



The Shaping of Diverse Masculinities by the Westernization of Men's Clothing in Modern China and Japan

Zhiwei Tian, Yu Liu

College of Fashion and Art Design, Dong Hua University, Shanghai, China

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Abstract: In the process of westernization and reform in East Asian countries, the western style men's clothing was changed due to the western wind, and for East Asian men who originally wore wide laminated traditional men's clothing such as robes, coats and shirts, the prominent expression was the simplification of men's clothing, which resulted in the male body that was hidden under the laminated fabric being gradually enlarged and accentuated. In this regard, East Asian men wore Western-style modified clothing and showed almost uniform masculinity. Chinese and Japanese men had different attitudes towards westernization and the purpose of wearing western men's clothing in the process, which led to the difference in the final image of the costume. It is for this reason that East Asian men took different paths in the portrayal of multiple masculinities. In general, Chinese and Japanese men have been influenced by Western menswear culture to change their concept of fashion. The further development in the social field has realized the dynamic trend of masculinity from flexible subordination to rigid dominance.

Keywords: westernized menswear, male images, masculinities, modern times, modern East Asia

1. Introduction

Starting from the image of men's dressing constituted by westernized men's clothing, the Western concept of male fashion has produced a change in East Asian men from the outside to the inside, i.e., a change in masculinity. Through the combined effect of the two, it constituted a transition from traditional to modern appearance in the modern East Asian men's dress reform. At the same time, the differences in social policy and westernized attitudes caused the result of diversified expressions of masculinity in this context. This result also illustrates that masculinity is not a static state in the process of practice but is expressed through constant changes and trends that eventually shape the diversity of masculinity in different social arenas. Comparing the differences in the image of East Asian men's dressing before and after westernization, the westernization of men's clothing led to changes in dressing at the level of appearance, and furthermore, the changes in appearance brought about by westernization were due to the influence of fashion concepts, thus causing an impact on the aesthetic thinking of East Asian men. The change in fashion perceptions before and after Westernization eventually led to the difference in the dressing image of men.

2. The shaping of diverse masculinities

In the process of westernization and reform in East Asian countries, the western style men's clothing was changed due to the western wind, and for East Asian men who originally wore wide laminated traditional men's clothing such as robes, coats and shirts, the prominent expression was the simplification of men's clothing, which resulted in the male body hidden under the laminated fabric being gradually enlarged and accentuated. In this regard, East Asian men wore Western-style modified clothing and showed almost the same masculinity. The different attitudes towards westernization and the different purposes of wearing western men's clothing in the process led to the differences in the final image of the dress.

Before discussing the issue of masculinity through dressing up, it is important to explain the concept of "masculinity." The Wechsler Dictionary explains masculinity as "the quality or nature of the male sex: the quality, state, or degree of being masculine or manly, the set of qualities considered appropriate for or characteristic of men." Later studies also translated "masculinity" as "masculinity, masculinity, etc.", but the discussion was all about masculinity. With the enrichment of gender awareness, research on the social construction of masculinity was gradually improved. Australian sociologist and one of the founders of the field of masculinity research, Raven Cornell, is well known for her work in this area. Her influential work on the concept of dominant masculinity in gender studies illustrates the existence of masculinity diversity. Her work on masculinity has been frequently cited in related studies in the field. It presents theories related to masculinity that are often applied to specific case studies of men, boys, and gender issues.

Men's studies are primarily a study of gender, which involves the issue of gender roles. At the heart of gender role theory lies an emphasis on the different roles that men and women play, where being a man or a woman means playing out a set of expectations that people have for a particular gender. Since masculinity and femininity can easily be interpreted as internalized sex roles, they are socially acquired or socialized products that emphasize how society shapes males or females in conjunction with their biological sex. Since masculinity is a practice, there are as many possibilities of practice as there are masculinities, which cannot be categorized in advance, and Cornell's four divisions of masculinity cannot exhaust all possibilities. Fang Gang, a leading Chinese scholar on sexuality and gender, proposes a three-dimensional constitution of masculinity. His theoretical model argues that "any practice of masculinity is a changing trend, not a static type. Masculinity is to be judged in terms of two different dimensions, dominant and subordinate trends, and rigid and flexible trends, with dominance and subordination looking at relationships, and rigidity and flexibility looking at individuality, which intersect but do not overlap."

The practice of masculinity is constructed in specific contexts and symbols. The same symbolic practice may have meaning in different contexts and symbols, only that its constructed masculinity practices may be different, and these affect the outcome of masculinity practices. In terms of that three-dimensional constitution, masculinity under Cornell's quadratic approach will produce external expressions that correspond to it. Each externality will produce a corresponding masculinity according to its three-dimensional composition, and there are as many different masculinities as there are possibilities.

3. The shaping of Japanese masculinity

In the process of westernization in East Asia, Japan reacted quickly and positively to the arrival of Western civilization due to the Meiji Restoration. This resulted in its westernization being the most pronounced among the East Asian countries. It is for this reason that the characteristics that are found in the men's clothing of all classes in the West can be found in the Japanese men's clothing. The images and expressions of masculinity that existed in Western men's clothing were also inherited by Japanese men. Later, the militaristic ideology intensified, and the rigid trend became more obvious, which led to the development of the masculinity of Japanese men towards a strong trend of rigid dominance until the Showa era. With the emergence of Emperor Hirohito's middle-class ideology, the initial Westernized system of masculinity was abolished, and the trend toward rigidity only gradually weakened.

In the early Meiji period, diplomats saw the lifestyle of European gentlemen as a symbol of maturity and progress. These well-groomed Westerners revealed a progressive and civilized manliness by wearing fashionable clothing. However, when the Japanese brought the material symbols and social customs of European bourgeois society back to Japan and began to use them wholesale, they were ridiculed and satirized by other opponents of Westernization, and even the European powers of the time expressed dismay at this. They thought that Japan's westernization was only concerned with appearance and form, and that it was an extremely shallow imitation of Western culture. It was true, too, that the Meiji emperor's earliest aim by dressing in a manner consistent with the West was to gain world recognition through consistency in appearance, while gaining social status. Another purpose was to distinguish the imperial aristocracy from the masses by dressing in expensive Western men's clothing.

Since masculinity is a constantly changing cultural construct, when westernization began to take place, Japanese men's masculinity was challenged in many ways, especially with the contrast between the traditional feminine dress of men and the military style that ran through after the Meiji Restoration. Westernization led to the introduction of military conscription and compulsory education in Japan, and as a result, large-scale armies and various Western schools were established. As a result, the men who emerged from the academies and the battlefields were almost perfect models of the manhood that was most needed in East Asia at that time. At the same time, the greatest impact of the Meiji Restoration on Japan was the deepening of patriarchalism, and the inequality of a male-dominated society intensified after the Meiji Restoration. This led to the localization of Westernized men's clothing in Japan, and the new types of men's clothing were basically designed and made around the military uniforms that had a strong dominant masculinity and the dressing habits of the powerful men in society.

Through a change in dress image, the idea of militarism emerged as a trend in the various types of men's clothing after its westernization. Relying on the fact that at that time, during the reform process, male students who could not afford tuition were admitted to military schools, a solid foundation of general education was instilled in these students who could not afford tuition by way of school military service if they received the same rigorous training as the military. Therefore, through this opportunity, male students who did not have the attributes of soldiers were given the attributes of soldiers through the military management, and although it is not clear whether these males truly possessed the masculinity of the military's rigid dominance trend, they at least achieved the appropriate temperament in terms of dress and image.

Renowned educator Mori Yuri issued the School Ordinance in 1887, setting forth the central goal of the perfect

educational system he envisioned: to create and nurture Japanese men who would defend the country and perpetuate the Japanese national spirit. His belief that Japanese men needed to undergo such a change after Westernization was due to his championing of military masculinity. As a representative figure in Japan following the modernist reforms, he and Ito Hirobumi felt that Japanese men were desperately lacking in self-discipline and physical strength after the Meiji Restoration. And all these attributes are contained in the military. During the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, school textbooks shifted from gender awareness to encouraging boys to participate in adventurous activities, hoping that the activities would deepen the bond between men and soldiers from an early age and generate admiration for the military community.

After the implementation of the School Ordinance, the need for male students to accept militaristic values was increasingly emphasized, and the practice of "playing the soldier" was promoted in schools, and textbooks began to teach that Japanese boys could become strong and real men if they had the same appearance as soldiers. As a result, the masculinity of the military was revealed through the image of dressing up and influenced boys from an early age, and when Japanese student uniforms borrowed from the Prussian military style emerged, male students also naturally showed a similar or consistent masculinity with the military community by wearing Western-style modified men's uniforms.

The manliness that is evident in the military is concentrated in the image of Japanese men's dress at different times, mainly because in the process of their education and improvement, they were receiving militaristic ideas. At the same time the country's rulers initially, it was to gain the same status as the West that they wore and imitated specific Western military uniforms, thus opening the door to the westernization of Japanese dress. Therefore, the organization that formulated the relevant westernized men's clothing in Japan, from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, was based on the basic principle of shaping a Japanese male with an expression of the military ideal of masculinity as an improvement and localization.

Japan has been labeled as a thoroughly Westernized country because of its indiscriminate absorption of dominant masculinity by adopting a specific Western image of the strong man. By adopting the same image of dressing up to achieve the same important social status as the West, they absorbed the philosophy of governance and the composition system of the capitalist society adopted by the "strong men" on the world stage. Through localization and reform, they established their own national system of men's dressing, especially the uniform system based on the military style. This westernized and reformed masculine dress proved to be the foundation for its dominance in East Asia. Due to the continued influence of this dominant masculinity in the modernization of Japanese men, when it created student uniforms with national characteristics, it became a sample for other countries to learn from and study in the subsequent development of East Asian men's clothing.

The Japanese student wear group not only brought a rigid masculinity to the men's wear because of the militarized gene in the men's wear, but also the dominant masculinity was eventually transferred to the expression of the national masculinity due to the inheritance of the western fashion concept in the early westernization process. At the same time, because the group represented by the students was a symbol of intellectuals, the masculinity was not entirely the rigid traits of the military. On the contrary, the masculinity constituted by Japanese student uniforms and their costumes was favored by revolutionaries and intellectuals in East Asian countries in the modern development through the flexible neutralization of the "literati" temperament.

4. The shaping of masculinity in China

In the mid-nineteenth century, China was during the fires of feudal society at the end of the Qing Dynasty. The inculcation of traditional Confucianism led Chinese men to show too much femininity and softness in their masculinity. With the help of the cross-axis of masculinity practices used as a theoretical basis by sociologist Fang Gang in his paper "Analysis of the Diversity of Masculinity Practices," masculinity practices were a changing trend. Thus, pre-Westernization Chinese masculinity is considered to have tended toward a flexible and subordinate nature. In his study of traditional Chinese men, Yang Yu suggests that the unique socio-cultural and socio-psychological structure of traditional Chinese society led to the assimilation of gender stereotypes of both sexes. The softening of the scholarly character is clearly reflected in the formation of the "gentle and generous" temperament of ancient Chinese culture.

In his doctoral dissertation on Chinese masculinity, Zhou Lili suggests that "Liang Qichao believed that the same gentlemanly qualities embodied in Chinese men could be achieved by learning to be gentlemen. Other elites regarded Chinese men at the time as the "sick man of East Asia" and believed that a strong body through military training and physical exercise would make the country strong. In addition to improving physical fitness, reformist thinkers sought to revive what they saw as China's long-neglected 'emphasis on the martial arts.'" This idea was put forward in the hope that masculinity would begin to shift from a flexible/subordinate nature to a rigid/dominant nature through

When westernization brought about changes in men's dress, the once flexible masculinity was gradually overwritten. The use of military uniforms highlighted the masculinity that came with the emphasis on "force", while the physical training

opportunities that came with military training gradually brought Chinese men out of the shackles of physical weakness. Thus, while the common of westernized menswear and inner temperament changed in modern times, the trend of Chinese men achieving a rigid/dominant masculinity began to change. Before westernized uniforms were localized, the various reformers wore the clothes of western gentlemen, as gentlemen represented the powerful and elite class, a dominant male figure symbolizing modernity and progress, and gained the same masculinity by wearing western suits. As Western ideas were gradually promoted to the masses by the revolutionaries, the localization of Western-style men's clothing provided Chinese men with a dress-up image caused by a change in the short, neatly trimmed hair, simple and well-fitting uniforms, easy-to-wear and practical styles, and uniform and regular features. The serious, rational and standardized characteristics of men were shown when dressing, a characteristic that men did not have in traditional Chinese society. Westernization brought the idea of the dominant social position of men in the Western world to China. Through the borrowing and improvement of Western menswear, the dominant masculinity that was once rooted in Western menswear was also brought into the DNA of Westernized Chinese menswear. Since Western men's fashion had entered a stable state of development in the early 20th century, and the Western men's fashion concept did not fluctuate, the expression of masculinity was also stable for a long time, which is the reason why the image of Chinese men was gradually unified and solidified after westernization. To sum up, East Asian men have been influenced by Western masculine culture and have produced a change in their concept of fashion. Further development in the social field realized a dynamic change in the trend of masculinity from flexible subordination to rigid domination gradually.

5. Conclusion

Faced with the differences in westernized attitudes and social structures, the goals established by the East Asian rulers in the modernization and reform determined the strategies and directions in the construction of masculinity. The dominant masculinity of men in Western societies has always been a distinctive part of their fashion construction system. Therefore, when the Westernization reform was carried out in modern East Asian countries, the trend of men's fashion was to build the image of dominant masculinity as the primary goal. In addition, the social background was built on the development of militarization dominated by the Western powers. The military character of western men's fashion was inherited along with it. Thus, the Westernized menswear had a rigid trend in the Western military uniform and its dressing image. Therefore, the goal of creating East Asian masculinity was to create a "rigid/dominant" masculinity. However, due to the specific social environment of each country, there are different subtypes of masculinity diversity. In general, East Asian men have been influenced by Western masculine culture, which has led to a change in their perception of fashion. Further development in the social field has realized a dynamic change in masculinity from flexible subordination to rigid dominance.

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