

Analysis Eastern and Western Women's Concept of Female Based on Comparison of Chinese Dudou and Western Corset

Mingxi Chen Xiaofen Ji*

Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

Abstract: - Compare to outward, underwear is an item which is more private to women and has more connection with body and sex. That is why underwear usually be given more emotion and meaning. There is also a wonderful culture world behind the underwear. In the western and Chinese underwear aesthetic culture, the silhouette, color and pattern belong to the shallow cultural structure that has symbolic characteristics. And the sense of value and aesthetic hidden behind the interface of these forms belong to the deep cultural structure, also known as the hidden culture. The former is the external manifestation of the latter, and the latter is the inner definition and soul of the former. Through the discussion and research on the superficial cultural structure of underwear, we can understand and distinguish the differences between Chinese and western deep cultural structures, such as value ideal and aesthetic pursuit, and seek the root of them through appearances, so as to find out the deep connotation of the differences between Chinese and western underwear culture and its root.

Keywords: - Duou, Corset, Female, Culture

1. Introduction

Underwear refers to the garment underneath the out wear. There are various saying about the origin of the underwear in China and western countries. Considering ancient fairy tale, in China, it is the goddess Nvwa who created the first underwear to cover her body. The creation of underwear was even earlier than human being. We can even believe that Chinese people born with a sense of shame. However, in western country, there is a story in Bible that when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes were delighted and realized that they cannot be naked to each other. Later, they used several leaves to cover the body. According to the different origin of underwear in Chinese and western myth, we reach the conclusion that Chinese feel shame of naked body naturally, while western are relatively open-minded and do not mind showing their body. And later, the different culture and mind respectively leads to the different development of underwear which are Dudou and corset.

2. Chinese Dudou

2.1 Background of Chinese Dudou

The earliest legend about Dudou was in ancient China, when Nvwa create the world, she used a cloth to cover herself. And the first historical record about underwear was in Qin Dynasty. At that time, there is no distinction of underwear between the male and the female. With the awareness of the gender and sex became mature gradually, the underwear especially for women appeared. In Tang Dynasty, when the social institution as well as economic reached the top, the women were open-minded, and underwear became popular and developed rapidly in at that time. In fact, underwear had several names in different dynasties, and finally named as Dudou in Qing Dynasty when the development of underwear came to the peak. Dudou was not only for the noble anymore, but for everyone. Not only women, but men, children and the elder also. It consisted of a piece of square cloth and four ties on each corner which can be tied crossed neck and waist. However, Dudou is a private item that cannot be seen in normal time. Only when couple get married, the husband can see wife's Dudou. People thought highly of Dudou but feel shame of it meanwhile. Dudou is an

extremely private and important thing, which gives women the beauty of bashfulness.

2.2 Silhouette of Chinese Dudou

Dudou had several names in different periods in Chinese history, and the outlook and function were

slightly different as well. Until Qing Dynasty, it had a mature silhouette and be named as Dudou. It consisted of a single front piece and four bands at each corner that can be tied cross neck and waist.



Figure 1 Chinese Dudou

(Figure 1). Dudou is a rhombus using flat cutting. And the overall silhouette was small, short and skinny. The part of body Dudou covered is stomach but the back left uncovered which left a beautiful imagine to man.

2.3 Color of Chinese Dudou

In China, color is supposed to be a symbol of different society level which should be take serious and cannot be wrong. But in terms of Dudou is underwear that not show others, unlike normal

clothes, Dudou is relatively colorful colored (Figure 2). And each color matching has it meaning. The most-used color is red, the classic color of China, representing strong motion of happiness and good luck. Yellow is the color for emperor, which means power and wealthy, and the meaning of yellow with different value has slightly difference. Green represents nature and birth. Blue gives people a sense of peace and purple means romance and secret. White is the representative of holy and pure and black means calm.



Figure 2 Colorful Dudou

2.4 Pattern of Chinese Dudou

Print is a straight way to show the emotion, it is an important part of underwear design, whether in contemporary society, or in the past. There are mainly two types of print of Dudou, one is word, and the other is pattern. Word is the direct and obvious way to express people's wishes. The word about praise for child, good grade in test and better life are very common. For pattern of Dudou, it not only made the Dudou fancier and more colorful, but also give

the Dudou a deeper meaning. There are mainly three types of pattern: animal, plant and character. Animal pattern are usually magic animals like dragon, Kylin and Phoenix, or the animals can bring good luck such as fish, magpie and crane. Dragon and Phoenix are usually embroidered together, means people want to get support from nature power to have peaceful and happy life. Fish pattern usually go with lotus, means the praise for a baby (Figure 3). The plant pattern concludes several flowers and other plants have

special meaning in China like bamboo. Every plant has its language. People like to personalize the natural growth of plants, in order to better life and perfect characteristic. For example, lotus stands for

incorruptibility and bamboo stands for tough. Character pattern comes from Chinese fairy tale, which express people's respect of these heroes.



Figure 3 Embroidery of Dudou

3. Corset

3.1 Background of Corset

The origin of corset can be traced back to Crete of Greek peninsula in 2500BC. In order to show off nice body curve, women wrapped their body from the chest to waist with cloth. By this way, their boob can be held higher and show a pretty shape. Corset developed rapidly in Renaissance when the time advocated humanity and praised beauty of human nature, and pursued the joy of wealth, art and love. People paid much attention to great visual enjoyment of body but ignored physical and psychological health. Women were crazy to fit their body into the metal container to show a perfect body in 300 years

proximately. Corset is the symbol of sex at that time, to express women's feeling and love.

3.2 Silhouette of Corset

The main purpose of using corset is making body curve more obvious. So, corset usually has a perfect shape to fit individual body. The corset consists of two pieces made with whale bone lining (Figure 4). It is a closed shape using bottom-top band to tie the left and right pieces tightly. By this way, women's back can be completely supported, the waist can be tied as skinny as possible, and the breast can be bosomy. Overall, the corset pursuit an exaggerated visual effect and help women achieve a perfect and charming body shape.

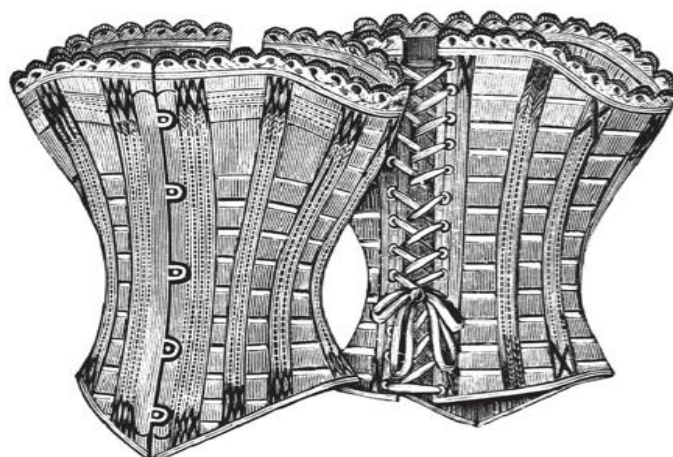


Figure 4 Silhouette of Corset

3.3 Color of Corset

The color of Chinese Dudou is an emotional support, but the best color of corset is the one fit the owner best. Because corset has very exaggerated silhouette, the color is mild by contrast. Corset use colors with lower purity more than the higher. White is the color be used most, reflected the pursuit of elegance. Mild

colors are usually used as bottom color and the bright colors will be the decoration. Besides, corset use a lot of white lace to decorate the edge (Figure 5). Because corset is noble's dress at first, whether the colors corset use, or the decoration detail and textile, all the design elements show the elegance and dignity.



Figure 5 Color of Corset

3.4 Pattern of Corset

The pattern of corset has changed a lot with the time past. It is European that led the costume pattern in western countries. Flowers and plants are the main pattern. Especially in Italian Renaissance, a lot flower pattern and lace can be seen on corset. Later in Louis XV in France, because of the pursuit of luxury, the s-shape plant pattern and delicate rose pattern became famous. People used a lot lace and falbala to decorate the edge, and used pearl, gem and sequins to decorated front (Figure 6). These made the corset shinier and more gorgeous. And later, Rococo style evolved. After 18 century, geometrical pattern came into the trend, the original texture of textile began to have people's attention. The design began

to use three-dimensional cutting and whole piece more to get a modern and simple visual effect.

4. The Comparison of Chinese Dudou and Corset

4.1 The Comparison of Silhouette

There are obvious differences of silhouette between Chinese and western clothing because of different body shape. Whether the corset in the history, or the clothes at present. Asian people have flat body curve while European always chase S curve. Therefore, the silhouette of Dudou tends to be flat and linear, which is easier and comfier to wear. But corset had a perfect shape to mold women a perfect body curve.



Figure 6 Trim of Corset

The plane and stereoscopic thinking of Chinese and western underwear in creation is the main reason for the difference between belly pocket and corset. Based on the segmentation of geometric form, Dudou pursues the "positive rate" of the image, that is, two dimensions. Corsets seek to restore the original form of the body, the pursuit of three-dimensional effect. Therefore, the belly pocket and the corset, whether the internal structure or shape, are very different. The design and structure of Dudou are relatively simple, using flat cutting and geometrical figure commonly; but the corset structure is complex, using the curve type solid cutting and producing with massive fish bone model. Apart from this, the Chinese Confucian doctrine propose comfort, moderation and uniform dress style. People's aesthetic values focus on the spiritual level, with little emphasis on body shape, not to speak of sex pursuit. So, the front piece of Dudou is loose and the back is bare which did not decorate female body shape but produced the coy feeling meanwhile. However, the word "sexy" originated from the west, is an indispensable element of female charm, is the eternal pursuit of western women's clothing. Western women take pride in the fact that the human body is a work of art and are happy to show it. A plump breast and a slender waist are symbols of beauty. The corset is cut based on this that make the curves of the female body extremely obvious and charming.

4.2 The Comparison of Color

For the psychological mechanism of underwear color selection, its dominant role is social and cultural factors, such as lifestyle, customs and moral beliefs. The underwear in ancient China was originally the color of the fabric itself, paying attention to comfort and practicality. With the progress of dyeing technology and the awakening of Chinese women's consciousness, underwear began to express people's emotions through color. However, China is a country with a long history of feudalism, and its traditional use of color has a strong class connotation. But Dudou serves as underwear, private and not be seen, the class meaning is relatively less. Therefore, the choice of color is richer than that of normal clothes, which has strong national and folk characteristics and is given more emotional sustenance. If the color of Dudou is a kind of perceptual choice, then the color choice of corset is more rational. Different from the ancient Chinese association of color and ethics, western color art is characterized by the pursuit of the truth and beauty of color vision and a more rational and scientific attitude towards color. Because corset emphasizes its stereo form to make structure and shape effect, it pays little less attention to color and think the color of underwear is a kind of reflect of savor. Corset is mostly monochrome, the corset that has adornment detail also uses consimilar color, color does not have too big fluctuation change. Of course, influenced by Christianity, westerners worship white, because white is the symbol of the holy precepts.

4.3 Comparison of Pattern

The patterns of underwear in China and the west cannot get rid of the common restriction of human totem system. Both the curving grass pattern of western corset and the flora and animal pattern of Chinese Dudou are a combination of three factors in totem system. Totems were regarded as protectors and symbols of the secular world, born in the matriarchal period of primitive society, each of which had some connection to something, based on human emotions and desires. In ancient China, the theme of totem is displayed through landscape, flowers and birds, and fairy tales on the Dudou. In the west, it is embroidered with lilies of the valley, pansy and corset, or printed with Cupid's cloth pattern. Although, compare with the importance Dudou attaches to pattern, corset pays more attention to stereo modelling and craft make. Adornment is not the thing corset wants to show most, which is completely opposite to Dudou that pay attention to adornment and simplifies modelling. For spiritual aspect, due to the restrictions of the feudal society, it was difficult for women to express their wishes on their out wear. Therefore, Dudou became a good carrier to express women's emotion. Chinese women use needlework and other traditional techniques to express the feelings of depression, the eager for love and pursuit of a better life. Dudou belongs to one of the representative works of Chinese women's traditional craft -- needlework, in which the pattern is formed from totem (an auspicious concept and folk customs). Totem comes from the belief of ancient ancestors, because people were so weak when fought against nature at that time. They believed that mysterious forces in the world would protect their lives. Therefore, the pursuit of the spirit of life and the belief of better life are reflected in these small objects. However, corset was not the carrier of strong emotional sustenance, but a carrier to show women's beauty. The use of pattern put luxuriant and fashion as priority, the pattern on trend was the best pattern.

4. Comparison of Concept of female

5.1 The influence of Confucianism on the Dudou

In fact, the long history of Dudou has been reflected in Chinses document. The first time Dudou was first

mentioned in Chinese ancient novel, was *Dream of the Red Chamber* in Song dynasty. It says the needle and thread in his hand turned out to be a Dudou in red and white, with the pattern of mandarin duck playing lotus on it. The earliest definition of Dudou was in Qing dynasty. *Barnyard note* records: "Moxiong, the small clothes covered the chest, named as Mofu, also known as Modu. Made with a square cloth, tightly tied chest, in case of wind and cold invasion, commonly known as the Dudou. Both men and women." Whatever the silhouette, color and pattern, the development of Dudou was affected a lot by Confucianism. It attaches great importance to aesthetic appreciation on the spiritual and cultural level, with less emphasis on the beauty of the human body. Confucianism emphasizes the "unity of man and nature", which means to humanize clothes and make them reflect people's emotional and moral ideals. When people choose clothes, they will unconsciously follow the following rules: first, not against the public aesthetic; second, based on personal aesthetic taste. Therefore, the color and pattern of Dudou fully express the emotion, consciousness and psychology of Chinese women. Covering the body with a piece of cloth weakened the body shape and comply with the moral ethics at same time, finally meet the moral rule of the society. The feudal thought of Confucian culture not only contributed to the unique graceful and restrained beauty of Chinese clothing, but also led to the physical and psychological constraints on women, thus forming a unique style of China's ancient underwear clothing.

5.2 The influence of western philosophy on the corset

The western traditional philosophy clearly separates the subject from the object and holds that the subject and object are opposite to each other, which makes the western traditional aesthetics rational, speculative and scientific. Ancient western art attach importance to the depiction of realism and reproduction of objective things, so the costume also shows the pursuit of body beauty. Corset is the embodiment of the western traditional aesthetic thoughts. The design concept takes the pursuit of

human body beauty as the core, shaping female body into F shape and beautifying female body shape. Besides, western philosophy pays attention to logic and seeking truth, and explores beauty rationally. Beauty has accurate proportion and specific form, and beauty is more rational than emotion.

5. Conclusion

Looking back at history, whether in China or western country, the female body is an object that has been greatly appreciated. The difference is that the Dudou and corset express two totally different fashion languages with the plane and three-dimensional constitution respectively. As the key to the inner molding underneath the coat, they reflect the differences between Chinese and western design concepts and carry the abundant cultural connotations of the Chinese and western underwear. The revolution of the underwear also symbolized the complete liberation of the body and mentality of the Chinese and western female in the society, which is the achievement from the pursuit of the self of the women in China and the western countries. The implicit and introverted nature of Chinese culture endows Dudou with hidden characteristics, while western culture creates corsets that shackle the body based on the pursuit of body curves. Anyway, Dudou and corsets promoted the development of underwear in history. And now, with the progress of social ideology, underwear is appearing in people's vision with a healthier and more cultural appearance.

Reference

1. Jingjing Liu, Huie Liang, Jiaqin Zhang (2016). Art comparison of Dudou and corset? Journal of Clothing Research, 2016 .8 1-4
2. Lixia Yang, Hongfu Wang (2013). Reactions to cultural differences between China and the west in the 16th and 19th century according to Dudou and corset. Fine Art Education Research, 2013-7
3. Fengdan Guan, Dongyu Hou (2018). A brief analysis of the aesthetic difference between corset and Chinese Dudou. Clothing and Design, 2018-22

4. Beibei Liao, Sijie Fan (2019). The relationship between the external form of Chinese Dudou and Confucianism. Chemical Fiber & Textile Technology, 2019-48-3
5. Qian Cao (2012). If you want to talk, then talk. Hunan Normal University, Master's thesis, 2012.5.1
6. Kaiyan Zhou (2007). The Same Aesthetic Goal of Chinese and Western Dress Adornment Demonstrated by Corset and Bound Feet. Art & Design. 2007.10 – 174
7. Rong Li (2007). Chinese Traditional Underwear: Inheritance and Creation of Dudou. Journal of Wuhan University of Science and Engineering. 2017-20-1
8. Wei Li, Tao Yuan, Renping Xu (2006). Study on Chinese Women Underwear Embroidery Pattern in Qing Dynasty. Journal of Henan Textile College. 2016-04
9. Yawen Zhang, Rongrong Cui (2015). Interpretation of Female Cultural Connotation of Dudou. Journal of Wuhan Textile University, 2015-28-4
10. Fan Yang (2017). The Meaning and Representation of Dudou Pattern. Journal of Suzhou University. 2017-32-10.