: Yes, light colors will not bring other people's eyes on you. The red color is so eye-catching. Even if you wear black shoes, the red is too shiny for a social occasion.

Taiwanese participants mentioned that red *qipao* was used for a wedding dress. They respected the red as a traditional color, but they wouldn't wear it themselves because it was not modern. A Taiwanese participant, Tpo, stated that a modern *qipao* or a fashionable *qipao* should not be red or navy. Twu also stated that: "I don't like the *qipao* made of

traditional motifs and colors, such as red color with a graphic of “long life.” In general, Taiwanese participants thought of red as a traditional and outdated color. A red *qipao* therefore was seen as from the “past” or “old-fashioned.” Taiwanese participants preferred to select fashionable colors even when they use the *qipao* to represent their culture.

Not all red *qipao* received positive comments. Some cases of red were perceived as “tacky” or “gaudy” because of the fabric pattern. Gong Li’s *qipao* (Table 13) is an example. Gong Li is a famous Chinese actress who is internationally well known for her beauty. During the interview, three images of her wearing a *qipao* or *qipao*-inspired garment were shown to participants. Two of the images received positive comments, but the one shown in Table 13 did not. Gong Li’s *qipao* in Table 13 was made of a cotton print of red peonies with green leaves and a peacock with a colorful tail; this was a popular print in Taiwan during the 1950s. It was often used on bed sheets or on scarves for farmers. When the Taiwanese participants saw this image, most of them connected it with bed sheets from the past and evaluated it as “tacky” or as “grandmom’s fabric.” They thought that it was not the right pattern and color for an elegant *qipao*. Two Chinese participants also commented that the fabric was too tacky; one of the Chinese participants associated the pattern with traditional Chinese New Year paintings. The red peony symbolizes wealth and goodness, so it frequently appears on Chinese New Year’s cards.

Like red, yellow is also a traditional Chinese color that represents the emperor. Participants did not have much to say about yellow when it was mentioned individually for a *qipao*. However, when the yellow appears with a dragon (#1 in Table 13), participants tended to dislike it. Three (50%) Taiwanese and five (71%) Chinese stated that the dragon symbolizes the (male) emperor, and so it is too masculine for a woman’s garment. Two Taiwanese participants stated that the color from YSL’s design (Table 13) is a neon yellow,

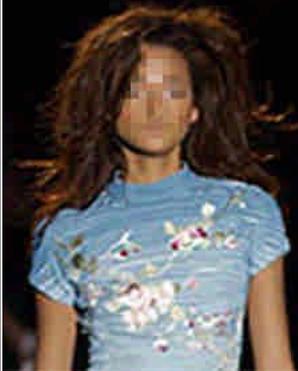
which is not the right yellow for the emperor; moreover, it was not flattering to the skin tone of Asian women. One Chinese participant stated that Western designers did not know the meanings of the dragon and the color yellow, so they were unable to use these Chinese motifs correctly. Roberto Cavalli's 2003 fall collection was inspired by Chinese cultural elements. One of his pieces (Table 13) incorporated a mandarin collar, yellow color, an embroidered phoenix and a flared skirt. Participants thought that piece was cute because the dragon was not at the center of the abdomen. When the dragon is located in the center of the garment, participants received a strong message that was a dragon robe. When the dragon was located on the side, participants viewed it as acceptable decoration for a *qipao*.

In short, the results of the study indicated that the color bore a cultural message, but it was not an independent criterion to evaluate a *qipao*. The meaning of the color is generated in the context of its use and the fabric pattern.

#### Dressing-up the *Qipao*: Hair, Accessories and Shoes

Dressing-up constitutes another layer of meaning for the *qipao*. Participants stated that to present a traditional *qipao*, the wearer needed to wear proper make-up, pull up her hair and choose the right shoes. Images #1 to #3 in Table 14 show the proper hairstyle according to the participants. Two of the Chinese participants mentioned that a hairstyle from 1930s Shanghai was a good selection too (#4, #5 and #6, Table 14). When a woman wears a short *qipao* or a *qipao* made of modern fabric, she could have a more modern hairstyle (#7, #8 and #9 in Table 14). However, the hairstyle needed to match the characteristics of the *qipao*. Hairstyles in #10 and #11 in Table 14 were perceived by all participants as too messy or too modern.

Table 14 Examples of Hairstyles

			
1 Up-swept hairstyle	2 Up-swept hairstyle	3 Up-swept hairstyle	4 30s Shanghai hair style
			
5 30s Shanghai hair style	6 30s Shanghai hairstyle	7 Acceptable	8 Acceptable
			
9 Acceptable	10 Not acceptable	11 Not acceptable	

*Note.* Image #1 and 2, Yi Qian *Qipao* (1989); Image #3 and 9, Guo (2005); Image # 4 and 5, Shanghai digital library, (2006); Image #6, Lu (2006); #7 Lady.tom.com (2006); Image #8, Yuan (2000); Image #10 Style.com (2002); #11 L'officiel et de la couture et de la mode de Paris, (1997).

All participants thought that a toe-covered high heel is the best shoe to wear with a *qipao* on a formal occasion. However, two Chinese and Taiwanese participants indicated that

sandals with heels were also fine (#1 to #3 in Table 15). Participants thought that high heels would enhance the wearer's elegance. Chinese embroidered shoes (#4 in Table 15) were another good selection if the wearer felt uncomfortable in heels. Slip-on shoes were improper (#5 and #7 in Table 15). White socks with sandals, proposed by John Galliano (#6 and #7 in Table 15), met with disapproval. Taiwanese participants connected the white socks with high school student uniforms. Chinese participants thought they were tacky and ugly. *Qipao* was perceived as an elegant and neat garment that should not have tacky accessories. Following this logic, participants thought that simple jewelry was the best selection for a *qipao*. Cwu also asserted that, in general, a woman wearing too much jewelry looked coquettish.

Table 15 *Examples of Shoes*

1 	2 	3 	4 
Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
5 	6 	7 	
Not acceptable	Not acceptable	Not acceptable	

*Note.* Image #1, Shou news (2006); Image #2, Dong Fang *Qipao* (2005); Image #3, Yang (1981); Image # 4 Taichung government website (2005); Image #5, Lady.tom.com (2006). Image # 6 and 7, Style.com (1997).

The images in Table 16 show unconventional ways of dressing up *qipao*. The first image (#1) shows a *qipao* worn with a sport jacket and sporty accessories, including sneakers, white

belt and “fanny pack” bag. The model in image #2 (Table 16) wears the *qipao* with jeans, a beret and heeled sandals. Almost all participants stated that the mix-and-match of the *qipao* in the first image looked bizarre; it mixed what they thought of as an elegant *qipao* with sportish elements. Two Chinese and two Taiwanese participants thought that this way of dressing up the *qipao* compromised the beauty of the *qipao*. Chinese participants used the sartorial code for traditional *qipao*’ to evaluate the image as unaesthetic. Cwu stated that “since you wear a *qipao*, you should follow the code of the *qipao* to dress up the *qipao* properly instead of mixing it with strange elements.” In contrast, Taiwanese participants tended to evaluate the image as unacceptable based on how modern fashionable dress should be aesthetically mixed-and-matched. Tpo and Tlin stated “I don’t like this kind of mix-and-match, it did not look good.” Tlo made fun of this image, criticized the model’s make-up, and concluded that the outfit was put together using elements that did not mix and match. That is, even though no one approved of this unconventional way of wearing a *qipao*, the two groups disapproved for different reasons. The Chinese cited *qipao*’s sartorial code, but the Taiwanese cited the aesthetics of fashion. The second image in Table 16 provides further information about how two participants made these judgments.

The left model's outfit in Image #2 in Table 16 was seen as a fashionable or modern way of mixing-and-matching the *qipao*. Chinese participants thought this example did not need comments or interpretation. A Taiwanese participant, Tch, stated that she was not a fashionable person so she would not wear it, but it did look nice. Tlin, Tpo, Twu and Tlo all stated that it was a good way to update the *qipao* so that it matched current tastes. Tpo explained that she did not like to wear a traditional *qipao* for daily wear because it looked out of date. The image in #2 presented a good mix of elements, military beret, elegant *qipao*, casual jeans and sexy sandals, and more important, all elements fit together to create a

fashionable modern look. Tpo did not pick any other kind of *qipao* that I showed her after asking “Would you choose a *qipao* for daily or any social situation?” Tpo only considered wearing the mix-and-matched *qipao* (#2 in Table 16) because it fit the current nostalgia trend. Twu made a similar remark when she explained why she had not chosen a *qipao* for her wedding dress.

Q: ...um...there’s conflict....I did not wear the *qipao* for my wedding because I think the *qipao* is too traditional. I don't like to show traditional feeling in my wedding.

C: Sounds like the *qipao* has ambivalent characteristics to you.

Q: Definitely. A bride wearing a *qipao* looks old-fashioned, like returning to the past. If the *qipao* is not short enough, it looks old-fashioned. And, it is impossible for me to wear a short *qipao* for my wedding [because of the formality], so I decided not to wear it.

Tlo stated that there was a sartorial rule to dressing up a traditional *qipao*, such as pulling up the hair, and wearing closed-toed shoes, but she would present the *qipao* with a fashionable modern look if she had a chance to wear a casual *qipao*. Tlin wore the *qipao* to a Halloween party in the U.S.A. and stated that she would like to wear a *qipao* with jeans for convenience.

It seems that traditional *qipao* for ceremonial or more formal occasions and *qipao* for daily activities have distinct sartorial codes. The sartorial code for a traditional *qipao* follows the rules established in the past, and “being fashionable or modern” was the sartorial guide for daily *qipao*. A traditional *qipao* has to be dressed up and worn in a certain way, but both groups prefer dressing up the *qipao* in an alternative way. The Chinese tended to modify or modernize a traditional *qipao* by shortening its length, removing the sleeves, or changing the collar. Taiwanese participants preferred mixing and matching traditional and non-traditional

elements, a popular fashion trend. Taiwanese participants were inclined to accept postmodern aesthetics that promote the ideas of “play” and “pastiche” and introduce two artistic techniques: bricolage and decentering (Morgado, 1996). “Play” is for fun and not for a certain purpose. The second image in Table 16 is one kind of “pastiche” that does not have to bear or present “traditional culture.”

The reactions to Image #3 in Table 16 are other examples demonstrating the differences between the two groups. All Chinese participants see Image 3 as positive and efficient for the working environment and daily wear. Most Taiwanese thought it was fine; however, three participants thought that the fabric and the pattern were too traditional and outdated.

Table 16 *Unconventional Way of Dressing up a Qipao*



Note. Image #1, Clark (2000); Image #2, TVBS.com (2004); Image #3, Bao (1998).

### *Qipao Types*

Participants used a variety of criteria to categorize the *qipao*. Traditional and fashionable *qipao* were defined by appearance and the wearer’s temperaments. The difference between a formal and a casual *qipao* depends on when and where the *qipao*

would be worn. When a *qipao* incorporated extra style elements or when one of the six style elements was changed, the *qipao* was perceived as having been modified. The *qipao* with a leaf-shaped hemline (#1 in Tables 9 and 10) is one example. Some participants defined traditional *qipao* based on the silhouette. Some participants considered a consistently loosely-fitting silhouette as a traditional *qipao*. But, some participants defined a traditional *qipao* as a form-fitting garment, because *qipao* has developed into a form-fitting garment through history.

The way that participants perceive and define *qipao* reflects their knowledge and experience of it and also their attitudes toward wearing a *qipao*. Every participant had her own way of distinguishing *qipao* and its use because she had learned about *qipao* in a different way. However, the participants shared many meanings of *qipao* learned through their respective cultures.

The “time” and “style elements” were two main variables for participants to identify the *qipao* type. When a participant had better knowledge of the *qipao*, she was able to identify historical *qipao* styles. Clu and Cgao, both from China, were the most knowledgeable about the *qipao* among participants. They were able to distinguish *qipao* styles and silhouettes from different time periods. Cwu, Cgu and Czhu from China had good knowledge of the *qipao*, but they did not place the 12 images in the correct historical order. A participant who had less knowledge of *qipao* was unable to recognize early kinds of *qipao*, or she was not aware that various kinds of *qipao* styles had been worn in the past. Most Taiwanese participants had very limited knowledge of *qipao* style changes. Tch and Tpo, both from Taiwan, may have had the least knowledge about *qipao* history among the participants. They were unable to recognize the initial *qipao* or any 1920s *qipao* as a *qipao* (Tables 8, 8-1 and 8-2). Tlin from Taiwan had inherited two *qipao* from her grandmother. She associated *qipao* with her

grandmother's *qipao* collection and what her grandmother had taught her.

The vocabularies used by participants clearly reflected that Chinese and Taiwanese came from different political systems. Chinese participants used the terms “end of Qing dynasty,” “1930s Shanghai,” “P.R.C.-established,” and “after reforming and opening markets” to describe *qipao* from different eras. The country name, R.O.C., was not present in Chinese participants' vocabulary, indicating that the P.R.C. government never recognized Taiwan as an independent country. Taiwanese participants, in contrast, did not use the term “1930s Shanghai *qipao*” as they did not have enough knowledge that *qipao* as daily dress reached its peak in the 1930s and that *qipao* was a symbol of urban dress, such as that worn in Shanghai. Also, Shanghai was too far away from the Taiwanese daily experience. Taiwanese participants use the term “early R.O.C.” or “the *qipao* from grandmother or great-grandmother” to differentiate historical *qipao* (Tables 9 and 10).

Both Chinese and Taiwanese groups used films or TV programs as references when they evaluated *qipao*. The Hong Kong film, *In the Mood for Love*, starring Maggie Zhang, was the most mentioned film because Maggie wore 26 *qipao* in that movie; the participants voted her *qipao* “the most beautiful and ideally traditional *qipao*.” A series of romance novels written by the Taiwanese novelist, Qong Iao (瓊瑤), was cited by both groups as the reference to describe and categorize the *qipao*. Several Chinese participants mentioned the female spy from KMT, the political party established by the R.O.C., always stereotyped with the *qipao*. This perception reflected the hostile relationship between Communist China and Taiwan in history. Overall, Chinese participants knew more about the *qipao* than Taiwanese participants did, perhaps because Chinese learned about *qipao* information from websites. When I googled “*qipao*,” over 95% of the sites came from China. It is also easy to see that Chinese share their *qipao* knowledge, such as Hu Yi, who described her 11 *qipao* on her personal blog

(Hu, 2006). It seems that Taiwanese are not as interested in learning about *qipao*, and the *qipao* is not a popular topic on Taiwanese websites. Therefore, it is reasonable that Chinese know more about *qipao* than the Taiwanese do.

While most participants used the words “traditional,” “current,” “formal,” “casual” or “fashionable,” to differentiate *qipao*, Cgu had a very creative way of categorizing them. She divided the *qipao* based on the style sophistication, fit, occasion, and social status. According to Cgu, the first of her four categories of the *qipao* was the long sophisticated *qipao*, which was worn on the most formal or special occasions, such as the Academy Awards. This type of *qipao* was very similar to the revealing Western evening gown. In other words, it was a *qipao* inspired by evening gowns. The second type of *qipao* was used to celebrate Chinese culture; it was not as elaborate as the formal *qipao*, but it represented Chinese culture. The fabric, hairstyle and accessories have to be matched to this type of *qipao*. Also, the first two types of *qipao* had a form-fitted silhouette and high side slits, so a good figure was critical. The third type was the daily wear cotton *qipao*, which had a comfortable fit with shorter side slits. Cgu mentioned that this type of *qipao* was comparable to the *qipao* that had appeared in China in the 1960s and in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1970s. It was plain and sober, and adopted by students and single women. The last type of *qipao* was for women without good figures or for women of lower social status. It was looser and was often made of brown, gray or blue cotton. Cgu used the Chinese movie star Gong Li’s *qipao* as an example of her first type of *qipao* (#3 in Table 13). She also cited examples of the second type from her *qipao* category while she reviewed *qipao* images (#7 and # 10 in Tables 10-1 and 10-2). Cgu’s remarks reflected that the category of the *qipao* was bound to class and figure. The loose-fitted *qipao* was for lower class women while the tailored fit was a fundamental attribute of the luxurious *qipao* worn by women of the upper classes. The luxurious *qipao* required a “good figure.”

Women from the lower classes wore the most sedate colors.

According to Chen (2001), Communist China used to consider fashion, including the *qipao*, as bourgeois and decadent, and turned China into a country of people dressed in gray. Chinese Communists believed that clothing color conveyed an image of social improvement; therefore, the dress reform in the Maoist era symbolized socialist progress toward gender and class equality (Chen, 2001). *Qipao* predated Communist China, so it reflected class privilege and social hierarchy. Apparently, socialist political ideology has been deeply imbedded into Cgu's taxonomy of *qipao* types. Czh from China also stated that *qipao* made of expensive fabric was reserved for members of the higher classes, such as landlords. None of the Taiwanese participants associated *qipao* types with social class.

In short, participants' differentiation of *qipao* types reflected their cultural knowledge and upbringing. There is no fixed standard, but the temporal factor, style elements and wearer's temperament, which will be discussed further in the next section, were three fundamental variables used to differentiate *qipao*. The criteria of *qipao* categories are relative. A loosely fitting *qipao* with figure slightly showing may be evaluated as a traditional *qipao* or as a *qipao* for older women. Participants' knowledge and experience determine the category for that *qipao*. In addition, social interaction and wearer's demeanor also affect participants' differentiation of *qipao*. In this section, I have discussed how physical elements affect participants' perception of the *qipao*. In the next section, I will discuss the impact of social interaction on *qipao* usage and participants' differentiation of the *qipao* types.

### Part III: *Qipao* Usage in Social Situations

*Qipao* in the social arena was consistently perceived as formal dress, such as that worn for a party or a wedding. The *qipao* was also seen as a Chinese garment that represents Chinese culture in a cultural situation. Four of the Chinese participants had attended “Chinese Model Team,” organized by the Chinese Student Association at their university, to present the *qipao* on campus in the Chinese New Year and Moon Festival party. Further discussion of *qipao* and cultural identity is presented in the next section. In this section, I focus on *qipao* usage in daily social settings and wearer’s experience of *qipao*.

#### *Where and When to Wear the Qipao*

Based on the results (Table 7), Chinese participants had more experience than Taiwanese of wearing a *qipao*. Chinese participant Cwu mentioned that she had selected the *qipao* for social gatherings in the U.S.A. a couple of times because she thought that *qipao* made her look good. Even though she did not have the chance to wear the *qipao* in China, she had noticed that more and more girls were wearing a *qipao* to work or to go out for shopping in Shanghai since 2003, while *qipao* was in fashion. Cwu expressed that she would consider wearing a *qipao* for hanging out with friends if she was in a good mood. Cgao mentioned that she wore a *qipao* once for a friend’s party before she came to the U.S.A. Cgu agreed that some kind of *qipao* was suitable for hanging out with friends but others were not. Cwei had worn *qipao* once because she was a receptionist for a school activity.

Taiwanese participants had quite different perspectives than did Chinese participants about using *qipao*. First, very few Taiwanese participants had worn the *qipao* before (Table 7-1). With the exception of wearing *qipao* for school or a class activity, only one Taiwanese

participant, Twu, would consider adopting *qipao* for a daily activity, such as going out for dinner with a friend. However, two Taiwanese participants purposely selected the *qipao* as a party costume, while none of the Chinese participants perceived the *qipao* as a party costume. Tlin adopted the *qipao* for a Halloween costume, and Tpo would have worn the *qipao* only if she attended a theme party with the theme of nostalgia or Chinese ancient dress. To Taiwanese participants, the *qipao* is not inviolable but fun dress, and this matches Taiwanese participants' preference to mix and match the *qipao* with other styles. Tlin and Tpo's perceptions of the *qipao* are below.

C: Had you worn it [*qipao*] here (U.S.A.)?

L: Yes, I had worn it to a Halloween party.

C: Why did you select a *qipao* for a Halloween party?

L: Everyone wore different style garments than regular dress for the Halloween party. And, *qipao* is not a regular dress. (Tlin)

C: Have you ever thought about wearing a *qipao* for a special occasion?

P: Sure, if there is a fun party, I will think about it.

C: Fun party, could you explain more?

P: I meant the theme party. If there is a theme party with the theme of nostalgic or Chinese ancient dress, then, I will wear the *qipao*. (Tpo)

The participants had seen other women wearing the *qipao* in public. Many hotel receptionists, restaurant hostesses and flight attendants wore the *qipao* uniform. The appropriation of the *qipao* uniform depended on the occupation. When the occupation was labor intensive, the *qipao* was seen as improper. Participants thought that it was suitable for flight attendants and secretaries to wear the *qipao* uniform because an elegant *qipao* gives them a professional image. Clu stated:

I think that *qipao* uniform relies on business environments. Flight attendants are higher end servants than are hotel ushers. Flight attendants need to provide good service and present a good image to passengers....

The purpose of hotel ushers is to lead you into the hotel. Most people do not pay attention to hotel ushers' *qipao*. Therefore, I think hotels do not invest much money on their *qipao* uniforms. My impression of those *qipao* uniforms was not good, some of them were ugly.

*Qipao* uniforms worn by hotel and restaurant personnel received mixed comments from Chinese participants, while only one Taiwanese participant had seen the *qipao* uniform in a restaurant when she was a child. About 50% of the Chinese participants said that *qipao* uniforms worn by hotel or restaurant personnel were not attractive because the uniforms were ready-to-wear, and most restaurants did not select quality fabric. Cgao mentioned that *qipao* uniforms worn in restaurants degraded the *qipao* because an elegant *qipao* was improper for a noisy restaurant.

The quality of an usher's *qipao* is not good. Their *qipao* does not fit well because they are ready-to-wear *qipao*, often looking loose without any shape. (Cwu)

Also, they are servants in the hotel. When they wear a long *qipao* and serve between a smoky kitchen and customers, how can they elegantly present *qipao*? (Cgao)

In addition, the restaurant *qipao* uniform was ankle-length and often red. It was the most mentioned *qipao* image among Chinese participants. It seems to be part of Chinese participants' experience of the *qipao*. Cgao stated that:

I think an usher's *qipao* is not so bad. However, when many hotel ushers wear a long *qipao*, it becomes a stereotype. When you wear a long *qipao*, it makes you look like a hotel usher.

A knee-length *qipao* with plain color is a good selection for the workplace or for a uniform. However, two participants thought that *qipao* is not as good as a Western suit for a manager's position or a public presentation. That is, *qipao* does not look as professional and powerful as a Western suit.

C: Have you ever thought to wear a *qipao* for other occasion?

A: Yes, I think at some Western or Oriental (Chinese) social occasions, I may select the *qipao*. Especially, in a Western casual occasion, not the business occasion or meeting, I would wear a *qipao* because *qipao* is unique. It can represent my oriental characteristics.... I think I should look professional in a business or meeting environment. The *qipao* is elegant but not suitable for business or presentation occasions.

(Clu)

### *The Wearing of the Qipao*

#### Physical Constraints

When wearing a *qipao*, all participants stated that *qipao* would pull on the upper body so the wearer had to hold the body erect. The *qipao* also limited the wearer's mobility or body movements because it was a tailored garment. Most participants did not feel uncomfortable straightening up their posture, but they did feel uncomfortable for other reasons. Tch mentioned that the side slits exposing the leg made her uncomfortable, and she had to manage the side slit to maintain a modest position.

I don't feel uncomfortable with that *qipao*. I don't feel any inconvenience. But, I do feel that I have to hold and keep my back straight all the time. (Clu)

When you sit, you have to pull the *qipao* a little bit up to give allowance for the *qipao* not pulling you back. Your back has to be straight while sitting down and that makes

you uncomfortable. This would be the same as when you wear a one-piece Western garment. Except for this constraint, I don't feel other constraints from the *qipao*.

Especially, I feel very comfortable while I wear a cotton *qipao*.

(Cwu)

[For attending a wedding banquet...] The *qipao* would limit your body movement so it is not easy for you to extend the arm to reach a dish [in a wedding banquet]. Also, it is not convenient to take public transportation. You need other people to pick you up and give you a ride...I felt okay [about the *qipao* that Tch had worn before] but the side slit was so high, reaching to the middle of my thigh; I had to watch out when I sat; I had to be so careful to arrange the front bottom piece of the *qipao*, separated from the back piece by the side slit [so the leg can be well concealed]. I think people who used to wear the mini skirt would feel OK with that height of the slit. I am not used to wearing mini skirts, and I used to walk in a big step. (Tch)

To wear a *qipao*, you have to maintain your upper body straight up. *Qipao* is not easy for you to squat or sit. Basically, *qipao* looks pretty but it does not provide any functionality. It is not easy for you stretch out the arms or pick up something from the floor. Also, you have to hold your two legs together all the time while you sit, and that is so tiring and does not meet ergonomic needs. (Twu)

Another constraint comes from the fitted *qipao* forcing the wearer to maintain her figure and weight. Also, participants thought that everyday clothing should be functional. *Qipao* is a sophisticated form of dress that requires much attention. A wearer could not wear a *qipao* without matching accessories and a complementary hairstyle. Participants thought

that wearing a *qipao* was time-consuming. In addition, while participants were accustomed to loose-fitting garments, they were not used to a tailored *qipao*. Therefore, *qipao* is too inconvenient and uncomfortable to wear every day. About 30% of participants, one Chinese and three Taiwanese, would not wear a *qipao* for daily activity for that reason.

C: Did you wear the *qipao* when the *qipao* was in the fashion?

Z: No, my major is chemistry. I have to work in the lab a lot so I didn't have any chance to wear it. Also, in Shanghai, the weather is either too hot or too cold. When it is hot, you want to wear less and a comfortable garment, and *qipao* is not the selection. When it is too cold, you want to wear something warm. *Qipao* is not a good choice for the cold weather either. I may wear a *qipao* to hang out with a friend or go shopping but definitely not every day. *Qipao* is not convenient for daily activities because...wearing a *qipao*, a beautiful garment, to school would be too distracting. In addition, when you wear a *qipao*, you have to select proper accessories. You cannot put on a *qipao* without the concern of the matching. And, this is time-consuming.

(Cwei)

C: How is the *qipao* uncomfortable?

L: It has many buttons. In comparing to wearing a T-shirt, 10 seconds; *qipao* needs more time to put on and button up. *Qipao* is a fitted garment; it is unable to compete with ready-to-wear garments for the price and comfort.

C:.... any other things make you uncomfortable when wearing a *qipao*?

L: Sure, there is. When you wear a *qipao* and eat too much, the button on the waist area could be unbuttoned by the "pot belly." When you are thin, you probably do not feel this way, but when you gain 10 pounds, you are never able to wear the same *qipao* again. So, I think it is very inconvenient. You have to keep your weight and figure

exactly the same as the figure at the time when you buy a custom-made *qipao*. It does not give you any allowance to gain or lose a little bit of weight. (Tlin)

### Social Conformity

Social conformity is another factor affecting participants' willingness to wear a *qipao*. Participants thought of *qipao* as a sophisticated eye-catching garment that would not only make the wearer feel uncomfortable but distinguish the wearer. Four Chinese and two Taiwanese participants (about 50% of the total sample) stated that they would not wear a *qipao* because it looked too different. One of the Chinese participants, Cgao, received criticism from her friends when she wore a *qipao* to a friend's birthday party. Her friends thought she was overdressed:

G: I wouldn't wear a *qipao* to school. I wore a *qipao* to my friend's birthday party once. People around me said "Wa, why are you so dressed up?"

C: Why did your friends ask you this question? Is it because your dress was too special, too formal or too sophisticated?

G: I just wore that *qipao* for couple of hours. My friends felt strange. They thought I was overdressed. So, I won't wear a *qipao* to a birthday party again. (Cgao)

I don't want to look different than other people so I won't wear a *qipao* in the social arena. I would wear the *qipao* only if I were a bride. (Cwei)

The attitude of "looking similar to others" connotes a message that *qipao* is a cultural object that is used to differentiate insiders and outsiders. Tch, Cwei and Czh clearly stated that everyone is the same in China or in Taiwan; there is no need to distinguish oneself:

In China, I would select a dress with the design of *qipao* elements. I won't select a traditional *qipao* in China because there is no need to tell other Chinese that I am a

Chinese, or that I inherited Chinese culture. In the U.S.A., I would select the most formal *qipao*, the ankle-length with Chinese pattern or embroidery. (Czh)  
 Everyone is the same (Taiwanese), so it is strange that you wear a *qipao*.(Tch)

Table 17 *Reasons to not Adopt the Qipao in Daily Social Activities*

Participant		Reasons not wear a <i>qipao</i> for daily activities		
		Body Constraints/ inconvenient	Not distinguish self out of the crowd	Others
Chinese	CLu		X	
	Cgao		X; no need distinguish self as a Chinese by a dress in U.S.A.	
	Cwu	X		
	Cch	X		
	Cgu			No comment on this issue
	Cwei		X	
	Czh		X; no need distinguish self as Chinese in China	
Taiwanese	Chen R	X	X; In Taiwan, we are all the same kind of people.	
	Twu	X		
	Tlin		X; do not want to make other people uncomfortable. Self uncomfortable because every one has their eyes on you.	
	Tpo			Personal preference; not like to wear the <i>qipao</i> ; not have a good figure
	Tlo			No comment on this issue
	Than	x; prefer Western dress		

## Part VI: *Qipao* Representation

Additional layers of *qipao*'s meaning come from what the *qipao* can represent, how it should be presented, how the wearer's temperament and behaviors affect the presentation of the *qipao* and how the *qipao* is associated with identity. In Part IV, I discuss *qipao*'s meaning from the concept of how *qipao* is connected to Chinese culture, women's beauty and Chinese women temperaments.

### *Qipao, Chinese Culture and Women's Beauty*

How *qipao* is associated with Chinese culture relied on participants' knowledge and interpretation of Chinese culture. Some participants were able to describe Chinese culture and easily connect Chinese culture to *qipao*, while some participants stated that Chinese culture is too broad or too complex to describe.

In this section, I focus on how the *qipao* is associated with Chinese culture. I analyze how participants used adjectives to introduce and describe the *qipao*. Participants may not have been able to explain clearly how the *qipao* is connected to Chinese culture, but from their application of specific adjectives, the underlying cultural values and beliefs can be discovered.

### *Chinese Adjectives and Their Meanings*

The most frequently used adjectives for describing *qipao*'s beauty and wearer's temperaments was *han xyu* (implicit or indirect; 含蓄), which was used by five Chinese and five Taiwanese (Table 18). The adjectives "elegant" and "graceful" (61.5%) were the next most frequently used, followed by *wan yue* (gentle and humble; 婉約) (Table 18). Other adjectives, including "delicate," "somber" and *han yang* (educated and cultivated; 涵養), were often used by participants (Table 18).

Most participants thought that it was difficult to describe Chinese culture; however, *han xyu* was the most frequently used descriptor of the characteristics of Chinese culture. Other adjectives, including “conservative,” *han yang*, “humble,” and *ju jin* (reserved; 拘謹), were used to describe Chinese culture (Table 19). Participants’ use of these adjectives indicated that the cultural contents of *qipao* were tightly connected to *han xyu*, elegant and graceful.

Simply speaking, *han xyu* means implicit or indirect. It has been frequently used to describe Chinese culture, Chinese literature and Chinese expressions. The expression of ideas, the *han xyu*, is similar to the way in which a symbol or a sign is signified. This process of assigning meaning is not linear but ambiguous. The signifier of *han xue* is not limited to an object; it could be a sentence, an occasion, a story or an abstract atmosphere for a reader or observer to interpret. For example, a famous Chinese classic novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, is a good example of the literary *han xyu* style. On the surface, the author was writing fiction but it actually told a true story. The author concealed his real intentions in the story of two people named “*zhen sh ying*/甄士隱” (“hiding the real”), and “*jia u cun*/賈語村” (“telling the illusion”). If a reader could not make sense of the clues that the author provided, the reader would have missed the riddle. In contrast, if the reader could catch the underlying meanings of the words, the reader would appreciate the author’s mastery and arrangement of the text, and this is the higher-level meaning of *han xyu*: deep appreciation. This may be comparable to drinking wine. While swallowing a mouthful of wine, a drinker is not tasting the wine. The taste of wine only can be savored when the drinker pays attention to it. Therefore, the inside meaning of the *han xyu*, the indirect expression, allows for more interpretations and makes the reader or observer “taste” the process of discovering. Chinese participant Cgao offered a very good explanation of how a

*qipao* is *han xyu*. She stated:

I would use the term “*hen you wei dao*”[“something tasted good”] to describe Maggie Zhang’s *qipao* in that movie [In the Mood for Love]. This term in my ideas is that you can appreciate Maggie’s *qipao* and subtle motions in a quiet way. From another way to look at this term, the term does not directly refer to how pretty she is, instead, the meaning of the term itself is unclear too. That is, there is no coherent explanation. You have to catch the meaning of the words by your own feeling. For example, in the past, Chinese never said “love” directly but talked about “the feeling of affinity.” [It is also like two people tasting the same food. When they both say “good,” it may not have exactly the same meaning of “good”]. This kind of expression is beyond a foreigner’s understanding. They don’t understand how this type of vague communication works. Western people wouldn’t understand this type of reversed way to express ideas. The characteristic of the *qipao*, to me, has this kind of vagueness. And, this is the beauty of the *qipao*.

That is, in comparison to directly speaking out, the implicit expression is conservative and unclear.

Table 18 *Adjectives Adopted to Describe Temperaments and Beauty*

	Adopted by numbers of Chinese participants	Adopted by numbers of Taiwanese Participants	% of total participants
<i>Han Xyu</i> [含蓄]	5	5	76.9%
Elegant/graceful	3	5	61.5%
<i>Wan Yue</i> [婉約]	4	1	38.5%
Delicate/Refined/Subtle	1	2	30.8%
Somber/simple	2	2	30.8%
<i>Han Yang</i> ; educated and cultivated [涵養]	3	1	30.8%
Conservative	1	2	23.1%
Sexy	2	0	15.4%

Table 19 *Adjectives Adopted to Describe Chinese Culture*

	Adopted by numbers of Chinese participants	Adopted by numbers of Taiwanese Participants	% of total participants
<i>Han Xyu</i> [含蓄]	5	4	69.2%
Conservative	2	1	23.1%
<i>Han Yang</i> ; educated and cultivated [涵養]	1	1	15.4%
Humble	1	1	15.4%
Open	1	1	15.4%
Broad and profound	2	0	15.4%

*Wan yue*, according to the Chinese dictionary, means gentle and humble. It is a feminine adjective and it is applied to women only. When a woman is described as *wan yue*, it means that she is gentle, obedient, humble, and polite. Therefore, *wan yue* is often used with *han*. While *wan yue* is used to describe a woman's beauty, it refers to traditional inner virtues that have been defined by traditional Chinese women disciplines, such as the "three dependences and four virtues" [三從四德]. The "three dependences" means that a woman

had to depend on and obey her father, then her husband and then her son. A woman had to cultivate inner virtues [婦德], maintain proper manners and appearance[婦容], behave properly[婦行], and implicitly express herself [婦言] (Lee, 1997). In other words, women are gentle, soft and weak, so they have to respect and submit to male authority. A Chinese female historian, Ban Tsao [班超; BCE 49-132], from the East Han dynasty, promoted the “three dependences and four virtues” by writing a book, *Nu Jie* [女誡], which was widely used as the guide to women's discipline in the past. Even during the late Qing dynasty, when the Chinese began to open modern schools for girls, *Nu Jie* was still as an important textbook to teach girls to be humble, obedient, gentle and disciplined (Lee, 1997). The adjective *wan yue* therefore was a very common term to describe the temperaments and characters of a traditional Chinese woman.

*Han yang* refers to the inner characteristics of a person that have to be cultivated and broadened through education. In Chinese culture, self-cultivation and pursuit of virtue were always core concepts. A person, especially an educated person, has to cultivate inner virtues. A traditional Chinese literature on morality, *Da Xue* [大學], stated that a wealthy person shows his wealth through his luxurious house, while a wise person reveals his quality virtues through good behavior and proper manners. Chinese culture emphasizes the cultivation of good characteristics but despises the external body. This idea can be found when participants used personal temperament as a critical factor in evaluating a *qipao* as Chinese traditional dress.

#### *What Adjectives Reveal*

Three themes emerged from analyzing the adjectives used to describe the *qipao*, the wearer’s temperament and the characteristics of Chinese culture. First, the inner virtues that

are transformed into personal temperaments are more important than *qipao* or personal physical characteristics to distinguish the *qipao* as a Chinese cultural object. Second, abstract cultural ideas or the feeling of the *qipao* are objectified through body posture and facial expression. Third, the concept of *qipao*'s beauty has been mingled with the Western concept of beauty that is often determined by body figure and dress silhouette.

### Chinese Women's Temperaments Make the *Qipao* Unique

Participants thought that a wearer's temperament, i.e., personality characteristics or manners of being displayed to others, played an important role in interpreting the *qipao*. Three Chinese and one Taiwanese participant mentioned that the wearer's temperaments pre-determine the quality of *qipao* presentation. Four Chinese and three Taiwanese participants believed that personal temperaments and the *qipao* complement each other, while two Taiwanese participants did not see temperament as a criterion.

In general, most participants believed that inner virtues transformed into personal temperaments affected the presentation of a *qipao*. In traditional Chinese culture, women were supposed to be *han xyu* (indirect and implicit) and *wan yue* (gentle and humble). In contrast to Western women, Chinese women seem passive, soft and indirect. Clu provided a very good explanation.

Western women are more expressive and unrestrained. They are good at expressing themselves. I don't mean "expressing" in a negative way. I think Western women are less bound to regulations than Chinese women. They often give me a feeling of liberal and open. They can say and do whatever they want. In contrast, Chinese women are unable to say what they really think. In past times, there were so many social regulations such as *San Gun Wu Tsun* [Chinese hierarchical social system that a wife

has to obey her husband] to constrain women's behaviors. So, Chinese women are *han xyu* but Western women are more outward.

Through contrast with the West, Chinese indirect and constrained characteristics became unique. The most used adjectives, *han xyu* and *wan yue*, are fundamental criteria to evaluate foreign women wearing a *qipao*. Participants always stated that Western women could not present the *han xyu* temperament as Chinese did, whenever they saw foreigners wearing the *qipao*. Most participants agreed that Western women would wear the *qipao* well if they had a smaller frame and a good figure. Participants pointed out that Venus Williams was too strong to wear a *qipao*, but Nicole Kidman had a good figure for wearing a *qipao*. However, none of the participants thought that Western women could wear a traditional *qipao* correctly because they did not have the cultural sensibility. They felt that foreigners cannot understand how Chinese culture was conveyed through the *qipao* and that foreigners do not understand how *han xyu* and *wan yue* can be presented through a garment. Several participants commented on this:

A: I think some of foreigners wear *qipao* nicely. However, the way they wear the *qipao* makes the *qipao* like other types of garments, it does not represent the [Chinese] culture.

C: What makes you feel this way? Because of the skin color? The face? Or the figure?

A: I think not because of their skin color or facial characteristics but . . . it just gives me a feeling that *qipao* is another article of clothing from their wardrobe. I am unable to catch any cultural feeling from their way of presenting the *qipao*. (Tch)

C: When you mentioned these foreigners wearing the *qipao* nicely, do they present a similar feeling as the Image #15, the one you think represents Chinese culture?

Q: No. Not at all. Their beauty is one kind of modern beauty not *han xyu*. ....

I really think that *qipao* does not suit black people [Venus Williams] because their temperaments are not right for the *qipao*. Their temperaments are very suitable for the hip-hop style, not for the *qipao*. They are much more open and active. (Twu)

The silhouette of Nicole Kidman's dress is similar to *qipao*'s silhouette. However, you can see that her prominent curvy figure makes her dress look tight [curvy infers "not indirect" or "not implicit"]. Her dress looks fine but does not reach the feeling that a *qipao* is supposed to have. (Cgao)

I think Chinese women are soft and *han xyu*, and that makes Chinese women presenting the *qipao* different than the Western women are. (Czh)

In addition, personal temperaments determine the quality of *qipao* presentation. When a woman has a typical Chinese temperament, the woman is able to present the *qipao* with the right feeling. Clu, stated that:

Gong Li [Chinese movie star] is often viewed as a representative of Oriental women's beauty. I agree with that, and she is really pretty. Her prettiness comes from her inner disposition. The *qipao* and her dispositions match with each other. I remember she had worn a *qipao* to a film festival. Oh, yes, this is the one. Even though this *qipao* is a little bit "exposed," sexual, and the front opening is a little bit too big, I still think her disposition always presents the *qipao* well ... This red *qipao*. . . when I pay attention to the fabric, the fabric is too gaudy, you know what I mean. However, Gong Li's disposition transfers the "gaudy" to the feeling of rebellion and stubbornness. Just like Maggie Zhang [Hong Kong movie star], her dispositions always interpret the *qipao* well; Gong's dispositions add a rebellious flair to this *qipao*.

In contrast, when a woman did not carry a traditional Chinese women's temperament, she

never presented the right feeling of the *qipao*. Cgu stated:

I think that modern Chinese girls are not suitable to wear the *qipao*. But, if the girl comes from a family emphasizing traditional values, the girl would have traditional women's characteristics.... I meant that personal temperaments, such as elegance and *han xyu*, are required to present a *qipao* well. Current Chinese girls share some Western girls' characteristics, very outgoing and energetic. They dye their hair. I think they would not be able to present the feeling of the *qipao*.

In short, even though today's Chinese and Taiwanese women do not practice the traditional "three dependence and four virtues" anymore. The traditional discipline of emphasizing inner virtues has been deeply embedded into participants' perception of the *qipao*. Chinese women's temperaments, such as restraint, softness, and implicitness, are significant factors in the interpretation of the *qipao*.

#### The Feeling of the *Qipao* Represented Through Women's Bodies

The adjectives *han xyu*, graceful and *wan yue* are also equivalent to what participants described as "the right feeling of the *qipao*." This abstract concept, on the one hand, is connected to traditional Chinese women's temperament. On the other hand, it is represented through body postures and facial expression. Two images (#1 and #2 in Table 20) were downloaded from websites. One was from a Chinese website with the title "The *Qipao* Shows Women's Sexiness," and Image 2 was from a Taiwanese TV program. In these images, a woman wears a *qipao* and reveals her legs. While participants looked at these two images, none of them provided positive comments; one Taiwanese participant stayed neutral. Three participants thought that these two images were pornographic; one participant said that the model was flirting, and other two participants thought that the images sent a

sexually-alluring message. The other six participants said that images were either sexually provocative or strange. Clu and Twu stated that:

These pictures, her *qipao* slit is so high, to me, she is purposely showing her leg and she is flirting. If she is playing traditional music, her postures are improper. I don't mind that she wears a *qipao*, but I think her eye expression and postures do not tell me she is a serious classical music performer. (Clu)

Q: Were these pictures copied from a porno website?

C: Definitely not. It is from a regular website.

Q: Why does this girl open her legs so wide? This posture is a sexually-alluring posture and is very improper while wearing a *qipao*. Her *qipao* looks nice but her posture sends out a "flirting" message. (Twu)

Compared to a woman wearing shorts or a short skirt, the level of skin exposure in these two images is not so overt. However, the model in the images directly exposes her legs and it is not *han xyu*. Basically, *qipao* is as a modest style that should cover the whole body. The side slits only allow the legs to show while walking. Purposely showing the skin is perceived as defiling the *qipao*.

From another viewpoint, participants' reactions to those images revealed that abstract Chinese discipline and Chinese women's inner virtues were objectified through the model's body posture and demeanor. Participants stated that while wearing a *qipao* the wearer had to stand still, walk gracefully and sit straight. The facial expression, a gaze and a smile were also the way to convey the right feeling of the *qipao*. According to participants, a woman's temperament can be shown through her gaze and smile. The feeling of the *qipao* should be presented with a soft gaze and smile. Cgu mentioned that a woman wearing the *qipao* should not smile with mouth widely open. Maggie's *qipao* from the movie, "*In the Mood*

*for Love*” and Images 4 and 5 (Table 20) presented the right feeling of the *qipao*. The smile showing in Image 6 (Table 20) is improper. Nicole Kidman was evaluated as showing a good figure but presenting a strong personality because of her facial expression. Cgao thought that Zhang’s posture (Image 3, Table 20) was too modern and her gaze was direct. Several participants’ comments are listed below:

Maggie in the movie [In the Mood for Love] always projects her gaze onto a distant place, not directly focused on you or the audience. I would use the term “*hen you wei dao*” [something tasted good] to describe Maggie Czh’s *qipao* in that movie. This term in my ideas is that you can appreciate Czh’s *qipao* and subtle motions in a quiet way. From another way to explain this term, the term does not directly refer to how pretty she is, instead, the meaning of the term is unclear too. (Cgao)

Nicole Kidman’s facial expression is straightforward. It makes Nicole not suitable to present a traditional *qipao* but a dragon robe. After all, Nicole is a “strong” woman. (Cgao)

These girls [#2 in Table 20 shows one of three girls] have good figures, so they present the *qipao* dress nicely but they do not present any feeling of the *qipao* or any feeling of traditional Chinese women’s elegance. They have adopted many modern elements, their smiles and gazes are a little bit too much. (Cgu)

*Qipao* itself is a neutral garment. However, a person wearing a *qipao* may give a coquettish flair if she is richly bejeweled or the fabric pattern is too eye-catching. Also, the coquettish flair could come from wearer’s body motions or behaviors. For example, you exaggerate your walking by swaying at the waist; then, the feeling of the *qipao* would change. (Cwu)

Participants’ critique of improper body posture explained the underlying meaning of why a

tightly fitted *qipao* did not look right. The tightly fitted *qipao* clings to the figure and overtly shows the figure, removing the possibility of space for the body to interpret the garment. It did not look soft, therefore, but provocative and energetic, which was not the correct feeling for a *qipao*.

Table 20 *The Feeling of the Qipao: Body and Face Expression*



*Note.* Image #1, Pretty women wearing *qipao* for showing leg (2005); Image #2, TVBS.com (2004); Image #3 and 6, Lady.tom.com (2004); Image#4 and #5, Qianlong.com (2003).

## Fluid Beauty

Fluid beauty is another concept often applied to describe how beautiful the *qipao* is. This concept may be easier to be understood if we take a look at how traditional Chinese painting depicts a beautiful woman (check online gallery of Taiwan Legislative Department or National Palace Museum). The Chinese paintings always show women in an elegant posture with part of their garments flowing in the air. Chinese used to wear loosely-fitted garments. The voluminous garment was tied by belts according to the wearer's height and body. The dress did not reveal the figure, but it created rhythmical motions of the garment along the body. When the wearer moved gracefully, the movement of the garment created rhythm. In contrast, when the wearer was clumsy, it was impossible to look elegant. Therefore, *yao i sheng z* [摇曳生姿] was often used in Chinese literature to describe a woman's beauty. This phrase describes the beauty of the flowing tree under a gentle breeze. When it is applied to women's beauty, the flowing tree is the metaphor for women's soft and elegant stride. Four Chinese participants and one Taiwanese either used this term or a similar one to indicate that *qipao*'s beauty is one kind of fluid beauty.

A: I meant that *qipao* is very suitable for the Oriental women. Then, it is very feminine. I am referring that the outlook of the *qipao* has a kind of fluid beauty.

C: What did you mean, "the fluid beauty?"

A: The fluid beauty means. .. how should I explain? That is, the line or the shape of the *qipao* looks very.... let me use a term "*iao yi sheng z*" which expresses my idea of fluid beauty very well. (Cgao)

The *qipao* is a long garment. If the wearer is not tall, she cannot present the beautiful feeling like the flowing willows. If the wearer is a little chubby, then, she is unable to present a fluid beauty when walking... I think that the beauty of the *qipao* comes from

the elegant movement during walking; it likes willows flowing under the breeze; it is soft and graceful; it is elegant not conservative and it is delicate not gaudy. (Cgu)

Furthermore, the concept of fluid beauty matches the concept of *han xyu*, graceful and *wan yue*, the feeling of the *qipao*. Both concepts imply a soft and elegant look presented through body movements.

In short, the *qipao* and wearer's beauty are not only directly presented through the glamour style and textile design but also indirectly presented by the wearer's temperament and demeanor. The ancient Chinese used mimetic techniques, such as "willow swinging," instead of the physical body figure to present or describe women's beauty. It was believed that women's beauty came from inner virtues (*han xyu*), which were evaluated through body movements, not the body figure. Therefore, personal demeanors defined women's inner virtues, and distinguished the *qipao* from other kinds of dress.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this study are to explore how young Chinese and Taiwanese women perceive and interpret the *qipao*; to investigate how cultural contexts play a role in the interpretation of the *qipao*; and to examine the differences in interpretation among Chinese and Taiwanese after 50 years of political conflict between their countries. The research questions were based upon the premise that human practices are the negotiated results between individual free wills and structural constraints. Also, the research questions probe the meanings and experiences of the *qipao* that affect participants' practice of the *qipao*.

Four themes have emerged from the interview data that include: “the sartorial code of the *qipao*”, “*qipao* usage in social situations”, “cultural representation of the *qipao*” and “the identities of the *qipao*.” The results of the theme “sartorial code of the *qipao*” explained how participants defined and meaningfully modified the *qipao* based upon its style elements. The theme “*qipao* usage in social situations” focused on participants' physical and social experience of wearing the *qipao*, and why fashion aesthetics discouraged them from wearing the *qipao* every day. The final two themes covered *qipao*'s cultural contents and identity.

In this final chapter, adopting the theory of practice, I reach higher level of understanding of cultural meanings of the *qipao* and how changes in the political environment affect the *qipao* practices and the *qipao*'s meanings. The main point of the theory of practice is to incorporate subjectivism and objectivism into analysis of cultural meanings. Therefore, in this chapter, I will first adopt a more objective semiotic approach to discuss the code system of the *qipao* and what messages these codes connote. Then, I will shift the discussion to subjective interpretation and analysis of individual participant's experience of and feelings about the *qipao*. Finally, how the *qipao* is associated with ethnicity and cultural identification will be discussed.

### **Structure of *Qipao*'s Cultural Meanings: Syntagm and Paradigm**

As people live over time in a culture, they develop knowledge to read signs that are meaningful within the culture. The participants in this study had learned to recognize and assign meanings to *qipao*. From content of the interviews categorized in the theme “*qipao*'s sartorial codes,” the nonverbal syntagmatic codes of the *qipao* were established and organized. According to Barnard (1996), a syntagm is an orderly combination of interacting signifiers. The syntagmatic difference refers to the signifying sequences or wholes that can be constructed using signs, while paradigmatic difference refers to a set of codes selected to fill or make up the syntagmatic sequences or wholes. The style elements of the *qipao* function as syntagmatic codes. The division, definition and related contents of the *qipao* correspond to the *qipao*'s paradigmatic codes.

In addition, this semiological analysis answers key research questions: How did participants define *qipao* styles? What is a “traditional *qipao*” as defined by the participants? How have historical meanings of the *qipao* been embedded in the young generation's perception of *qipao*? Do the two national groups have a different understanding of *qipao*? And how have participants learned about *qipao*?

#### *Syntagmatic Codes for Qipao*

According to my analysis, a *qipao* has to incorporate a mandarin collar, asymmetrical side opening, side slits and frog buttons; these four style elements form the essential codes for a *qipao* and must be included for a garment to be labeled or qualified as *qipao*. However, these four elements are not weighted the same as evaluation criterion. The mandarin collar and frog buttons were the most critical for defining a *qipao*. Participants perceive a garment

as a *qipao* when it had a loosely fit silhouette, mandarin collar, frog buttons and no side slits, but a garment without the mandarin collar and frog buttons is never recognized as a *qipao*.

The silhouette does not determine whether a garment is labeled as *qipao* or not, but it is the key element affecting participants' perceptions of a traditional *qipao*. The silhouette distinguished the era of the *qipao* and wearer's age. For example, a loosely fit *qipao* is either associated with an old style of *qipao* or with older women. According to respondents' classifications, a traditional *qipao* should have either a form-fitted or a loosely fit silhouette with the body figure somewhat evident to the observer.

There are many selections for *qipao* fabric. Brocade or satin fabric with embroidered or painted Chinese motifs is the typical fabric type mentioned for a traditional *qipao*, while silk, silk-like synthetic or cotton are three most popular fiber contents associated with a traditional *qipao*. Modern fabric, such as crinkled, sheer or quilted fabric, is never perceived as suitable for a traditional *qipao*.

A *qipao* can have set-in sleeves, kimono sleeves or be sleeveless. Length of the *qipao* can be mini-skirt length, right above the knees, at the knees, right below the knees, calf or ankle length, but a traditional *qipao* has to cover the knees.

#### *Paradigmatic Level of Analysis*

The combinations of *qipao*'s style elements are varied, but the function and the usage of the *qipao* determine how the style elements should be combined properly. Mick (1986) states that while syntagmatic analysis studies the "surface structure" of a sign, paradigmatic analysis seeks to identify the various paradigms (or pre-existing sets of signifiers) that underlie the manifest content of signs. At the paradigmatic level, the various combinations of style elements communicate further division of *qipao*.

## Paradigmatic Categories

Based on the results, four paradigmatic categories can be established, including old *qipao*, traditional *qipao*, non-traditional, and *qipao*-inspired garment.

### Old *qipao*

The concept of old *qipao* refers the initial robe type *qipao* that was loosely fit without showing any body figure. Kimono type sleeves can be over elbow-length or short. Sleeves are big and full when long. The length varied from lower-calf to ankle. Image # 4 in Table 9 is an example. Based on literature, the old *qipao* can be a subset of the traditional *qipao*. However, not all participants perceived the two categories, the “old” and “traditional” *qipao*, the same. Few participants clearly stated that if time is the only factor in defining a *qipao*, the initial *qipao* is a traditional *qipao* too. Most participants did not pay attention to this issue but instinctively named the initial *qipao* as "old" or "not a *qipao*."

### Traditional *qipao*

The definition of a traditional *qipao* was not so coherent among participants. However, in general, a traditional *qipao* has to include the four essential style elements. It symbolizes Chinese traditional culture and Chinese women’s temperaments, including gentleness, refinement, restraint, reserve, modesty and shyness. Therefore, the style of a traditional *qipao* has to be conservative without improper skin exposure, such as exposing the knees or arms. Taiwanese and Chinese participants had inconsistent expectations for arm-exposure in the *qipao*. Most Taiwanese participants specifically indicated that *qipao* had to have sleeves, but several Chinese participants did not care whether the garment was sleeveless while

defining a traditional *qipao*. A mandarin collar is required for a *qipao*, but no participants mentioned the height of the collar. The shape of the side opening, curvy or straight, does not affect the definition of a traditional *qipao*, as the *qipao* incorporates a side opening with frog buttons. The silhouette is either form-fitted or loosely fitting with the body figure visible to the observer. The fabrics used for a traditional *qipao* include fancy satin or brocade for formal situations and cotton for daily usage. The traditional *qipao* generally is perceived as a *qipao* adopted by people in the past, not as current fashion. The grandmom's *qipao*, therefore, is a traditional *qipao*. Grandmom's or older women's *qipao* were never described as having a form-fitted silhouette and short sleeves. Instead, a traditional *qipao* for older women is more conservative; it has a more loosely fitted silhouette than younger women wear and elbow-length sleeves.

How to dress up a *qipao* is also part of the *qipao* syntagmatic code that should be incorporated into *qipao*'s paradigmatic analysis. A traditional *qipao* has to be dressed up in a certain way to present the right feeling of a traditional *qipao*. It includes a pulled-up hairstyle, simple accessories, and toe-covered high heels or Chinese embroidered shoes.

#### Non-traditional qipao

A non-traditional *qipao* is often referred to as current or fashionable *qipao*. The style composition for this kind of *qipao* includes, first, that the garment has to be recognized as a *qipao* but may be made of various kinds of fabric, such as quilt, lace or any other kind of fabric. Second, a non-traditional *qipao* allows for some alternation of the four essential style elements, such as the asymmetrical opening changed to a front water-drop shaped hole (see Table 8) or center back zipper. The silhouette and length for this type of *qipao* is flexible. Individuals decide the length and silhouette according to their preference. It can be

form-fitted, loosely fit, or loose-fitted with the body figure showing, mini-skirt length or at-the-knee length.

A non-traditional *qipao* allows more selections of hairstyles and shoe types; nonetheless, the way of dressing-up a *qipao* has to be clean and simple. A fuzzy hairstyle or slippers are not accepted, even for non-traditional *qipao*.

#### *Qipao-inspired garment*

When two or more of the four essential style elements of the *qipao* are altered or a non-*qipao* style element is added, the *qipao* falls into the category of *qipao*-inspired garment and is not a *qipao* anymore. For example, the third *qipao* in Table 8, with round collar and two layers, is an example of a *qipao*-inspired garment. Most Western designers' works in Table 13 were recognized as *qipao*-inspired garment too. Several Western designers, such as YSL and Galliano, have used *qipao* as the source of design inspiration. They mixed and intermingled *qipao* related elements with new, Western or other kinds of elements. *Qipao* elements in their designs are not cultural elements anymore but a part of aesthetic expression that makes their designs unique. For example, YSL's yellow long garment (Table 13) mixed a quasi-mandarin collar, Chinese traditional motifs, Chinese emperor's yellow color and a laminated elastic high tech fabric. Roberto's red garment (Table 13) mixed mandarin collar, Chinese motifs, a flared mini skirt in light fabric and red color.

Pictures in Table 21 provide examples of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic codes for old *qipao*, traditional *qipao*, non-traditional *qipao* and *qipao*-inspired garment.

### Behind the Paradigmatic categories

Based on the findings, I concluded that the definitions of *qipao* types among participants are not always consistent. Two variables emerged from the results that either affect participants' perceptions of *qipao* paradigmatic categories or conflate with the above categories. These include "the concept of traditional *qipao*" and "Western dress codes."

#### The concept of traditional *qipao*

The concept of traditional *qipao* varies based on individual knowledge of the *qipao* that was either imagined or acquired from various sources such as novels, television or films. When an individual had more knowledge, the definition of the traditional *qipao* embraced all kinds of *qipao* that had appeared in history. Conversely, when an individual had limited knowledge of *qipao* history, the traditional *qipao* was limited to what they have learned. For Chinese participants, the *qipao* in marketing efforts is the most mentioned source drawn from to define a traditional *qipao*. The style seen in advertising or marketing is often sleeveless. Chinese participants were aware that the *qipao* was in fashion in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai; therefore, the Shanghai *qipao* also serves as the prototype of a traditional *qipao*. Chinese defined traditional *qipao* to include four essential *qipao* style elements: ankle-length, sleeveless, form-fitted silhouette and high side slits.

Even though the *qipao* was popular daily dress in Mainland China in the 1930s and 1940s, the practice of wearing a *qipao* was not popular in Taiwan until the immigrants from Mainland China brought it with them. Some Taiwanese participants were aware that the traditional *qipao* was imported from Mainland China. When Taiwanese participants were young, they had learned the *qipao* through books and TV series. Two of the Taiwanese also had learned about the *qipao* from a family member. The information from TV series, books,

family members or Taiwanese celebrities have helped Taiwanese participants to define a traditional *qipao* as over knee-length, arm-covering sleeves, functional side slit, loosely fit or form-fitted silhouette. For the Taiwanese group, a traditional *qipao* is defined according to the *qipao* style from the early 1950s.

Obviously, the source of the prototype of a traditional *qipao* for Taiwanese and Chinese are not the same. This phenomenon, that Chinese and Taiwanese associate the traditional *qipao* with historical *qipao* from different time periods, indicates how traditional dress has been historically and socially constructed. In this study, among Taiwanese, the traditional *qipao* was defined according to a historical *qipao*. Among Chinese, the knowledge of the *qipao* was produced from media and marketing sources. The temporal factor is not the determinant, but participants' knowledge of the *qipao*, accumulated from their experience and structural system, is. The *qipao* from the past does not have to be the same as a traditional *qipao*. How the *qipao* is presented through media and political and educational systems affects the concept of the traditional *qipao*.

In addition, traditional dress has to be inherited from the past and have a certain physical format (Handler, 1984; Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Eicher & Sumberg (1995) had refuted the concept that traditional dress is always fixed without change. The findings from this study support this statement. However, previous studies did not emphasize that the definition of traditional dress varies based on the structural knowledge that confines individual perceptions. What is a traditional *qipao* relies on how the history of the *qipao* has been presented and how much individuals have learned. Most participants were unable to recognize *qipao* styles from every historical time period, but every participant had her own way to define a traditional *qipao* and to distinguish *qipao* types.

Western dress codes

Western dress codes also serve as part of essential knowledge used to categorize the *qipao*. Level of formality is most mentioned while differentiating *qipao* type, and the style elements, whether fashionable or not, affect participants' recognition of a modern or fashionable *qipao*.

Formal and less formal were talked about by participants frequently. The occasions of wedding and receiving an award are perceived as the situations for which to wear formal dress. Work, shopping or fun activities were perceived as less formal. In Chinese history, formal dress was worn by noblemen and governors. The category of formal dress included "ritual dress," "ceremonial dress," "governor uniform" and "daily dress" (Zhao, 1993). Citizens wore "better dress" vs. "daily dress." This kind of differentiation is different from how Westerners categorize formality, according to occasions and activities. In addition, traditional Chinese dress regulations differentiate formal or less-formal garments based on the level of fabric fanciness. Garment length does not determine the level of formality. Furthermore, Taiwanese young people wear school uniforms most of time from age six until they attend college. They barely learn different levels of formality because their growing-up experience does not provide relevant information or practices. Therefore, the idea of formality of the *qipao* borrowed from the Western dress code system is simplified as formal and less formal. While a formal *qipao* is used for weddings and receiving an award, a less formal *qipao* is used for working, for shopping or for fun. Nevertheless, *qipao* is never perceived as casual wear. Following this logic, a long and form-fitted silhouette *qipao* is used for a formal occasion, and *qipao* used for daily activity has to be short because the Western dress code system had defined it as such. From the results of the study, the codes

for a traditional and for a formal *qipao* are conflated, as are the non-traditional and less formal *qipao*.

Furthermore, the participants' sartorial codes for *qipao* differ from the codes of the original *qipao*, which was commodious with no slits. These codes also differ from traditional Chinese sartorial codes that never paid attention to the body silhouette but focused on body motions and behaviors. In traditional Chinese dress ideology, personal virtues transmitted through dress were more important than personal appearance. The *qipao* has incorporated Western style elements since its early development in the 1920s. The desire to be modern stimulated the Chinese to pursue a modern image. The desire to be modern was also a mechanism continually causing *qipao* style to change, but in smaller or more subtle ways than did Western fashion. This mechanism makes the *qipao* appear more modern than other kinds of Chinese traditional dress and similar to Western dress.

In addition, the sartorial codes are not only socially- or culturally-constructed but also can be re-created through individual practice of the *qipao* or designers' creations. To mix-and-match style elements from various cultures has been a popular tactic for many years. This bricolage or mix-and-match strategies do not follow the modern aesthetic coding system to dress up or design a garment; instead, these strategies provide a tool for individuals and designers to create new ways to dress up a *qipao* or give a *qipao* a new look. This postmodernism strategy, in turn, stimulates the change of *qipao* practice and its meanings. While a traditional *qipao* has to be dressed up or composed in a certain way to present the right feeling of a traditional *qipao*, the postmodern way of dressing or designing a *qipao* keeps the *qipao* current and fashionable. For example, participants combine a mini *qipao* with a jean (see examples in Table 16) or Western designer's works in Table 13. Past studies (Banerjee & Miller, 2003; Hansen, 2000; Hendrickson, 1995; Rovine, 2001) have extensively

discussed that a traditional dress system is never isolated from global or Western fashion trends. The results of this study support past findings as well as provide an insight that the continuity of traditional dress style relies on whether the form of dress can be compatible with current fashion trends. The postmodern way of dressing up a *qipao* seemed to render the *qipao* “inauthentic” to the participants in this study. However, incorporating fashionable elements is critical for traditional dress to remain in daily, non-ceremonial use.

Overall, the concept of traditional and Western modernization were mixed and intermingled together, so the many ways participants divided and defined different kinds of *qipao* are also multifaceted. Table 21 provides a summary and some examples.

In short, from the semiological analysis of participant responses, syntagmatic and paradigmatic codes of the *qipao* were established. The codes include a mixture of Western and Chinese rules for dress. The connotations of the paradigmatic codes can be discovered while individuals differentiate the *qipao* types. This study found that historical and structured *qipao* knowledge significantly affects the definition of the traditional *qipao*. The different learning experiences of each individual lead Taiwanese and Chinese to define a traditional *qipao* inconsistently. In addition, in the early twentieth century, looking modern was a critical reason that the Chinese gave up two-piece attire in favor of the one-piece, form-fitted, Western-inspired *qipao*. This core concept of maintaining a modern look seems not to have changed for today’s young generations. Both Chinese and Taiwanese youth have created new sartorial codes to make the *qipao* modern. However, no matter how much the fabric or silhouette changes, the mandarin collar and frog buttons on the asymmetrical side opening remain the critical signs to define a garment *qipao*. The concepts of traditional *qipao* and non-traditional *qipao* co-exist in participants’ minds. Participants define a

traditional *qipao* based on their historical knowledge of the *qipao* but include Western dress codes when they put the *qipao* into practice.

Table 21 Summary of Paradigmatic Analysis

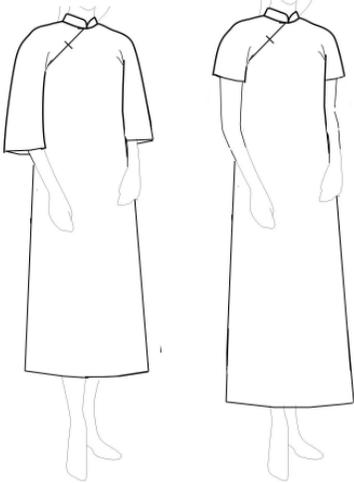
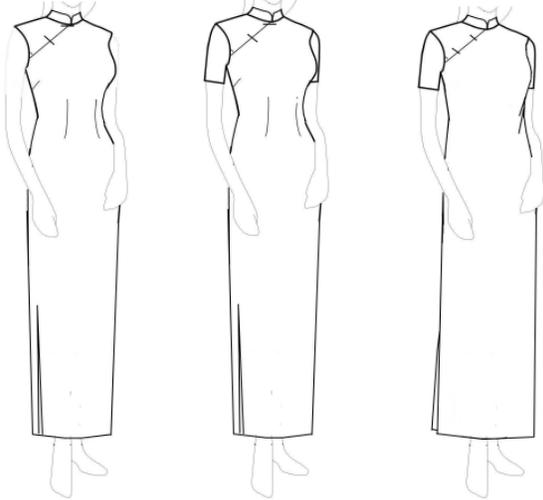
	<b>Old <i>qipao</i></b>	<b>Traditional <i>qipao</i></b>
<b>For Formal Situations</b>	<p><b><i>Qipao</i> style codes:</b>            Four essential <i>qipao</i> style elements except no side slits; commodious and big sleeves; below-calf or ankle length.            The old <i>qipao</i> does not follow the Western idea that formal garment is usually long and less formal garment is short. The fanciness of fabric instead of garment length determines <i>qipao</i> 's level of formality.</p> <p>Visual examples:</p> 	<p><b><i>Qipao</i> style codes:</b>            Four essential <i>qipao</i> style elements; various shape of side opening; made of luxurious Chinese fabric; ankle length/ sleeveless (mostly Chinese) or have-to-cover-arms /cover knees (most Taiwanese); form-fitted silhouette or a loosely fitted with figure showing; bearing cultural contents</p> <p><b>Codes conflated with the Western garment codes:</b>            Sleeveless            Long garment length            Form-fitted silhouette</p> <p>Visual examples:</p> 

Table 21 Summary of Paradigmatic Analysis (continued)

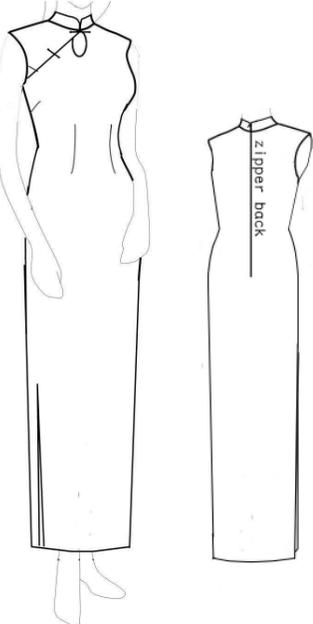
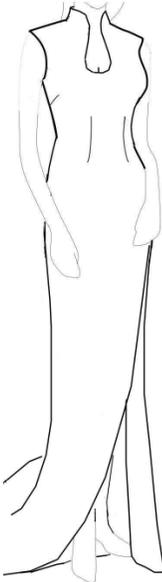
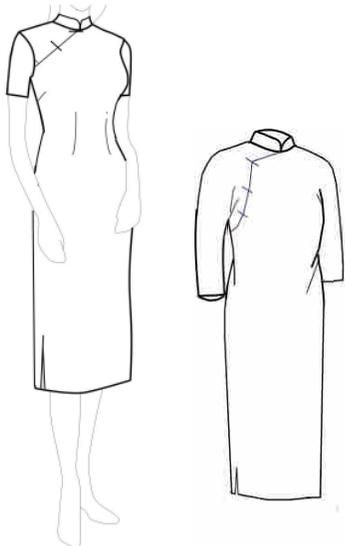
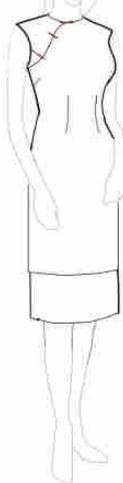
<b>For Formal Situations</b>	<b>Non-Traditional <i>qipao</i></b>	<b><i>Qipao</i>-inspired garment</b>
	<p><b><i>Qipao</i> style codes</b>            Allow alternations on <i>qipao</i> style elements but has to be perceived as a <i>qipao</i>; any fabric. Form-fitted silhouette or loosely fitting with figure showing; at least ankle-length</p> <p><b>Codes conflated with the Western dress codes:</b>            Except the mandarin collar, other style elements can be replaced by Western style elements. Sleeveless, ankle-length and form-fitted silhouette are essential. Western dress elements of a formal dress.</p> <p>Visual examples:</p> 	<p>Keep some <i>qipao</i> style elements but does not have to be called a <i>qipao</i>.</p> <p>Follow current aesthetic and Western codes of a formal garment</p> <p>Visual example:</p> 

Table 21 Summary of Paradigmatic Analysis (continued)

	<b>Traditional <i>qipao</i></b>	<b>Non-Traditional <i>qipao</i></b>	<b><i>Qipao</i>-inspired garment</b>
<p><b>For Less Formal Situations</b></p>	<p><b><i>Qipao</i> codes:</b> Have four essential <i>qipao</i> style elements; made of not-fancy fabric (such as cotton prints); cover knees; cover arms or sleeveless.</p> <p><b>Codes conflated with the Western dress codes:</b> Short garment length</p> <p>Visual example:</p> 	<p><b><i>Qipao</i> codes:</b> Allow alternations on <i>qipao</i> style elements, except the mandarin collar, but has to be perceived as a <i>qipao</i>; any fabric; short length.</p> <p><b>Codes conflated with the Western dress codes:</b> Any kind of silhouette and garment length. Any way of dressing up <i>qipao</i> including postmodern way of dressing up <i>qipao</i></p> <p>Visual examples:</p>  <p>back zipper opening    mini <i>qipao</i></p> <p>Mix and match <i>qipao</i> with jeans with roll-up bottom hem.</p>	<p>Keep some <i>qipao</i> style elements but does not have to be called a <i>qipao</i>.</p> <p>Follow current aesthetic and Western codes of an informal garment</p> <p>Visual example:</p> 

### **Subjective Aspects of *Qipao*'s Cultural Meanings**

In addition to an objective or semiological analysis of *qipao*'s cultural meanings, the interpretation of the subjective experience and perceptions of the *qipao* will be discussed within four themes: “using *qipao*,” “subjective reactions to social constraints,” “Chinese women’s body figure” and “embodied temperaments.” Also, these four themes will answer the research questions of: “How do participants perceive the *qipao* as a daily-wear garment?” and “What are participants’ experiences with wearing a *qipao*?”

#### *Using Qipao*

The results show an understanding of four major uses of *qipao*—as personal/individual practical dress, as costume, as occupational uniform, and, above all, the usage of presenting culture. The results indicated that Chinese participants have more experience of wearing the *qipao* than do Taiwanese participants, but Taiwanese have more of a mix-and-match strategy in wearing a *qipao* than do the Chinese. The Chinese group appeared more enthusiastic about purchasing and wearing the *qipao*. Participants in this group wore the *qipao* for cultural events, social gatherings and weddings, while the Taiwanese group wore the *qipao* for cultural events, Halloween parties, and theme parties.

Generally speaking, the major part of participants’ experience of using or seeing other people wearing *qipao* is associated with the idea that the *qipao* presents Chinese culture. Both Chinese and Taiwanese proposed that one of the purposes of wearing the *qipao* is to

present culture. The *qipao* uniform adopted by restaurant servers or by receptionists for a party held by the government were the most mentioned cases of seeing other people wearing the *qipao* in Mainland China. Even though most Taiwanese participants did not pay attention to how the *qipao* has been used in Taiwan, the *qipao* uniform, in actuality, is adopted by the organizations that need to represent either the R.O.C. or Chinese culture. For example, China Airline in Taiwan is the first airline company supported by the R.O.C. government. The company was established in 1959, and they have adopted the *qipao* uniform for flight attendants since then. Another example can be found in museum uniforms. Both the National Palace Museum and the National Museum of History, which have a specified goal of storing and protecting Chinese cultural objects, both choose *qipao* uniforms for their female staff. The *qipao* uniform for both airline and museum staff, on the one hand, fits the traditional and less formal paradigmatic rule that includes four essential *qipao* style elements as well as length right at the knee, set-in sleeves, a functional side slit and solid color. On the other hand, the *qipao* uniform symbolizes China Airline as a company from R.O.C.; the uniforms reflect the characteristics of museum specification.

Although both Chinese and Taiwanese participants selected the *qipao* to represent their culture, the two groups have different attitudes about using the *qipao* as a cultural object or cultural item of dress. According to Chinese participants, many Chinese international students bring at least one *qipao* with them to the States. Chinese participants also actively present the *qipao* to Americans by wearing it when holding or participating in cultural events on campus. Only one of the Taiwanese in this study brought a *qipao* to the States. This is in

direct contrast to my first overseas study in the U.S.A. in the early 1990s, when it was easy to find Taiwanese students who brought a *qipao* to the States. Today, Taiwanese young women seem to have less interest than Chinese young women to use *qipao* to present Chinese ethnic culture. This difference in responses suggests that individual practices of using the *qipao* to present Taiwan culture to the world may be fading out.

For Taiwanese today, the *qipao* is considered to be a style of dress that people wore in the past, so it is part of cultural heritage. Younger adult Taiwanese respect it as traditional dress, but they are not eager to wear it. This attitude affects Taiwanese *qipao* practice insofar as none of the Taiwanese had selected or considered the *qipao* as a wedding dress, because the *qipao* looks old-fashioned in comparison to the Western wedding dress styles that provide multiple and more contemporary selections. The *qipao*, to the Taiwanese participants in this study, was more a symbol of tradition than practical dress.

Furthermore, only two Taiwanese were aware that China Airlines had adopted a *qipao* uniform, although they had seen a China Airlines flight steward at the airport and in TV ads at least once. This lack of awareness may connote that *qipao* uniforms in Taiwan are well blended with modern working environments and do not look “improper” as uniforms. The discrepancy between the descriptions of “*qipao* as an old-fashion garment” and “as a modern uniform” indicates that Taiwanese do think of *qipao* as having a somewhat “static image.” Hence, the Taiwanese participants were not so willing to wear *qipao* for weddings or daily activities, even though the less formal *qipao* is not necessarily considered to be “old dress” and out of style in other parts of the world. In previous research, scholars (Eicher & Sumberg,

1995; Handler & Linnekin, 1984; Hobsbawm, 1983) have emphasized that traditional dress should not be treated as stable without change, but this study found that when traditional dress is not part of daily dress, it tends to be unconsciously fixed with a certain image and meaning and evaluated as “old” and out-of-date, especially when individuals do not have much knowledge of the history of that form of dress.

The case of restaurant and hotel service *qipao* uniforms in China provides another perspective on current *qipao* usage. The *qipao* uniform seen in restaurants or hotels establishes the connection between traditional and current life. This type of *qipao* is a traditional and formal one. The long, formal *qipao* used in the restaurant environment did not receive positive comments among Chinese participants. Many Chinese participants thought that this use of the *qipao* disgraces the elegance of the *qipao* and degrades it as traditional dress. *Qipao* as a symbol of presenting Chinese culture seemed, to the participants, as not matching the restaurant environment, which was often described as “sticky,” “smelling” and “disgraceful.”

Finally, *qipao* as a cultural object is used not only to show individual cultural identity but is also adopted by institutions to present culture. While museum, airline, hotel or restaurant female staff wears a *qipao* uniform, male staff wears Western style dress. This phenomenon of women, but not men, wearing traditional dress to present a culture has been discussed by several scholars (Banerjee & Miller, 2003; Hansen, 2000; Hendrickson, 1995), who found that women always serve as the agents of tradition and culture within modern, often national, operations. While this study focuses on the female aspects of the *qipao* and its

cultural meanings, further study could be conducted to understand how gender plays a role in the cultural meanings of the *qipao*.

### *Subjective Reactions to Social Constraints*

Bourdieu (1977) asserted that habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices in accordance with the schemes engendered by history (p. 82). The systems of dispositions, or the habitus, from the past survive in the present and perpetuate themselves by transforming the objectivism of social regulations into individual internal laws. These internal laws serve as dispositions that relay external constraints to set individual daily practices following the regulations (Bourdieu, 1977). As habitus, then, the history of the *qipao* has predisposed the *qipao* to be a modern garment in the past and a traditional garment in the present. “Being traditional” and “being modern” in different timeframes therefore sets parameters and confines *qipao* practices in current social contexts. The young Chinese and Taiwanese both present Chinese culture to others through traditional *qipao*, but some also follow Western dress codes to select the *qipao* for social occasions. The data indicated that current popular dress codes have a strong influence on what is modern or looks good when someone is deciding whether to adopt the *qipao* for daily activities. *Qipao* has been predisposed in history to be composed of certain style elements that are not always interpreted as looking modern according to current fashion trends or current dress dispositions. Although *qipao* was a fashionable item while "China chic" was in play, it was not an in-fashion item during most of the past twenty years.

Social sanction is another habitual factor that affects a personal comfort level when wearing the *qipao*. As Kaiser (1998) explained, individuals place and express their identities in a social situation according to their interactions with others. While an individual uses appearance management to present the self in public, this is a process of interaction between the person (and his or her self-image, goals or moods), an audience (the other with whom one interacts), and a situation (with all of its attendant opportunities and constraints) (Kaiser, 1998). A traditional and formal *qipao* is never considered suitable for everyday occasions, such as going to class or to the store. In addition, the results of my study show that wearing a *qipao* can make the wearer stand out in social occasions, and this can make the wearer uncomfortable. Therefore, the idea of using the *qipao* for daily wear is often rejected under the constraints of social conformity. This can also be understood as the social regulations that an individual learned or experienced from the past and transferred into internal rules that unconsciously affect an individual's decision to maintain a socially accepted appearance. Chinese cultural characteristics used to emphasize more collectivism than individualism, and this is reflected in individual appearance management practices. Part of the reason that participants do not adopt the *qipao* for daily dress today is because the *qipao* provides a unique appearance that makes many participants uncomfortable in daily activities. Most individual Chinese and Taiwanese do not tend to want to distinguish themselves in a crowd, but follow the group. In other words, social conformity can be viewed as strongly shaping the habitus of social appearance management that involves both structural constraints and individual decisions of whether the person feels comfortable about

having a unique appearance.

When individual actors act upon *qipao* habitus, there is room for an individual to select or combine *qipao* elements with other non-*qipao* dress elements. To shorten the *qipao*, to adopt cotton print fabric or to change the style elements are the strategies adopted by Chinese to make the *qipao* fit current modes of social dressing. Few Taiwanese, however, will “shorten the *qipao*” and “change to modern fabric” if they plan to wear a *qipao* for a social occasion.

This idea of fitting and adjusting traditional dress into current dress modes reflects how individual dress tactics keep the *qipao* modern. For example, Taiwanese may adopt a postmodern dress strategy to re-present the *qipao* as a Halloween costume. Here, the combination of traditional Chinese dress and American holiday, part of what Kaiser calls the “polyethnic culture,” denotes the trend of postmodern aesthetics that focus on creating a new look by mixing, matching and juxtaposing non-related elements and contexts (Kaiser 1998). Appearance management in the postmodern era emphasizes visual expression over the presentation of traditional culture. One Taiwanese participant even insisted on not wearing a *qipao* unless mixing and matching it with current in-fashion style elements, such as jeans. This phenomenon, on one hand, is an individual dressing tactic to mix-and-match the *qipao* with other elements without concern for how the culture can be presented through their way of dressing up a *qipao*. On the other hand, “being in fashion” continually serves as a regulation that unconsciously affects individual dress tactics.

In addition, body constraints and behavior limitations caused by a form-fit *qipao* is another reason affecting a person's willingness to wear the *qipao* for daily activities. The form-fitted *qipao* will force the wearer to maintain an erect body posture and limit the range of body movements. In addition, to present the right feeling of the *qipao*, the wearer has to maintain a certain body posture and movement to present Chinese *han xue*. Grinning or deliberately exposing the leg from a side slit was considered as improper for wearing the traditional *qipao*. In other words, the intimate relationship between the *qipao* and the wearer's body also significantly affects the willingness of adopting a *qipao*. This will be discussed further in the next two sections.

### *Chinese Women's Body Figure*

Entwistle and Wilson (2000) state that dress is a fleshly practice involving the body. It is not merely textual or discursive but an embodied practice. Bourdieu (1977) claimed that dress and its bodily dispositions constitute a different mode of meaning. Bourdieu used the term "body hexis" to refer to political mythology realized, embodied, and turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking (p. 93). That is, individual gestures, body postures and motions reflect how the social structure and constraints are internalized and expressed through the body. The body-dress habitus is experiential, and indeed as physically experienced serves as a basis for "naturalizing" moral evaluations for cultural meaning (Bourdieu, 1977). The body is a tool, an agent or a subjective category of social-cultural dimension of individual existence. Turner

(1995) claims that the body is the site of individual consciousness, sensations, and social controls, as well as the cultural representation of the materials from a social world. The results of this study support past researchers' discourse on the intimate relationship among the body, dress and culture.

While *qipao*'s sartorial codes are mixed with the Western dress code system, the wearer's body and temperament interpret the *qipao* as Chinese. Both Chinese and Taiwanese concurred that a traditional *qipao* has to follow *qipao* sartorial codes, and the wearer has to present a traditional Chinese look. The traditional Chinese look involves individual temperament and the intimate relationships between the wearer's body and the *qipao*. The Chinese look or the right feeling of the *qipao* requires a woman to have a medium-size bone frame with a body figure that fits Chinese ideals for proportions. A large bone frame, an hourglass body figure or a plump body figure are not right to present a traditional *qipao*, as these characteristics do not match the ideal Chinese women's body figure, which was described as "not too thin or too fat." Entwistle and Wilson (2000) stated that the body is a cultural form expressed through dress. The form-fitted *qipao*, on one hand, concretely presents the ideal Chinese woman's body, which had been described abstractly in the ancient Chinese literature. On the other hand, a form-fitted *qipao* creates an intimate interrelationship between the body and dress, including maintaining a good figure and consciously presenting the body figure to a degree that was never appropriate in traditional Chinese culture and dress until after the 1920s. The body in traditional Chinese culture was a means to perform social or structural regulations instead of a means of aesthetic expression. The feeling or

consciousness of the body figure and its relationship to the garment silhouette were not emphasized in traditional Chinese culture. A beautiful woman was defined by her inner virtue and proper behavior, not her body figure. Also, the individual sense of the body figure was not apparent under a loosely fit garment. Under the influence of Western culture, the commodious *qipao*, beginning in the late 1920s, gradually shifted to having a curvy waistline and the silhouette became form-fitted by the 1950s. The emphasis on body figure also increasingly became important in emerging *qipao* traditions.

Kasier (1998) advised that the body is not only a means of performing collective constraints but also a reflection of self through individual body consciousness. Two Taiwanese participants clearly stated that they did not want to wear a *qipao* because they did not feel comfortable showing their figures, while most Chinese participants claimed that a good body figure would enhance the attractiveness of the *qipao*. From this point of view, a form-fitted *qipao* intrigues subjective deep sensations of the body through a fitted silhouette. Body consciousness transformed the cultural meanings of the *qipao* from traditional virtues-oriented to appearance-oriented. Also, following the same logic, when the current *qipao* continues the idea of “being modern,” individual psychological feelings about the body take a role in current *qipao* practices.

### *Embodied Temperaments*

Besides the modern discourse of body consciousness and the form-fitted *qipao*, wearer’s temperaments also play an important role in the definition of a traditional Chinese look. The

Chinese look or the right feeling of the *qipao* refers to traditional women's virtues as soft, euphemistic, constrained, refined, and obedient. These temperaments cannot be presented unless the wearer maintains the proper body posture, facial expressions and behavior. Both the Chinese and the Taiwanese participants commented that Western people were unable to present a traditional *qipao* well, not because they do not have the right body form but because they lacked the temperament of traditional Chinese women. In other words, the traditional Chinese look is concretely performed through the wearer's body movements and expressions that reflect her inner virtues. In addition, the wearer's embodied temperaments were more critical to the participants than were the physical form of the *qipao* or body figure to present the Chinese look. This finding is consistent with Cheng's (2000) study of Chinese Americans' acculturation and perceptions of appearance. Cheng found that more highly Chinese-oriented respondents put more emphasis on behavioral characteristics and psychological traits when assessing female beauty and attractiveness; more acculturated Chinese Americans emphasized physical characteristics as essential to attractiveness.

The difference in perception of the side slits between Chinese and Taiwanese groups indicates that Chinese associate gender ideology with the *qipao* more than the Taiwanese group does. While the Taiwanese thought that the side slits were a functional element that had been added to make walking easy, the Chinese saw the side slit, reaching half way up the thigh, as a sign of women's emancipation. Bourdieu (1977) contended that individual practice and perception often reflect what that individual has learned from the environment.

The discourses of women's emancipation and *qipao* sexiness among the Chinese group

may be illuminated by Croll's work (1995). Croll (1995) studied Chinese women's identities in three time periods: Republic (1911-1949), Revolution (1949-1978), and Reform (1978-current). In the early R.O.C., the traditional Confucian rhetoric of female obedience and restraint were the major discipline for "good quality" of girls or women. Confucian rhetoric also espoused traditional gender differences and hierarchy. Along with the social changes that followed the overthrow of the feudal regime, women gradually gained education and rebelled against the traditional gender ideology, including the tradition of parents engaging their daughters to a man that they had never met (Croll, 1995). After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the Communist Party set out to reduce gender differences and hierarchy in the interests of equality. A new name and title established new androgynous categories (Croll, 1995). First, women were to be addressed by an individual name instead of as someone's wife or mother. Second, women were a great revolutionary force. "Women hold another half of the sky" was a famous national adage during the revolutionary era; this saying reflected the new national ideology of gender equality. The new model woman promoted by the Communist party retained the Confucian emphasis on virtuous behaviors but added emphasis on androgyny, especially in the workplace. Chen (2001) also pointed out that the Communist party was eager to establish a new aesthetic image to fulfill the historic progress that the Communist party had claimed and achieved. However, Croll (1995) reported that her own and other anthropologists' field studies in China did not find that Communism had delivered the "equality" that the Communist Party had promised. Instead, women's experiences not only did not match communist gender discourse but also were hidden and

replaced by the coherent national gender discourses. Inequality and hierarchy still existed in production and reproduction. Croll asserted that the national rhetoric of gender equality had frequently shaped perceptions to the degree that the new image promoted by the Communist discourse substituted for women's real experience. Therefore, when the reform came, women gave up their androgynous appearances and resumed wearing make-up and jewelry. This was not only part of a new interest in consumption; it also marked a new emphasis on the feminine or female as separate and different from masculine or male. Croll reported that this new reflection on gender difference could be seen as a reaction against the enforced female appropriation of a male-defined world during the revolution.

Croll's field studies in the early 1990s found that Chinese women thought that "softness" and other nurturing qualities contributed to the uniqueness of women. Furthermore, traditional female qualities such as gentleness, refinement, restraint, reserve, modesty and shyness became the new criterion by which to define women as unique. Croll's studies provide further understanding of Chinese participants' discourses that side slits represent women's emancipation. This may also explain why the Chinese paid more attention to the feminine characteristics and sexiness of the *qipao* than the Taiwanese did. The Communist Party tried to break traditional gender inequality by promoting androgyny, but the form-fitted *qipao* provided a means for Chinese women to negotiate Communist surface gender equality and re-establish Chinese women's appearances as valuable.

### ***Qipao and Identities***

In the shifting of environment, dress often functions as an indicator of multiple identities, including cultural, ethnic and national identity. Based on the results of this study, the *qipao* is consistently perceived as traditional dress that represents *Zhong Hua* culture. The *qipao*, compared to other kinds of Chinese traditional dress, provides a Chinese-ized modern look. The history of *qipao* is testimony to how Han-centered *Zhong Hua minzhu* declined feudalism, gave up *Manzhu*'s attire and pursued the modern. That is, the *qipao* not only is embedded within traditional *Zhong Hua* culture, but also shows a *Zhong Hua* defined modern image to the world.

The *qipao* is also interpreted as ethnic dress and national dress, but the meanings associated with these two terms varied based on the time and space. Before the R.O.C. government moved to Taiwan, the *qipao* was daily wear and national dress for Chinese women. *Qipao* represented China (R.O.C.) and Chinese. While *qipao* gradually faded out from daily practice after the R.O.C. government migrated to Taiwan, the *qipao* was ritualized as a wedding ceremonial dress and was classified as traditional dress associated with the past. Based on the results, the Taiwanese participants in this study showed respect but not enthusiasm for learning about or wearing the *qipao*. For Taiwanese, the *qipao* is not ethnic dress because the *qipao* is not dress for any minority group. *Qipao* is not national dress for Taiwan either, because the *qipao* represents P.R.C. China. Under the current Taiwan government's de-China-ized ideology, Taiwanese have become sensitive about being labelled as Chinese. Taiwanese tried to avoid the confusion caused by a common understanding that when two persons wear the same traditional dress, these two persons come from the same area. The boundary of the nation-state and the boundary of the Chinese

culture, in Taiwan, are separate. Taiwanese agree that they share the same cultural roots with Chinese, but Taiwanese strongly claim that Taiwan is not part of China.

In China, the past Communist political ideology criticized *qipao* as the product of Western capitalism, so the *qipao* was prohibited. But now, after China has opened to the world market, the *qipao* represents China again. Chinese participants in this study showed enthusiasm toward presenting Chinese culture through *qipao*. In addition, Chinese thought that *qipao* came from *Qi*'s dress but represented *Zhong Hua minzhu* ethnic dress. In some cases, Chinese claimed that *qipao* is not Han people's ethnic dress. In other cases, the Han-centered ideology that other ethnic groups in China are always acculturated into Han culture made some young Chinese ignore the discrepancy between the culture and ethnic group that *qipao* represents.

Identities, including cultural, ethnic and national identity, are not a fixed but relative concept (Yinger, 1985). Which group initiated the *qipao* and how Han people see the *qipao* as associated with Han culture determine *qipao*'s ethnic and cultural identities. Both Chinese and Taiwanese carry Han-centered ideology so that the *qipao* does not represent a single ethnic group but the Han-centered *Zhong Hua* group. Yinger (1985) mentioned that the concepts of "country of origin" and "ethnic identity" are often synonymous. From this study, the terms Chinese and Taiwanese sometimes function as the category of ethnic group, even though there are many other ethnic groups in both China and Taiwan.

Yinger (1985) stated that the concept of ethnicity (ethnic identity) is varied, including both identification of a homogenous group defined within a national or geographic border and identification of a group within a country having multiple ethnic groups. Ethnicity is also affected by social structure or religious affiliation and subjective experience and interpretation. The hanbok for Korea is an example of traditional dress adopted by a country

having a homogeneous population. According to Eicher and Sumber (1995), the national border and ethnic border in Korea coincide, so that hanbok is ethnic dress only outside the border of Korea; it is national dress within the country.

The *qipao*, similarly, is traditional dress for the majority of Han people in China and Taiwan and ethnic dress for *Zhong Hua minzhu* who may not live within China. The *qipao* is also assumed to be Chinese ethnic or national dress from an outsider's viewpoint. This phenomenon reflects a point that might not appear in previous studies. The ethnic group associated with the *qipao* is the Han-centered *Zhong Hua minzhu*, so it is easy to see that *Zhong Hua* people in Singapore and Taiwan present the *qipao* as traditional dress. From an outsider's point of view, the ethnic group connected to the *qipao* is "the Chinese," which also refers to the people from China. In other words, outsiders perceive *qipao* as ethnic and national dress for Chinese. This conflation between the concept of Chinese as an ethnic group and as Chinese citizens affects insiders' selections and practices of the *qipao*. Some Taiwanese, therefore, do not like to wear the *qipao* when Chinese are around to avoid the confusion caused by the concept of "*qipao* representing Chinese citizens." The discrepancy between outsider and insider's perspectives reflects that cultural and ethnic identity often get conflated when ethnic dress is created and promoted by the majority group in a country. From outsiders' viewpoints, the concepts of ethnic and national dress are mixed. Furthermore, *qipao*, as a majority group's dress, reflects the political conflicts between groups. The political regime and ideology changes have impacted associations of national identity of the *qipao*.

In sum, what is traditional involves a selective process. From this study, individual knowledge of *qipao* history serves as a selective mechanism to define what a traditional *qipao* is. From an objective perspective, *qipao* is the product of a majority group that

pursued a modern nation and tried to establish a modern society since 1912. Han-centered ideology makes the *qipao* consistently interpreted as a *Zhong Hua minzhu*'s traditional dress. Also, Taiwanese know that Chinese and Taiwanese belong to the same culture, but the political ideology strongly affects Taiwanese negative emotional reactions to “be a Chinese.” Taiwanese usage of the *qipao* clearly reflects the political conflicts and ambiguous relationships between China and Taiwan.

### **Conclusion**

Dress as a cultural form or a means of communication connotes and denotes rich meanings that cannot be fully captured strictly by either structural analysis or from individual experiences and interpretations. This study adopted Bourdieu's concept that subjective perceptions and objective constraints both need be considered and analyzed in order to discover the fluidity of cultural meanings. This study incorporates semiological analysis and subjective interpretation to explore the cultural meanings of the *qipao*. From participants' reactions to a wide variety of *qipao* stimuli, this researcher has identified *qipao* syntagmatic and paradigmatic codes, which indicated that traditional *qipao* is not simply defined according to temporal factors but by individual knowledge learned from the cultural system. The individual tends to associate a traditional *qipao* with a fixed image learned from her experience or knowledge. Therefore, the definition of a traditional *qipao* may vary from individual to individual, from generation to generation or from geographic area to geographic area. The findings of this study also suggest that the major motivation for wearing the *qipao* after the late 1920s was to look modern. “Being modern” played an important role in shaping changes of the *qipao* style, but the mandarin collar, frog buttons on the asymmetrical side opening and side slits define the *qipao*.

From the analysis of individual subjective experience and practices, several themes appeared. First, a form-fitted *qipao* presents an ideal Chinese women's figure. Second, the form-fitted *qipao* establishes an intimate relationship between individual body, *qipao*, and historical-cultural regulations. Third, the young generation's consciousness of body figure affects individual willingness of adopting a *qipao*. That is, the modern body-oriented dress discourse has replaced traditional Chinese moral-oriented dress discourse. The fitted *qipao* concretely presents Chinese women's disciplines and beauty through body motions and postures.

The concept of the "ideal Chinese body figure wearing the *qipao*" found in this study would have never appeared in traditional Chinese dress ideology, but *now* it is a means to make Chinese culture visible. Ironically, the body/figure relationship of modern *qipao* is one of the reasons discouraging some people from wearing the *qipao*, a form of traditional dress that, in theory, should be able to be worn by everyone in the culture.

Finally, social conformity also affects *qipao* practice in daily life. *Qipao* as a cultural object can be easily found in individual *qipao* practice and institutional uniforms. The Taiwanese had less interest than the Chinese to adopt, experience or present a *qipao*. Some Taiwanese participants insisted on adding in-style fashion elements if they have to wear a *qipao*. The meanings collected from subjective analysis do not always appear consistent, but that is the nature of postmodern culture and its ambiguous meanings. The cultural meanings of the *qipao* are never rigidly fixed.

I also explored how individuals evaluate *qipao* as traditional, ethnic or national dress. Both Chinese and Taiwanese agreed that the *qipao* is *Zhong Hua minzhu's* ethnic dress and traditional dress for both China and Taiwan. While Chinese feel comfortable using the *qipao* to present that they are from China, most Taiwanese feel uncomfortable wearing *qipao*,

because other people outside of Chinese culture associate the *qipao* with the country of P.R.C.. Taiwan and China each have their own independent political regimes and current cultures, but the two groups of people share the same cultural roots. Both young Taiwanese and Chinese hardly distinguish Taiwanese and Chinese cultural backgrounds. However, national or political ideology affects Taiwanese willingness to wear *qipao*. Taiwanese show ambivalent and controversial identity between “being Chinese” and “sharing Chinese culture”. Bourdieu (1977) stated that dress forms part of the ongoing dynamic between objective social forms and subjective experience. Dress is simultaneously a static icon of cultural identity and also a dynamic enactment of so-called transnational cultural flows. It is physical impediment and restricts social movement; it is also a practical medium through which mobility and social connectedness are experienced. Dress is a burdensome constraint and also a sensible source of agentive autonomy (Bourdieu, 1997). *Qipao* in this study, whether from the perspective of traditional, ethnic or national dress, provides an example of Bourdieu’s arguments.

### **Significance of the Study**

In order to catch the fluidity of cultural meaning, Hamilton (1987) borrowed Marxism’s cultural concept and suggested a unified model that incorporated micro components and macro mechanisms to study clothing from the perspective that clothing is part of the cultural system. However, it is hard to find research in the clothing field that applies Hamilton’s (1987) integrated model or other cultural models to investigate the meanings of clothing. This study tried to explore the complex and dynamic cultural meanings of the *qipao* based on a perspective similar to Hamilton’s statement that cultural meanings cannot be fully explored unless the cultural system is used as the unit of analysis. This study adopted

Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice as a cultural model that functioned as the frame of analysis. Objective semiological and subjective interpretation were incorporated into practice theory as the analysis strategy. This study provides an empirical example of how practice theory functions as a framework of analysis.

In addition, it is difficult to find *qipao* related studies that emphasized how the cultural meaning of the *qipao* has evolved and what the *qipao* means to the younger adult generation today. This study, on the one hand, provides an insightful view of how Chinese and Taiwanese, after over thousands years of cultural development, select traditional dress to represent themselves in the present-day world. On the other hand, the findings of the study provide further understanding of how the *qipao* is associated with the "Chinese" culturally, ethnically and nationally. The study also provides an understanding of the complex and dynamic relationships among cultural, ethnic and national identities.

Furthermore, the study included photos as a supplementary research instrument that helps to clarify participants' ideas about the sartorial code of *qipao* style. The technique helps to eliminate misunderstandings between the researcher and participants; the method therefore increases the validity of the study.

### **Limitations**

The findings of this study cannot be generalized to all Chinese and Taiwanese. With the targeted sample of Chinese and Taiwanese female students temporarily residing in the US, the study only provides an in-depth understanding of the *qipao* practices and meanings among a small and non-representative sample of highly educated Chinese and Taiwanese young women. Studies with larger samples and with samples including men or other generations are needed to broaden understanding of how the *qipao* is part of the Chinese

and Taiwanese cultural systems.

My ethnic heritage affords me in-group understandings of the people I am studying but also presents several limitations or biases. I am Chinese because my home country is the Republic of China, and since I was born, I lived in a culture that practiced Chinese ethnic ways of living. I am Taiwanese too because I was born and grew up in Taiwan. My parents moved from Mainland China to Taiwan during 1948 and 1949. My family and school education make me a medley of Chinese and Taiwanese. I speak both Mandarin and Taiwanese. I have historical and geographic knowledge of both China and Taiwan.

My background provides several pros and cons while conducting the interviews. With the Taiwanese interviewees, my background is a benefit to help me explore the answers further by enlisting common phenomenon that I have observed in Taiwan. But Taiwanese participants tended to give me short answers, probably because they assumed that I understand and hold the same meanings as they do. And because of my in-group status, I may have missed or passed over important themes that are a part of my taken-for-granted, subjective constructions of the world. For the Chinese group, my identification and knowledge of Mandarin Chinese made my language more accommodated to Chinese political ideology and decreased the potential hostility caused by political tension. However, I do not share a common social and political background with the Chinese participants, so I may have missed some insights or the participants may have been reluctant to say some things to me for fear of insulting me. Also, Chinese from different provinces may have different social and cultural environments that would make their perceptions of the *qipao* different; for example, a person from Shanghai may view the *qipao* differently than does a person from a small town.

### **Suggestions for Future Study**

*Qipao* studies in the past were either focused on *qipao* history or associated the *qipao* with a specific topic, such as nationalism or dress reform. The present study investigated *qipao*'s cultural meanings from a holistic perspective and found that several concepts deserve further investigation. First, due to the limitations of location and time, this study focused on college educated women between 25 to 30 years old who were studying in the U.S.A. Further study with a focus on men and older generations would be valuable to track how cultural meanings shift from generation to generation and whether gender plays a role in *qipao*'s cultural meanings. How the media presents and constructs *qipao*'s meanings would also help in understanding cultural discourses shaping the practice of *qipao*. In addition, a field study conducted in China will be needed to further understand *qipao* practices among different provinces or areas in China.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### General perception of the *qipao*

1. How would you describe a *qipao* to people who do not know it?
2. Would you please describe more details of *qipao*, including the silhouette, style element, color and materials?
3. Would you please view pictures and tell me which picture has the silhouette that reflects what you just described? Can you provide comments on other pictures which you think are not a proper *qipao* silhouette?
4. (for people who have wearing experience) What were your criteria (color, motif, trimming, slit and materials) to select a *qipao*? When you wear a *qipao*, what kind of accessories do you chose to go with it?
5. (for people who do not have wearing experience) What would make you not choose to wear *qipao*? Have you ever thought to wear *qipao* in some situations?
6. (Showing color pictures) What style of *qipao* would you select for daily wear and for formal wear? You can combine the line, color, or motif from different pictures.
7. What would you think your husband/boyfriend/ mother/grandmother/friends would think of the style you chose?

### Individual experience of *qipao*

8. Have you worn a *qipao* before? Would you please describe for what situation you wore *qipao*, the style(s) you wore, and comments from others.
9. (For people who have *qipao* wearing experience) How do you feel while wearing a *qipao*? Do you feel prettier or more unique or not than when you wear other garments? Do you feel constraints or not on the movement and are you comfortable in *qipao*?)

### Cultural knowledge of the *qipao*

10. If a foreigner asks you what is *qipao*'s history, what would you tell them?
11. To you, what is Chinese culture or how would you describe it?
12. How would you associate *qipao* with Chinese culture?
13. Is *qipao* a traditional dress? If so, how? If not, why? Is *qipao* ethnic dress? If so, how? If not, why? Is *qipao* a national dress? If so, how? If not, why?
14. What is alternative *qipao* style to you? What elements from a traditional *qipao* have to be kept in an alternative *qipao*?
15. (Show movie stars and celebrities wearing *qipao*) What are you comments on these celebrities presenting *qipao*? Or do you not think these are *qipao* anymore?

16. What are your comments on these body positions? If your sister or your close friends wore *qipao* and presented themselves in these postures, how would you react? Would your husband or boyfriend want you to appear like the photo shows in public?
17. What would you describe are the cultural differences between Taiwan and China?
18. When a Chinese and a Taiwanese appear in a *qipao* at one event, do their *qipao* disseminate similar cultural meaning? If yes, how? If not, why?
19. Can you tell me more about Chinese women's beauty standards? Were you referring to the beauty of the garment (*qipao*) or were you referring to other characteristics? Does it mean that every Chinese woman donning *qipao* represents Chinese women's beauty?
20. Which element from *qipao* is the key component that represents Chinese women's beauty that you just mentioned?

Reaction to *qipao* designed by Western designers

21. (Show designer *qipao*) What do you think about this Western designed *qipao*? Do you think these designs are good or not? Please tell me more specifics of your thoughts about the line, color, motifs and style. (wait for reactions) (Probe the design motif (dragon), colors (yellow). What are your comments about the dragon on the yellow *qipao*?
22. If *qipao* is in fashion, would that increase your desire to wear *qipao*? Or would you change your perception of the *qipao* after *qipao* is in fashion?
23. Do you think that these designers' *qipao* are attempts by the Western world to sexualize Asian women?

## APPENDIX B: INTERCODING GUIDE

<b>Code and definition</b>	
<b>I</b>	<b>Qipao Style:</b> This category looks for participants' perceptions of qipao's style elements including their comments of "what are the essential elements for a qipao," "the comments of the style elements while they review the qipao of their own or pao from photos" and "how a qipao should be dressed up"
<b>I-A</b>	<b>A. Essential style elements for a qipao</b>
I-A-1 I-A-1-a I-A-1-b	1. Collar a. Traditional mandarin collar b. Non-traditional mandarin collar
I-A-2 I-A-2-a I-A-2-b I-A-2-c	2. Side Slit a. About 10cm above the knee b. Middle of the thigh c. Higher than the middle of the thigh/improper length
I-A-3 I-A-3-a I-A-3-b I-A-3-c	3. Color a. Red b. Yellow c. Other colors
I-A-4 I-A-4-a I-A-4-b	4. Closure a. Frog button/Chinese knot button b. Zipper
I-A-5	5. Front side opening
I-A-6	6. Trimmings or binding
I-A-7 I-A-7-a I-A-7-b I-A-7-b-i I-A-7-b-ii I-A-7-C I-A-7-c-i I-A-7-c-ii I-A-7-d	7. Fabric a. Designs and pattern b. Types i. Stain ii. Brocade c. Contents i. Cotton ii. Silk d. Others

I-A-8 I-A-8-a I-A-8-b I-A-8-c I-A-8-d I-A-8-e I-A-8-f	b. Garment length About/above the knee length Calf length/Middle of the calf Below middle of the calf Ankle length Mini skirt length f. Too short- above the thigh
I-A-9 I-A-9-a I-A-9-b I-A-9-c I-A-9-d I-A-9-e	9. Sleeve length a. Short sleeve b. Elbow-length sleeve c. Long sleeve d. Sleeveless e. Other sleeve length or type
<b>I-B</b>	<b>B. Silhouette and fit</b>
I-B-1 I-B-2 I-B-3 I-B-4 I-B-5	b. Loosely fit without revealing body figure/bell shape/ straight up line without showing waist line 2. Not well fit /too loose or too tight 3. Well fit/perfect fit/form-fitting; fit well with proper ease 4. Skin tight/mermaid shape 5. Others; for example emphasize a curvy silhouette
<b>I-C</b>	<b>C. Comments on motifs and design elements</b>
I-C-1 I-C-1-a I-C-1-b I-C-1-c	b. Design elements a. Non-traditional elements such as fringe, front opening with a teardrop shaped hole over the chest or lower cut front. b. Printed or woven pattern (fabric pattern) c. Others
I-C-2 I-C-2-a I-C-2-b I-C-2-c	2. Motif a. Dragon b. Chinese Painting c. Others (embroidery and other type motif)
I-C-3 I-C-3-a I-C-3-b	3. Chinese look/Asia look a. yes b. no

<b>I-D</b>	<b>D. Comments on accessories to dress up a qipao</b>
I-D-1 I-D-1-a I -D-1-a-i I -D-1-a-ii I -D-1-a-iii	1. Shoes and hoisery a. Heel height i. About 1inch /3cm ii. About 1.5 inch/5cm iii. Others
I-D-1-b I -D-1-b-i I -D-1-b-ii	b. Toe style i. Closed toe ii. Open toe
I -D-1-c I -D-1-d I -D-1-e I -D-1-f	c. Sandals d. Chinese embroidered shoes e. Others f. Hosiery
I-D-2 I -D-2-a I -D-2-b I -D-2-c I -D-2-d	2. Hairstyle Worn up 30s Shanghai hair style Modern style Others such as improper hairstyle
I-D-3 I-D-3-a I-D-3-b I -D-3-b-i I -D-3-b-ii I -D-3-c	3. Jewelry, other accessories and make up a. No need for much jewelry b. Make up i. Yes ii. No c. Other comments
I-D-4 I -D-4-a I-D-4-b	4. Mix with other type garment a. with some elements matched: for example thigh length qipao mixes with jean with the consideration of color tone matched. b. without consideration of matching
<b>II</b>	<b>Body Context:</b> This code looks for the relationship between qipao and body.
<b>II-A</b>	A. Facial Expression
II-A-1 II-A-2	1. Eye gaze/expression 2. The way of smiling

II-A-2-a	a. Big smile with teeth exposed
II-A-2-b	b. Smile with teeth covered
<b>II-B</b>	<b>B. Body Size-what kind body size presents qipao better</b>
II-B-1	1. Smaller bone structure
II-B-2	2. Good body proportion: For women of all ages, a good body proportion is no big breast, tummy, big hip or no fat roll above the belly.
II-B-3	3. Medium body size, not too fat or too thin, is the best body size to wear a qipao (when woman is overweight, chubby or too thin can not wear qipao)
II-B-4	4. Overweight, too Chubby or too thin does not look good in qipao
II-B-5	5. Other comments related to body size, body figure and qipao wearing quality
<b>II-C</b>	<b>C. Body silhouette</b>
II-C-1	1. Qipao is good for showing women's body figure: Qipao accentuates the good and enhances the weak parts of Eastern women's body figure.
II-C-2	2. A well fit qipao
II-C-2-a	a. Gives an impression of a small waistline
II-C-2-b	b. Shows feminine S-curved shape from both front and side view of a woman's body shape.
II-C-2-c	c. Provides an individual fitting that makes qipao and the wearer unique.
<b>II-D</b>	<b>D. Height</b>
II-D-1	1. Taller is better
II-D-2	2. The height is not a major issue
<b>II-E</b>	<b>E. Skin exposure</b>

II-F	<b>F. Body posture placement and movement</b>
II-F-1 II-F-1-a II-F-2 II-F-2-a II-F-2-a-I II-F-2-a-ii II-F-2-a-iii II-F-2-a-iv II-F-2-b  II-F-3 II-F-4	1. Proper posture while wearing a qipao a. Straight posture 2. Improper posture a. Open i. Too sexual ii. Unaesthetic iii. Strange iv. Cool posture b. Closed – slumped  3. Swaying the hip 4. Slit management while sitting
<b>II-G</b>	<b>G. Constraints and restrictions of the body</b>
II-G-1  II-G-2 II-G-2-a II-G-2-b II-G-2-c II-G-3 II-G-4 II-G-5	1. Qipao as tensor; on body alignment/straight alignment or control the weight and eating (cannot eat too much) 2. Limit larger motor movements a. Stretch arms b. Bend the body c. Sit/squat/wide gait/stepping up 3. Don't feel any discomfort or inconvenience 4. Take more time to put on a qipao 5. Pay attention on maintaining the body figure so the qipao can be worn again.

<b>III</b>	<b>Origin of the qipao:</b> this code looks for participant’s knowledge of “how qipao came from” and “how qipao became a traditional Chinese dress”
<b>III-A</b>	<b>A. Chinese tradition</b> Ethnic Chinese outside China or Taiwan carry Chinese tradition to wear a qipao.
<b>III-B</b>	<b>B. The tradition of “wearing a qipao” originally came from China</b>
<b>III-C</b>	<b>C. Don’t exactly know</b> Only know it is related to the past. Chinese people in the past wore a qipao
<b>III-D</b>	<b>D. Qipao was defined in the 1930s Shanghai</b> Qipao before 1930s is treated as “ancient qipao” or “older than traditional qipao”
<b>III-E</b>	<b>E. Qipao evolved from Qing’s dress</b> Qipao began from ManZhu (Qing dynasty). Therefore, qipao from the end of Qing and early MinGao (early R.O.C.) is called traditional qipao
<b>III-F</b>	<b>F. Acculturation</b> Qipao was ManZhu’s ethnic dress but it becomes a traditional Chinese dress because of the acculturation between Han and Man people.
<b>III-G</b>	<b>G. Majority or dominant group promote qipao as a traditional dress</b> Ethnic dress is the dress adopted by a minority group. While a dress adopted by majority or dominant group, the dress becomes a traditional dress; Qipao first was used by a minority group, which became a dominant group. Therefore, qipao becomes a Chinese traditional dress
<b>III-H</b>	<b>H. Other comments or perception of a traditional qipao and its style</b>

<b>IV</b>	<b>Qipao types and related definition:</b> looks for “how participants categorize the qipao and how various types of qipao are defined and differentiated”
<b>IV-A</b> IV-A-1 IV-A-1-a IV-A-1-b IV-A-1-c IV-A-1-d IV-A-1-e IV-A-2 IV-A-2-a IV-A-2-b  IV-A-2-c  IV-A-2-d IV-A-2-e  IV-A-2-f	<b>A. Terms and ideas of qipao type</b> 1. Various terms and perception of the qipao a. Past qipao (traditional qipao) b. Current qipao c. Alternative qipao d. Fashionable qipao e. Other terms 2. Differentiate Qipao a. Time as a factor: traditional qipao is associated with the past. b. Fashion as a factor: Current qipao incorporates many fashionable /Western (or modern) elements or designs such as fringe, a shaped hole, or fashionable fabric pattern. c. Construction and style elements as a factor: qipao’s style elements and construction details are used to differentiate qipao types. For example: a traditional qipao should be long, at least calf length; current qipao has shorter slit height/different opening or closures/current qipao does not fit well as the traditional qipao d. Function as a factor: current qipao is more functional e. Cultural elements as a factor: for example traditional qipao carries idea of <i>han xyu</i> f. Others: For example environmental context serves as a source to differentiate a qipao

## APPENDIX C: HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL LETTER

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Institutional Review Board**  
Office of Research Assurances  
Vice President for Research  
2138 Pappas Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2037  
515-284-4386  
FAX 515-284-6272

**DATE:** June 5, 2006  
**TO:** Chui-Chi Yang  
**CC:** Dr. Mary Lynn Damhorst  
Dr. Susan Tortore  
**FROM:** Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research Assurances

**SUBJECT:** IRB ID# 06-270 **Study Review Date:** June 1, 2006

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed the project, "The Meanings of Qipao: Chinese and Taiwanese Perspectives" and declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) (1) and (2). The applicable exemption category is provided below for your information. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The only change that is required in your study is that the letter of introduction should contain the elements of informed consent.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if the project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Because your project is exempt, you do not need to submit an application for continuing review. However, you must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.

Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

### Exempt Categories

- (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

## APPENDIX D: FIGURES



Figure 1 *Qipao* in the 1950s. Clark (2000). Figure 2 Original *qipao* from the early 1920s. Clark (2000).



Figure 3 *Qipao* from the early 1930s, the male robe (*pao*) and women's robe (*pao*) had very similar appearance, Clark (2000).



Figure 4 Qi's *pao*, Queen of Emperor Guangxu, around 1903 (2004). Round neckline with trimming and piping; neck tie as a fake collar; wide sleeve, side opening from neck to bottom. Satin fabric.



Figure 5 *Sang yee (han fu)* from Han dynasty. Hunan Museum (2003).



Figure 6: Men's robe (*pao*) in Tang Dynasty. Seachina.com (2003).

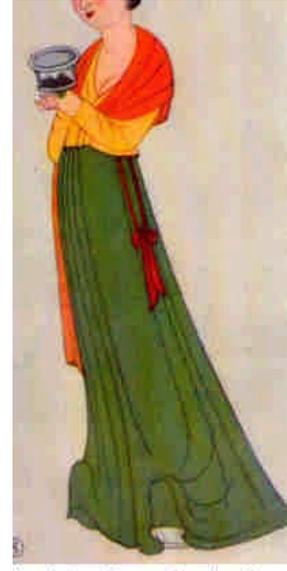


Figure 7:*Zu* and *qun* from wall painting from cultural relic of Tang. Seachina.com (2005).



Figure 8 Two-piece ensemble, *sang* (top) and *qun* (skirt) in Ming dynasty. Seachina.com (2005).



1930 短襖黑羅裙

Figure 9 Two-piece ensemble, jacket (*au*) and skirt (*qun*) in 1930 Taiwan. Gao (1995).



Figure 10 *Qi's pao*, queen's formal garment from Qing dynasty; narrow sleeve. Lee (1993).



Figure 12 A long *maijai* (long vest), 1926, Yang Nei-Mei (1904-1960). *Memoires*, Shanghai digital library (2006).



Figure 13 1924 Ms. Lin Hwei Yin (1904-1955) wearing a *maijai*. *Xinhuanet* (2005).

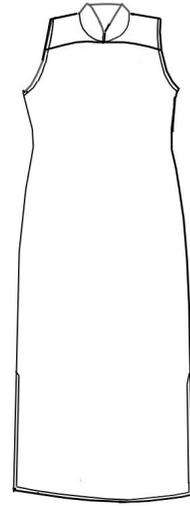


Figure 14. *Majai qipao*, Redrawn from a picture of Anna May Wong (1905-1961). Lee (1969)



Figure 16 *Qipao* made of bias cut, high collar, frog buttons, set-in sleeve. *The Young Companion Pictorial* (1934).



Figure 17: *Qipao* in 1935. Floor length and kimono sleeve. *Memoires*, Shanghai digital library (2006).



Figure 18: Student *qipao* with short slit. *Zeng* (1931).



Figure 19: Side slit. He (1934).



Figure 20: Side slit with underlap. Wu (1934).



Figure 21 *Qipao* made of Yin Dan Shi Lin fabric (1934).  
Qianlong.com (2004).



Figure 22 1930s Movie stars at Shanghai shows various kinds of *qipao* materials, Memoires, Shanghai digital library (2006).

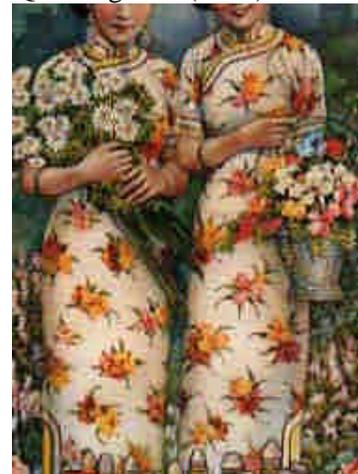


Figure 24 Shanghai old advertisement for perfume; Kwong Sang Hong Ltd (1937/2005)



Figure 25 College students (1935).

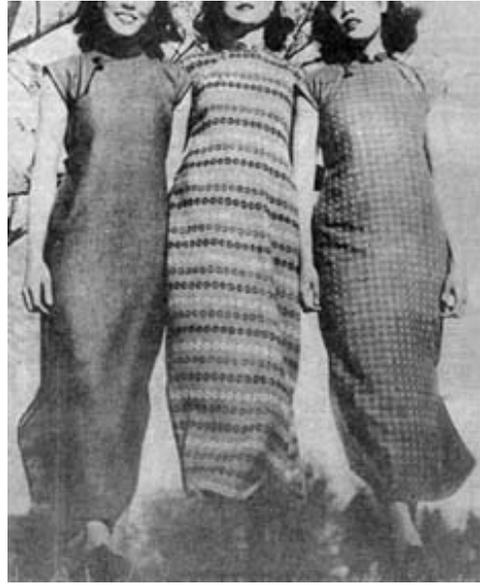


Figure 26: *Qipao* in wartime (1941).



Figure 27 *Qipao* as working attire. Wang (1936).



Figure 29 Christian Dior, Y Line dress, autumn/winter 1955-56. Design Museum (2007).



Figure 30 A tightly fitted *qipao* from 1966 Hong Kong. Clark (2000).



Figure 31 Mini *qipao*. Taiwan designer attend Hong Kong fashion week. Lin (1970).



Figure 32 Chinese women in *bulaji*. Zhang (2002).



Figure 33: *Bulaji*. Zhang (2002).