



Research on the Application of Han Dynasty Portrait Stone Patterns in Contemporary “Guochao” Fashion Design

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Abstract

The Han Dynasty portrait stone patterns, which were a critical decorative element of the Han period, served as a visual record of the civilization. They were mainly found in tombs, ancestral halls, stone coffins, and cliff engravings. This particular form of aesthetics traditionally represents indigenous Chinese ethnicity and culture. More than two millennia after its initial development, the trajectory of human development has propelled humanity to the present day. Modern man and technology have overshadowed the spiritual world. The desire for identity and a spiritual return home among many people facing a spiritual vacuum in Western life has correspondingly signaled the emergence of the “Chinese tide” in science and technology. Guochao is a response that manifests in two directions: it caters to the spiritual expectations of young people in the fashion market and reinforces its rebellious spirit by blending Chinese traditional elements into modern designs. The Han Dynasty portrait stone patterns' metaphorical meanings and external structure can be effectively integrated into the design language of contemporary fashion. Intending to blend futuristic digital fashion design with Guochao culture, the goal is to use a unique style to capture the interest of young fashion designers and introduce the innovative concept of integrating Han stone patterns into Guochao.

Keywords

Han Dynasty portrait stone pattern, “Guochao” fashion, fashion craftsmanship, traditional culture

Introduction

In the wave of the revival of traditional Chinese culture, the “Guochao” style attracts widespread attention because of its unique charm of cultural connotation. Han dynasty portrait stones were always the academic research focus and exploration hotspot due to their unique patterns and dignified appearance. The application exploration of the Han dynasty portrait stone pattern in the national style tide fashion design provides a unique and profound research perspective for the contemporary translation of Chinese traditional cultural elements. This paper not only tracks the root and development track of Han portrait stones in art and culture but also explores its innovative application prospects in the contemporary fashion industry. Han portrait stone, as a rich historical background and culturally expressive art style, has brought infinite inspiration space for the designer, while contemporarily giving the application of pattern in the field of clothing design is full of many potential problems and challenges, for instance, how to accurately convey the culture Inheritance and innovation in fashion design.

Through an in-depth analysis of Han maker's pattern works' artistic characteristics and an investigation of the national tide fashion design practice in contemporary China, this paper intends to reveal the current status, application

modes, existing issues, and future trends of the traditional Chinese pattern element representative Han portrait stone pattern art style's application in the national tide fashion design module. The researcher applauds that the fusion of digital textiles, digital image directional devices, 3D devices, artificial intelligence, Han dynasty portrait stone image creation, and influence in the field of clothing design can achieve visual upgrade innovation dissemination and popularization.

1. Han Portrait Stones

Han portrait stones are stone carvings decorated on tombs, ancestral halls, stone coffins, cliff faces, and other structures during the Han Dynasty, which is designed to be crafted on the stone surface with knives instead of brushes. Or, in another way, such as outlined in ink and colored. The term "portrait" is a term that means flat images from Hongwu and Yongle's literature about epigraphy of the Song dynasty, which originally referred to the images of transformed stone carvings, that is, plane pictures. This two-dimensional stone carving painting technique under the plane representation has a very inside Chinese national cultural style. The unique form is an artistic language of exaggeration and abstraction; as an ancient artistic spirit with expression first and capture the spirit without sticking to the rules and models; and has an ancient, vigorous, and fierce style, even if it is still worthwhile for contemporary designers to refer to and study (Zhang, Daoyi, 2019) (Fig. 1).

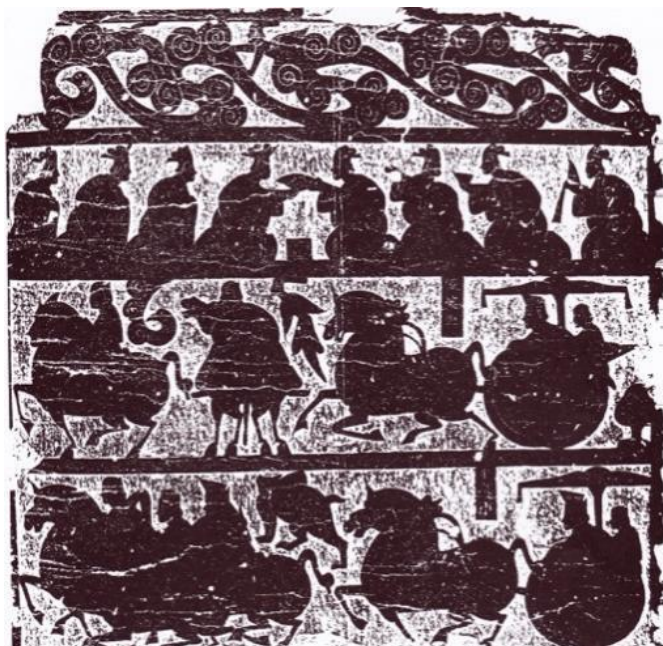


Figure 1. Han portrait stones depicting historical stories, rubbings from Shandong Jiexiang.

2. The Artistic Realms and Philosophies of Han Dynasty Stone Relief Patterns

The art behind the Han Dynasty stone relief pattern occupies an essential position in China's excellent traditional arts and crafts, with prominent characteristics of the times and place, and a unique peculiarity in the art pattern at that period. Within the use of imagery, artists of that period used symbols to express aesthetic ideals. The abstraction of the real and the mythic animals and plants held auspicious meanings, effectively transforming in these phenomena from nature and anthropomorphizing human activity. Distinct from Western sculpture's aesthetic system, the creation of Han Dynasty stone relief patterns follows ancient Chinese artists' inherent oriental charm and planar expression, most notably through various aesthetic and artistic aspects.

2.1 The Unadulterated Simplicity of Nature

As Mr. Tian Zibing put it, the Han Dynasty's decorative style is best summarized by the four words "authenticity, liveliness, cohesion, and essence." This era's stone relief patterns use the most simple syntax to grasp the viewer the imagery and enable them to savor what is depicted, condensing the simplest movement and change into the most

simple line (Zhao Niannian, 2023). Global artwork inventory has inspired numerous theoretical studies of the Western language of visual language, including Gestalt Psychological Theory of Form on Picture Aesthetics. Nevertheless, Han stone relief patterns, rather than having been rationalized by designers deliberately, are more derived from the natural condition associated with each artistic gesture.

2.2 The Eloquent Simplicity of Metaphor

The use of lines by Han stone relief artists is mostly used to draw an overall silhouette of the figure, capturing the dynamic image's dynamic essence and critical characteristics. Patterns make use of the association between abstract shapes of varying sizes—silhouettes as a creative language. They are simple, and the vivid image of various feeling states is simply translated by one or two combinations.

2.3 The Ingenious Clumsiness of Abstraction

In the formation of the image, Han stone reliefs are clumsy, but at the same time do not lose the ultimate visual effect. Instead of a refined representation—an eternal theme of modern art—aesthetics rests within what one might call the ingenious clumsiness of abstraction. It is compliant with the generalized essence contained within each artistic gesture. The late Matisse used paper to collage art—a creative method close to Han stone patterns.

2.4 The Coexistence of Form and Spirit

When examined or further cleaned down, the Han Dynasty stone relief pattern is evident in the ancients' creation were never the formal shape or the essential spirit, yet both were required to serve the essence. The central sector of Han stone relief art against the reasonable, thoughtful approach is the claim that the essential spirit is greater than the spirit and commands the spirit. For contemporary designers, this enhanced measure confirms that they can still draw on the rich artistic concept of their precursors and appropriately fulfill prerequisites for both form and spirit.

3. Artistic Concepts in Han Portrait Stone Patterns and Their “Harmony but Distinction” with “Guochao” Style

3.1 The “Harmony” between Han Portrait Stone Patterns and “Guochao” Style

“Guochao” Style is a modern artistic expression of Chinese elements in the Western trend system's contemporary category. It satisfies the aesthetic standards of the time and introduces the external form of Chinese elements into materials, to become the younger generation's spiritual product when they return to pure land. Han portrait stone pattern's form language is easy and abstract, with the content being pure and innocent (Jiang Yuhan & Yang Mei, 2024). The creator put imagery and symbols in aesthetic ideal and deformed the “exaggeration” and light detailing of beautiful designs, which are symbolic, metaphorical, aesthetic, and fulfillment of symbolism and symbolism. In the context of contemporary design art, the above form language transformation ought to be more easily born and is more accessible to design artists. “Guochao” Style Clothing is a balanced aesthetic form of Chinese traditional cultural elements' external status and modern-life clothing style, near contemporary aesthetics, and routine life rhyme. The meaning of traditional Chinese cultural elements is not well known in Guochao style, but it brings new opportunities to “Guochao” style designers with implied Chinese culture theme form.

3.2 The “Distinction” between Han Portrait Stone Patterns vs. “Guochao” Style Fashion

The traditional Chinese pattern culture system of Han portrait stone patterns is derived from “harmony” created by the traditional Chinese thinking mode. It is expressed in one style: expressing knowledge and judgment of heaven, earth, and humanity based on the unique philosophical unity between heaven and humans. From the perspective of thinking modules, heaven, and humans form a unity, which uses concrete imaging symbols as a system and a view, an image as the source, a system to form an image, and the image to form an icon, expressing the imagination as much as possible. In contrast, the origin of Guochao-style clothing is the mainstream popular “trend” culture apparel culture of the West. It is the Sinicization branch of the Western fashion system. The essence lies not in the traditional Chinese spirit and charm on the surface, but in the contemporary lifestyle with aesthetic value and a sense of national cultural identity. The essence of the two created is very different (Cao Yupei, 2020).

3.3 An Exploration of the Future Possibility of Convergence between Han Portrait Stone Patterns and Guochao Style Fashion

Guochao style fashion was used by many people in the contemporary design circle to push forward the re-derivation of the various elements of traditional Chinese culture. There is no intention of re-externalizing the traditional culture of the republic into the world but was all carried out based on the emphasis on the variety of the republic's aesthetic Chinese cultural elements. Therefore, the Guochao established the fundamental true basis of form. It is based on the Chinese cultural elements and underlines the renewal of its dimensional appearance. However, there is a group of new Chinese brands such as Li Ning, HUI, Zhihe, pronounce, etc., working hard to promote the republic spirit to the world. The pronounce brand's Fall/Winter 2023 series. The disassembled book of changes oracle bone radicals and the graphic expression of "knot" were the starting point of my imagination, the concept of record primitive information expression was used as the perspective of expression to express material and care in the form of bag rope knots. The extremely straightforward method revisits the primitive pattern collection method, allowing the imprint to indulge in more contemplation and energy. Some think tanks believe that the discourse of Guochao does not necessarily lie in the form but in the expression of the spirit through the form or abandon the forced Chinese-style expression form and use modern proficiency to express the essence of China's aesthetic patterns. Therefore, if people overlook the aesthetic misunderstandings and stigma of the republic, then the future Guochao-style fashion will undoubtedly carry a historical background of profound cultural integration. The integration is not only a combination of the outside but also an in-depth knowledge and expression of the inside. Therefore, the modern aesthetics of guochao and classical Han art can be used in future collections, which means they can express traditional China without losing modern significance. This means that the two aesthetic designs will move the audience emotionally through cultural motifs, show a steep aspect of Chinese culture, and show excellent aesthetic content (Xu Yichun, 2023).



Figure 2. Pronounce Brand's Fall/Winter 2023 Collection.

4. Method and Means of Applying Han Portrait Stone Patterns to Contemporary “Guochao” Trend Fashion Design

4.1 Symbolic Migration, Rage of Form and Spirit

The Han stone portrait pattern content is rich, with a wide range of temperatures. Generally speaking, the temperature of the Han stone portrait pattern mainly includes two aspects: one is the narration, which reflects the social life and the temperature of the ideal spiritual realm in the view of the people of the time (Li Yaqi, 2019). The other is the temperature of decoration, a specific temperature display of people's aesthetic thoughts at that time and style characteristics. The content of the Han stone portrait pattern is often a kind of blessing by implication. The Han Dynasty people respected Laozi and Zhuangzi, called for a reversion to nature, and hoped that humanity could live in peace with the heavens and the earth and the things in the world (Zhao Xiaoyuan, 2023). Although this kind of life thought and blessing may express the temperature and the ancient unity of heaven and humanity from various angles such as bad implications. By integrating the implied meanings behind Han portrait stone pattern materials with the modern dressing principles of Time, Place, Occasion (TPO), and applying them flexibly in design.



Figure 3. The original action posture contours of the characters.

In addition, using the way of abstract art expression in line with modern aesthetics standards, the form of various ways of conquer appear unimaginable, far-reaching experimental with Piet Chose Han's portrait stone, or even traditional patterns. The key lies in liberating the impression of the external form of elements, thus greatly expanding the possibilities of the application of the elements of the Han portrait stone pattern and relic elements of innovation. A combination formed by treating the human and action contour of the entire pattern scene and multiple figures of pattern characters based on the formal elements of Han portrait stone pattern into a polyline form, and then by using pattern processing software such as secure processing software Photoshop, so that the fold forming surface effect is stronger, and a new material is formed with the texture of modern abstract pattern without damage to the original pattern material. Through re-coloring and combined with the style of athletic hoodies, it forms a fashion style of "Guochao". The original action posture contours of the characters in Figure 3 are adhered to the right-hand side. It is processed into simple geometric points, lines, and faces to fill the contour and fill in with different forms of the geometric body of multiple light and multiple body colors, thus forming a certain sense of light and multi-spatial combined with a sculpture. The overall pattern treatment of the pattern here not only preserves the temperature characteristic of the pattern of shaping the spirit but also uses current abstract polygon fill temperature elements.

4.2 Continuous Penetration, Inheriting the Rhythm of Traditional Pattern Forms

The core of the composition and distribution of Han Dynasty portrait stone patterns is to express rhythm. Contemporaneously, the easiest to be abstracted as key design elements in translations are the rules. The subtle interconnected relations between images in patterns attract viewers. In the patterns, there seems to be a detail, an engraving, a line, and a twist. They all have their thoughts, emotions, and soul. The rhythm of continuity and transition in traditional Chinese pattern compositions is highly contiguous, just as related to the theory of Gestalt in Western psychology. Various components in an art piece depend on one another trend. On the surface, they are not related, but their relative trends are interdependent. Han portrait stones such as "Fighting Scene", "Bullfighting and Lion Fighting", and "Building Drum Dance" all have a strong sense of movement and exaggerated motion. Defense and offense both have extreme visual tension. The combination of excitement and tranquility makes people feel that a still pattern can convey motion (Wang Na, 2023). In the practice of "Guochao" style fashion design, the key dynamic line in traditional patterns can be extracted and separated. The basic geometric shape can be used as the unit form language to integrate and innovate as the second creation experiment material to form the contemporary aesthetic form of "Guochao" (as shown in Figs. 4-5).

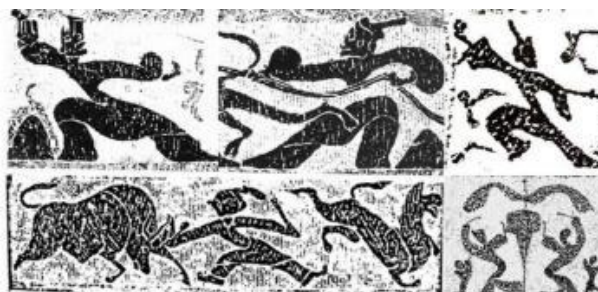


Figure 4. Partial views of Han portrait stone patterns: "Wrestling", "Lion Fight", "Construction of Dance Steps."

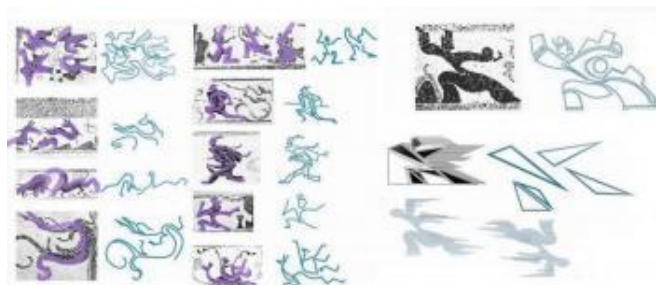


Figure 5. Innovative design attempts based on the traditional formal rules of Han portrait stone patterns.

4.3 Diverse Transformations, Innovating “Guochao” Style Fashion Pattern Craft Design Pattern Thinking

4.3.1 Form Overlap, Clothing Structure and Pattern Isomorphic Expansion

The design category of “Guochao” fashion, after all, fundamentally belongs to contemporary creative ready-to-wear design. The ready-to-wear “system”—in which the abstract form overlaps different clothing parts with Han portrait stone patterns—directly changes the overall creative style of the garment. While the silhouette is uniform, based on the above, how to creatively integrate the part of the inspirational pattern’s abstract line form with the clothing structure design by method transferring will be a method of pattern application in creative fashion use. As a matter of fact, as early as the 1930s, Elsa Schiaparelli, a master of modern Italian fashion design, pioneered the creative and design method of the Italian School of Pattern Design that brought about the isomorphic innovation of form overlap application. The clothing structure design using surrealism and visual illusion along with the clothing pattern is also related to isomorphic expansion. The methods and concepts of clothing structure design are also quite representative and referenceable, while the overall artistic style here needs to be influenced by the spatial thinking and overall aesthetic attractiveness of Eastern aesthetics (as shown in Fig. 7).



Figure 6. Works by Elsa Schiaparelli, a master of modern Italian fashion design.

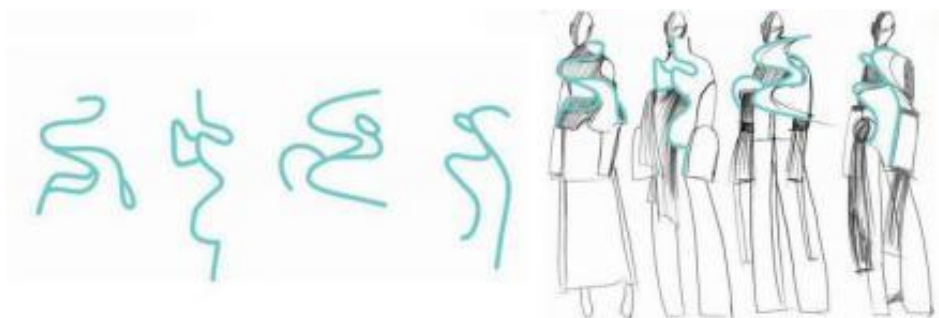


Figure 7. Exploratory practice examples of applying Han portrait stone patterns in clothing structure applications.

4.3.2 Craft Transfer, Starting Point Innovation

Fabric is an important starting point for fashion innovation, within the actual design coordinates of “Guochao” ready-to-wear, the inner source innovation of this source can also directly affect the overall style and wearing effects of “Guochao” fashion. In this design mood, designers transferring read the stone carving form of Han portrait stone pattern to the surface texture and jacquard design of fabric can bring more design possibilities (Wang & Xu. 2023). Therefore, the source of fashion design elements of the times will not be restricted by the traditional language of the appearance of the Han Dynasty. It will take a step back from the artistic style to advance, just based on “Qi”. We can imagine that all the lines made by Han craftsmen during the stone carving process can reflect the artistic background and momentum.

5. The Application Trends of Traditional Chinese Pattern Elements Represented by Han Portrait Stone Patterns in the Contemporary "Guochao" Style Fashion Design System

In recent years, together with similar traditional Chinese pattern elements, the Han portrait stone patterns as traditional Chinese pattern elements and significant symbols comes in "Guochao" style fashion design. The exploration of combining and innovating techniques has become a trend in fashion today. Designers, in design practice, are no longer using these patterns merely as decorative elements for direct application—they begin to explore the cultural connotation and aesthetic qualities that exist in Han portrait of these picture stones (Xu Yichun, 2023). They employ modern design languages and technical means to reposition these traditional elements with reborn elegance and vitality.

It can be expected that this new method of merging tradition with modern form in "Guochao" fashion design will develop further in the future and will include mainly as follows.

5.1 Digital Reconstruction: Diversified Innovations of “Guochao” Fashion Patterns

Digital technologies are increasingly widely adopted in the fashion industry, resulting in richer ways to express clothing pattern design. The traditional two-dimensional form can no longer meet the needs of contemporary fashion designers to innovate diverse “Guochao” clothing patterns. In particular, recent years have seen the rise of parametric methods and virtual reality 3D effect-modeling software, which has driven the digital transformation of art design disciplines and the revolutionary iteration of design methods. Designers use digital technology to re-image Han portrait stone patterns in terms of contemporary fashion languages, a process that not only expresses the original beauty of the pattern but adds new meanings and connotations in terms of contemporary aesthetics. In terms of the design process, digital tools such as 3D modeling and VR technology have transformed the process by making it flexible. Until now, modeling softwares such as C4D and Grasshopper have been more widely used in the industrial field, as well as architecture and graphic design, and have only recently entered the field of fashion design (Fig. 8).

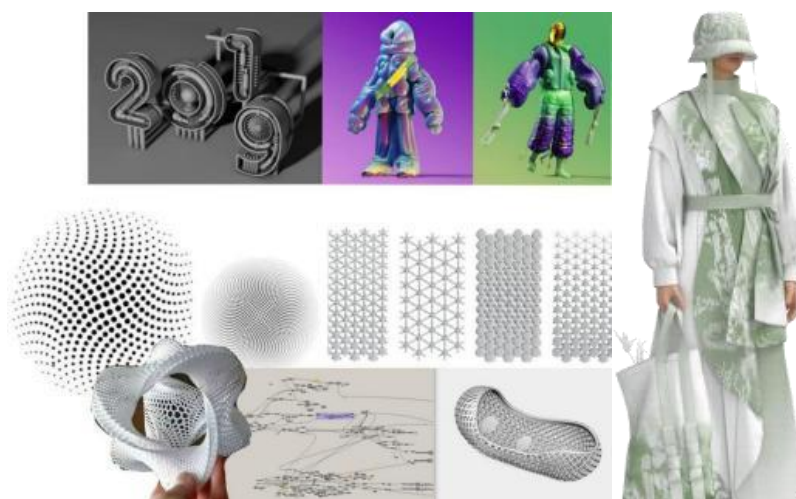


Figure 8. Innovation in "Guochao" fashion patterns using new 3D surface texture modeling software represented by C4D, Grasshopper, and style3D.

5.2 Sustainable Design: The Harmonious Coexistence of Environmental Protection and Traditional Culture

The integration of sustainable development concepts into the design of the Han portrait stone patterns and “Guochao” style fashion design embodies both respect for the environment and the protection of traditional culture. The use of renewable materials and reduction of waste generation in the production process not only represent a treasure for resources but also pay special attention to the development and protection of traditional culture. The trend to continue to promote and protect traditional culture remains in modern design but is also subject to modern design trends and reflects traditional cultural patterns.

5.3 AI and Cultural Innovation: The Artistic Touch of Intelligent Technology

Artificial intelligence can not only analyze and reconstruct the already transformed pattern of the existing “Guochao” concept through big data but also offer new auxiliary design methods in coloration, material reflection, and other aspects of production. It can also inspire the designer based on the huge historical database inspiration to enable the designer to make more innovative new products that are newest and with cultural conditions. From the consumer perspective, artificial intelligence through big data analysis comes up with the most beautiful aesthetics and lifestyle fit innovative “Guochao” fashion pattern design which makes it differentiated, making the “Guochao” fashion products have more personalized designs, which are more market and consumer-oriented.

5.4 Cross-cultural Artistic Dialogue: The Traditional Remolding in Globalization

In the context of globalization, the Han portrait stone pattern is combined with the cultural element design language of other countries, which has a strong cross-cultural design network. Not only does it improve the design works, but it also creates interaction and respect between cultures.

6. Conclusion

The way now of translating the already existing techniques of traditional Chinese art must not simply involve an unthinking imitation of a particular point in history, or the mechanical application of a particular style. Rather, it must dig deep into the social context traditions old and new are located in: the mode of living people have and the practical requirements life puts upon them. The use of Han Dynasty portrait stone patterns in the form of avant-garde fashion aesthetics and fashion design is a direct inheritance from past art forms, but it can also provide new life to traditional culture in modern society. Designers have discovered that real innovation is rooted in a deep understanding of history and a clear grasp of current cultural trends. Future design practice ought to create both historically profound and modern-looking work, bringing the essence of traditional culture to the world in entirely different ways (Wang Qiao & Li Zheng, 2019; Zhu Shuai, 2021).

In exploring this methodological system, the modern application of Han portrait stone patterns becomes a sort of sublimation going beyond simple aesthetic rejuvenation and into much deeper aspects of cultural substance and self-expression. This mixing of art and design provides a unique window for observing and understanding Chinese traditional culture within the global context of current economic integration. By even taking advantage of modern design techniques and digital technologies, such as computer-aided tools or computer graphic arts (CG), the use of Han portrait stone patterns will be able to branch out into even more diversified areas than before, as the inheritor and innovator of traditional arts. The future “Guochao” fashion design trends are likely to provide all the more avant-garde “new Chinese clothes” combinations which make a fusion of tradition and modern times, the East, and kinds of excitingly unexpected geography.

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