

## Study on Textile Patterns in the Film "In the Mood for Love" – Focused on qipao of heroine –

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### Abstract

The retro fashion and orientalism have been the main trend in the fashion industry from 2000 as the turning point from the minimalism. In particular, the far eastern orientalism, that is, Japanese orientalism had been rapidly spread from 2001. As the trend has been moving to Chinese orientalism from 2003, the fabrics with flower pattern prints and those imbued with Chinese orientalism that were popular in 1960 are the main stream in the textile industry at present. As keeping up with the current trend, this study analyzed the common features and differences between textile patterns with Chinese orientalism that are prevailing at present and the textile patterns that were popular in 1960s through the film "In the Mood for Love" that told the story of people who immigrated from Shanghai to Hong Kong in 1960s.

According to the analysis, the popular textile patterns in 1960s were splendid flower patterns, pop art and op art patterns. Such a trend was elegantly expressed as the textile pattern of Chinese orientalism using qipao in the film "In the Mood for Love".

**Key words** : pao, qipao, Wuen Bioring, Magap, Chinese orientalism, op art

## I .Introduction

### 1. Background and purpose of the study

The textile patterns that are in fashion now comprise mainly the patterns remembering 1960s. In particular, Chinese orientalism is very popular.

For analyzing the textile patterns, it is necessary to understand the patterns that were

in vogue in China in 1960s. The film "In the Mood for Love" is the remarkable works by the director Wong Kar Wai through his intensive investigation, with the set in Hong Kong in 1960s. In particular, the film was excellent in expressing the patterns and colors that were popular at that time through qipao, the folk costume of heroine.

## 2. Range and method of the study

This study aims to analyze the textile patterns that are in vogue at present by comparing with the textile patterns in the film "In the Mood for Love" set in 1960s.

This study analyzed Chinese orientalism in the textile patterns in 2005 by analyzing the textile patterns showing Chinese orientalism in 1960s. For the analysis on patterns in 1960s, the textile patterns in the film "In the Mood for Love" were collected through the DVD "In the Mood for Love" and Internet. The textile patterns on qipao of heroine were classified into the flower patterns, stripe patterns, geometrical patterns and patterns using a variety of fabrics. Then, the ways of expression, size of motif, density of motif and frequency of use were analyzed. Moreover, the history of qipao and qipao applying the textile patterns popularized at that time were accurately compared and analyzed.

## II. Text

### 1. Review of the movie 'In the mood for love'

The movie 'In the mood for love' is the one filmed by Wong Kar Wai that was made in 2001 in Hongkong.

Director Wong Kar Wai mainly produces cult movies that are of high quality, and this movie is also the one that pursues beauty of temperance that is made in Hongkong style which is about the greatly concealing old love that has disappeared long time ago. As we say the point

of this movie, it may be 'Romance or Obliquity'.

The word 'hwayangyeonhwa' means the period like the flower of life. The director is expressing the memory of love in the young age as the most beautiful time.

The story of the movie starts from the setting that two households move into the apartment where the people from Shanghai live and Hongkong is the main background and it is setting 1962 as the period of the movie. Richen, who is working as a secretary of a trade company, and her husband and Chau who works at the desk of local paper and his wife are those people.

Richen's husband frequently goes on business trips to Japan for his business, and Chau's wife works in a hotel so she frequently leaves her house. So, Chau and Richen spend time alone most of the time. They bump into each other in the streets, apartment and on the way to the grocery, so they become close to each other. Chau checks the point that Richen has the same handbag as the one of his wife, and Richen comes to notice that Chau wears the same tie as the one of her husband, so they come to notice that their spouses are meeting each other secretly. Richen weeps in sorrow as she cannot leave the person she loves. Chau consoles Richen and feels love to her.

### 2. Features of Qipao in the Film

The whole feeling of the movie is temperance. Especially, all acts and garments of the main actress are pursuing temperance just as it is woven into.

The garments of the main actress are the Chinese traditional garment, qipao which fits

perfectly without scattering, and sharp high-heel, hair which are curled uprightly seem to show the inner world of the main actress.

The movie set the time from 1960s to 1970s. In this time set, the qipao garments of the protagonist are 26 pieces in all. qipao, which originated from the fact that the lower edge of the skirt blows like the flag, is the garment that has slacks in both sides from the top of the hip to the bottom.

The qipao emerged in the movie is the one made by the famous craftsmen of Hongkong and the main actress changes the costume every 3 minutes during the whole running time—from light green qipao that has white stripe, passionate red qipao that matched see-through chiffon, white qipao that has large black rose pattern, and flower pattern qipao that has contrasting colors.

The movie is showing the chasing course how they came to where in the situation that the spouses of the two protagonists are having an affair, and in this situation, it is showing the psychological conflict according to the change in emotion of the actress indirectly through various colors and pattern design.

### **3. The analysis of change in textile of Chinese qipao**

#### **1) History of Qipao**

The origin of qipao dates back to the shimeui of the Age of the Warring States. Shimeui is the costume that was widely used by the people from the Age of the Warring States to one generation. The pao afterward may have relations with this pao. Shimeui is more or less different from the qipao as of. Shimeui shows the

effect just like connecting the upper garment and skirt and is the form of two-piece, and pao is the form of one-piece and has the feature that doesn't have any separation in upper garment and skirt. After that, pao gradually developed while settled into stable costume style.

pao was used as the official costume since the Han Dynasty. First, it was the form of an arc in the elbow parts, had X type collar, was wide in width, the length reached the feet, the sleeves were wide, and the edge was narrow. The style of pao was shown differently according to ages, but the most typical one was wide and long, and intelligent people or the governing class enjoyed wearing them. pao which was in vogue in minorities or the nomadic was tightly fit to act comfortably when moving actively such as riding on horse or shooting with a bow and arrow.

This pao was worn while tying the collar mostly to the left and the sleeves were narrow and the width fitted. The Hans had accepted the pao that fitted tightly to the body many times in the history. Also in the Tang Dynasty, Chinese garment was in vogue once, and the tightly fit pao formed the main stream of the costume in the governing period of minorities such as Yo, Keum, Won, and Qing Dynasty. The Qing Dynasty was the longest in governing period and was stable, so pao could settle as a typical costume. By the stability of the regime, they propelled the renovation of costume system, and from this time, two-piece form costume that wore skirt and upper garment was only worn in houses by the women of Han, and men and women had to wear Fao at official places.

As a result, the types of pao increase into long pao(the formal suit that embroidered dragon pattern and the emperor wore it), mang pao, and

zhangfu pao(the formal suit that embroidered anaconda and the ministers wore it). As we see from the meaning, qipao was zhangpao that Manju people wore, but only zhangpao that the women in Palgi wore at usual times can be classified as the original type of qipao afterward.

The Qing Dynasty made qipao in vogue nationally by gradual combination of costume style by assimilating the Hans by the costume of Manju people on one hand while maintaining the customs and costumes of their own. As time reached the latter period of Qing Dynasty, the qipao which Manju people wore became wide, strong and straight in lines and the length reached the ankle.

The height of the collar covered the cheeks and reached the earlobes, and they embroidered various patterns by color thread on the surface of qipao. The various decorations of the qipao of the women at that age reached its top.

From 1930s, qipao was renovated into the pattern that had sleeves which was worn over the short cotton jeogori and reached the feet and was the form of magap, and this became the prototype of new qipao. These people who made qipao in vogue were girl students of Shanghai area, and the girls at that time were the symbol of intelligent women and were the ideal of the society. They were the symbol of civilization and the pioneer of fashion, so the celebrities or the demimonde women were dressed up in girl student fashion.

The renovated Qipao that emerged in the late 1930s made it fit more well to the body while absorbing the cutting method of the West in composition, and it became the standard costume of modern Chinese female doctor that combined the costume feature of China and the West while grew far from the old style.



〈Photo 1〉  
The Changpao of Palgi  
women Dynasty



〈Photo 2〉  
Wuien Bioring Magap  
in the end of Qing

## 2) The textile pattern change of qipao

As China went through the Xinhai revolution, the pattern was shown up in concise design and fabulous color from the embroidery pattern of fabulous and complex form of the past while being influenced by the costume of the West. From the end of 1920s to the beginning of 1930s, the length of skirt and sleeve of qipao were shortened to knees and elbows by the influence of the miniskirt of the West. From the mid 1930s, the skirts were elongated to the extent of reaching the ground, and the pattern adhered to the original and traditional pattern. Whereas, the side sleek became bolder to reach the thighs, and the waist line was more highlighted.

Reaching the 1940s, as practicalism was highlighted, the length of qipao shortened again and reached the calves, and flower pattern became prevalent of simple form that excluded the decoration.

In the 1950s, by the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the mainland faced declination, but in Taiwan or Hongkong, geometric pattern and simple flower pattern were induced. Also, it can be mentioned as the period when traditional textiles such as jikgeumdan and gohyangdan for qipao were developed actively.

In this period, qipao eliminated complex and miscellaneous decorations and pursued practicality, economic feature, and aestheticism included in costumes and nayeom and set it as the universal emotion in crafts-art system, and the design of qipao was concise and humble and few used flower embroidery and edge decoration.

From 1960s to 1970s, qipao couldn't develop more by the obliteration policy of the traditional culture, as it was the period of cultural revolution which continued endlessly in the mainland. But as for the overseas Chinese and Hongkong, and Taiwan, it can be said as the developed period which was new and detailed.



〈Photo 3〉 Qipao of 1950s



〈Photo 4〉 Qipao of the 1960s

It has characteristics that made the edge of the clothes smaller just as the size of a vase while orienting curves to qipao. The textile patterns mainly used various seonyeom pattern with textile printing. Especially, the qipao enjoyed its fame overseas.

In 1970s, the women in the inland China didn't wear qipao, but the fashion designers of the inland China were making qipao for the overseas Chinese.

From this time, qipao was regarded mostly as the formal dress, and the fabric prevailed in fabulous flower embroidery and traditional patterned print material. But among women in Hongkong and Taiwan, there were fewer occasions to wear qipao for usual costumes.

By this time situation, qipao lost its basis of necessary production technology needed in vogue. Also, the traditional textile needed in the production of qipao didn't become to the time trend, so the entrepreneurs didn't develop new textiles any more. The change in lifestyles of the people also affected the vogue of qipao.

In 1980s, uniform qipao emerged which had strong vocational meaning. For the purpose of ads and sales, the women who worked as the PR helper or in banquet, hotel or and these qipaos used chemical textiles that imitated raw threads in every case, so the color was fabulous and the part that had sleeks on the edge was very high and as the production method was complex, it damaged many beautiful forms to the original qipao. This uniform qipao was mainly of textile printing and the color was mainly of fabulous flower pattern.

From 2000s to now, qipao wasn't in vogue to common people for many reasons, but at formal places such as wedding ceremony, overseas visit, and TV program, it became to be settled as formal suits, so the pattern is mainly of traditional print on red textile and flower print.

Qipao, which has maintained its position as traditional costume of Chinese for 1 century went through the course of change and development but as all traditional clothes are, they preserve national emotion much irrelevant to the trend of



〈Photo 5〉 uniform qipao



〈Photo 6〉 The present Qipao

the present age, and due to the change in the ideal of the women in 2000s, qipao is changing into the form the people who favor straight shoulder and small hip size want.

#### 4. The analysis of textile pattern shown in the movie 'In the mood for love'

The qipao which the main actress wears highlights slim neckline and beautiful shoulder, and draws perfect curve along with the waist and falls to the hip, which is present qipao. But to make use of the feature of qipao in the 1960s, it heightened the height of Kara, so it is expressing the feature of qipao at that time.

Qipao is showing various patterns of the 1960s to the protagonist, and the contrasting color, flower pattern, stripe pattern, also the geometric pattern and colorful pattern show the characteristics to the pattern which were in vogue at that time well. These features can be classified as follow.

##### 1) flower pattern

The flower pattern of qipao which emerges in the movie used contrasting colors and primary colors and it has a big motive. Also, the degree doesn't exceed 8 degree.

In case of (Photo 7), it used large flower and mid-sized flower of the rose motive, and used gasree technique so it has the feature to let the pattern be seen strongly.

(Photo 8) has the feature to make the green background and purple flower become strong colors as they are contrasting colors.

It produced the red flowers to be diagonal by the pattern of half drop, and the purple flower that becomes the main motive produced it in 2 degree so it gave the flower a strong look by contrasting them.



〈Photo 7-1〉

〈Photo 7-2〉



〈Photo 8-1〉

〈Photo 8-2〉



〈Photo 9〉 has the feature of concise and simple one point pattern. It deployed cool light green stem on the yellow orchid flower, and used water color painting method for the motive and produced the pattern by letting it be a realistic image.

〈Photo 10〉 is the design that is produced in 1 degree by deploying black flower pattern on the white background. The qipao's slim line shows the best in this situation, and it is the handicraft work that drew pattern by the brush on the textile by hands.

## 2) Stripe pattern

〈Photo 11-1,2〉 used primary colors and achromatic colors just as the flower pattern. Especially, the light green qipao which has white check left wide spaces to diagonal check and is giving cool feeling. Also, the check pattern that had red check on the white textile and make it look in pink mode is highlighting elegance and womanliness even more. 〈Photo 12-1,2〉 is the

qipao which used horizontal stripe pattern on the achromatic colored textile and it has vivid color that was in vogue in the 1960s and has line pattern. Here, we highlighted texture on the fabric rather than the stripe pattern.

## 3) Geometric pattern

On the right of 〈Photo 13〉, it shows geometric line, simple minimalism and thin silhouette as the main characteristics.

The left side is the pattern that shows optical illusion by the overlapping deployment of geometric diagrams on the vivid red color pattern.

〈Photo 14〉 is the pattern that made use of blotted effects of the type, and we can see that it is the qipao made by hand. This kind of handwork is the feature that shows well on traditional costume and it is the pattern that is expressed irrelevantly with the trend. It is the pattern of painting in India ink mood and the match of black effect with light green is showing a mysterious mood.



〈Photo 9-1〉

〈Photo 9-2〉



〈Photo 10-1〉

〈Photo 10-2〉





<Photo 11-1>



<Photo 11-2>



<Photo 12-1>



<Photo 12-2>



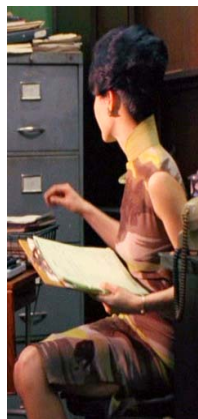
<Photo 13-1>



<Photo 13-2>



<Photo 14-1>



<Photo 14-2>



<Photo 15>

<Photo 15> can be mentioned as the representative art trend of the 1960s as the op art that gives optical illusion, and the color of qipau that is shown here has black line on brown color and is expressing the unstable mind of the actress well. Especially, it is characteristic to assimilate the color of qipao to the background surrounding it.

#### 4) The pattern that used various fabrics

<Photo 16> is the qipao that used chiffon and is expressing the most Chinese color strongly. The textile is the dip-dyeing that used see-through chiffon and is shown in red color and green color which are passionate.

<Photo 17> is the qipao that used rough and

vivid texture fabric, and it used black net formed textile as the color and the decorative factor was excluded. Especially, the qipao on the right side can be said as experimental clothes that patch-worked light colored silk fabric.

### 5. Chinese Oriental Textile Patterns of 1960s Reproduced in 2005

2005 F/W Collections propose the Chinese orientalism at present.

The flower patterns of Chinese orientalism in 2005 are characterized by simple and big patterns as well as frequent use. They are very similar to those in the film "In the Mood for Love". However, the patterns highlighting the smudge technique are in fashion as a variety of colors are applied on the primary colors.

While there are patterns with simple design on the solid colors without lines, the styles with the color contrast like those in 1960s, which accompany the patterns with lines or geometrical lines, are emphasized. Celine and Marc Jacobs



<Photo 16-1>



<Photo 16-2>



<Photo 17-1>



<Photo 17-2>



<Photo 18>



<Photo 19>



<Photo 20>



adopted the op art print patterns from 1960s. Op art in the film "In the Mood for Love" used the simple and geometrical figures. On the contrast, a variety of complicated figures are used in 2005.

The common features between patterns in 1960s and those in 2005 are the diversity of patterns making a variety of changes.

As we see the same rose patterns, they are showing various patterns by the harmony of size and color and are giving change in graphic pattern and stripe pattern and it is one of the big common points that it is giving out the mood of pop-art.

The fashion industry is increasingly demanding more retro and more oriental things in 2005. This trend shows the contrast of clear colors and illusion effects with the simple geometrical lines that contrast with the splendid and primary flower patterns with minimal designs. A variety of patterns drawing attention in 1960s are applied as the patterns that can make the best use of simple silhouette like chiffon through op art.

#### IV. Conclusion

The fashions in 1960s were in the age when the diversity and testability co-existed. Antiwar movement and minimalism were emerged and the splendid flower patterns, pop art and op art patterns were in vogue. The film "In the Mood for Love" elegantly and sumptuously expressed such diverse textile patterns through qipao, the ethnic costume of China. However, we need to consider that since the film was made in 2001, qipao of 1960s in the film showed the

modernistic aspects.

Nevertheless, the film enables those who never experienced 1960s to sufficiently understand the costumes and a variety of accessories through the true reproduction of the situations at that time.

Accordingly, it was found that the modern trends were also expressed in slightly different ways depending on the countries and their ethnicity.

Then, the textile patterns in the film "In the Mood for Love" demonstrated substantially Chinese colors and motives. The colorful and magnificent expression on red and green and simple stripe design on achromatic colors expressed the oriental features well.

The motives are characterized by big size and roughness. While the density is very high, the modern oriental textile patterns are vividly expressed with high saturation by combining yellow and blue as well as expressing dark red and purple in various ways. The motive sizes are dense and use the simple line. The motive density is simple. The textile patterns in the film "In the Mood for Love" expressed the strong contrast of complementary colors using the primary colors by reducing the frequency to 2-3 times. In that way, they emphasized the simple, rough and luxuriant colors on the patterns in 1960s. The present patterns expressed the abundant gradation colors using a number of frequencies, 8 times or more, with the smudge effects. The present patterns are characterized by simple image using the simple motive density. In consideration of the differences, the textile patterns mixing modern orientalism and minimalism are in vogue in 2000.

However, since the future orientalism becomes more retrospective and oriental, the textile patterns will resemble those in 1960s.

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- 9) <Photo 3>~<Photo 6> <http://myhome.naver.com/mugm20/fengsu/qipao1.htm> 2005-05-26
- 10) <Photo 7>~<Photo 17-2> The movie " In The Mood For Love" DVD capture.
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