

Historiography Analysis of Qing Dynasty Clothing Review in ‘Geng Yi Ji’

Lanlan Yan¹ & Xiangyang Bian¹

¹Fashion & Art Design Institute, Donghua University, Shanghai, China

Correspondence: Xiangyang Bian, Fashion & Art Design Institute, Donghua University, Shanghai, NO.1882, West Yan-an Road, 200051, China. Tel: 86-21-6237-3978. E-mail: bianxy@dhu.edu.cn

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Abstract

‘Geng Yi Ji’, written by Eileen Chang, is an important literature for fashion research of the Republic Period of China, and most of scholars in fashion field also focus on this part, they mentioned this article in lots of books. While, there is nearly no literature talk about the fashion of Qing dynasty in ‘Geng Yi Ji’, in fact, compare with the fashion in the Republic Period, the fashion in Qing dynasty is also a main part of ‘Geng Yi Ji’. This thesis analyzes Eileen Chang’s Qing dynasty fashion review in ‘Geng Yi Ji’ through historiography point, in order to explore certain fashion culture and fashion history in ancient China. The thesis analyzes three fashion reviews of Eileen Chang, briefly including ‘over the course of three hundred years of Manchu rule, women lacked anything that might be referred to as fashion’, ‘the details of ancient Chinese clothes were completely pointless, such as the soles of cotton shoes inscribed with patterns’, ‘the dissipation of energy on irrelevant matter, marked the attitude toward life of the leisure class in China, such as the three or more pipings and trimmings on coats’. Through the historiography analysis, it explores the real fashion trends in Qing dynasty, the culture connotation of fashion decoration in ancient China, the root and development of coat embroidery borders.

Keywords: Eileen Chang, fashion, Geng Yi Ji, history, Qing dynasty

1. Introduction

Eileen Chang’s ‘Geng Yi Ji’ is an important literature for the research of the Republic Period Clothes in China, while, the Qing dynasty clothes review in this article were seldom researched by scholars. As a prose, ‘Geng Yi Ji’ briefly described and commented Chinese three hundred years clothes, with strong epochal character and subjectivity. Professor Bao Mingxin, from Donghua University, indicated that ‘Geng Yi Ji’ was the classic Fashion Review of the Republic Period in his book *Course in Fashion Comments*. He also indicated that the Fashion Reviews from literary intellectuals could enrich the Fashion Review content with the beautiful and sharp writing style. (Bao, 2005, p. 140) It is true that ‘Geng Yi Ji’ can raise more thought and research of Chinese clothes.

Eileen Chang published her prose ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ on an English magazine called *The XXth Century* in January 1943, which was the original copy of ‘Geng Yi Ji’. Eileen Chang published three articles on this magazine, all of them were published in 1943, and ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ was Chang’s first article in this magazine. *The XXth Century* magazine was based in Shanghai from 1941 to 1945, and supported by the German Foreign Office. Its life was only five years, which was ended with the end of the war in Europe on May 8, 1945. Dr. Klaus told readers that ‘the nations of Europe have entered upon an entirely new road which we are unable to judge or to interpret at this distance. And so we bid farewell to our readers and contributors, thanking them for their encouragement and support.’ (Klaus, 1945, p. 230) It can be seen that *The XXth Century* was stopped because of politics. The magazine was born under the condition of war in summer 1941, as the spreading of the European war isolated East Asia from the west world. And also, it was ended with the end of the war. It was such a fate. *The XXth Century* was reprinting by lots of languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, Russian, French, etc., which was offered to readers from lots of countries and out of regions. Maybe it was too international, and didn't separate ‘friends’ and ‘enemies’, that’s why it must be stopped after war. As the editor-in-chief from June 1941 to the final issue in June of 1945, Dr. Klaus Mehnert gave Eileen Chang a high evaluation. In the beginning of the article, Klaus Mehnert wrote that ‘This is the author’s first experience in our magazine. It is a pleasure to present to our readers such promising young talent as represented by Miss Chang, who wields the pen so well that she

has produced not only this charming article but also its expressive illustrations.’ (Klaus, 1943, p. 54)

‘Geng Yi Ji’ was published in December 1943, on the magazine *Gu Ji*. There were more than five thousand characters in ‘Geng Yi Ji’, briefly expressed the changes of Chinese clothes within three hundred years. (Yu, 2013, p. 75) While, Eileen Chang hadn’t explained the relationship between these two articles, so it is difficult to know whether ‘Geng Yi Ji’ translated from ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ or not. But from the similar content and contemporary literatures, we can mostly speculate that these two articles are the same articles in two different languages, even the content was not totally same. Meanwhile, almost every reference indicated that ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ is the original copy of ‘Geng Yi Ji’, for example, Yuan Ze and Hu Yue quoted the words content from ‘Geng Yi Ji’, but used the sketches from ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ in their book *A Century of Fashion*. (Yuan & Hu, 2011, pp. 45-165) Andrew F. Jones also thought that Eileen Chang translated and revised ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ to ‘Geng Yi Ji’. He translated ‘Geng Yi Ji’ to English, named ‘A Chronicle of Changing Clothes’. During his translation, he also used Eileen Chang’s sketches in ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’. (Jones, 2003, p. 428) It was known that when Eileen Chang was famous, Zhou Li’an, the editor of *Gu Jin*, asked Eileen Chang to write an article for *Gu Jin*. Under this situation, Eileen Chang rewrote ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ to ‘Geng Yi Ji’ and published it.

Comparing with other literature and historical materials, ‘Geng Yi Ji’ contains amount of subjective comment. Eileen Chang was very interested in human nature, and very familiar with Chinese nationality and culture, so she mainly expressed Chinese personalities in the history through talking about Chinese clothes. In ‘Geng Yi Ji’, Eileen Chang was talking about Chinese nationality, rather than clothes. It is clearly that ‘Geng Yi Ji’ was talking about the spirit culture of clothes from human, rather than clothes gave human beauty. In this case, Eileen Chang’s emotion of human nature influenced the objective description of Chinese clothes. Eileen Chang spurned Chinese nationality at that time, so she also spurned Qing dynasty clothes in ‘Geng Yi Ji’. Therefore, she didn’t think about the clothing system and clothing culture very deeply, or from historiographical perspective. Her reviews of Qing dynasty clothes were mainly indicated her view of Chinese people’s personality at that time.

On the other hand, ‘Geng Yi Ji’ was influenced by the times factor. During the corrupt time, all the old things were dross; China society needed advanced culture system and knowledge. As one part of the culture, clothes are very closed to human life, so Eileen Chan indicated that the clothes in China history were too complicated, all of the decoration of clothes should be deleted. Therefore, the spurn attitude of Qing dynasty clothes due to times factor, history factor and society factor. There was no right or wrong, Eileen Chang’s fashion review of Qing dynasty was very seasonable and relevant to Chinese psychology at that time. In this case, this article uses the objective historiography perspective to analyze the Qing dynasty Fashion Review in ‘Geng Yi Ji’, to give some evidence of Qing dynasty clothing system and culture.

2. The Historiography Analysis of Clothing Review in ‘Geng Yi Ji’

This article will analyze three Fashion Reviews in ‘Geng Yi Ji’, including ‘over the course of three hundred years of Manchu rule, women lacked anything that might be referred to as fashion’, (Andrew F. Jones, 2003, p. 428) ‘The details of old Chinese clothes, however, were purely decorative, and sometimes rather obscurely so. No artist could, for instance, have hoped for anyone to notice his intricate designs on the soles of women’s shoes, except indirectly by the imprints left in the dust. The homemade soles, manufactured from cardboard and paste and bits of old cloth, had white stitching on a dark ground, forming chaste, abstract patterns with a Moslem touch. The edges of the slightly raised heels were also covered with elaborate designs, in fact, there was not a square millimeter on the tiny shoe that was not alive with some rhythmic motif.’ (Chang, 1943, p. 56), ‘The spacious jacket was overloaded with either ‘three pipings, three bindings’, or ‘five pipings, five bindings’, or ‘seven pipings, seven bindings’... This tremendous amassing of bits and bits of interest, this continual digression and reckless irrelevancy, this dissipation of energy in things which do not matter, marked the attitude towards life of the leisurely country in the world.’ (Chang, 1943, p. 56) In order to use Eileen Chang’s original words and native English languages, this article will use the content from ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’ and ‘A Chronic of Changing Clothes’.

2.1 *Over the Course of Three Hundred Years of Manchu Rule, Women Lacked Anything That Might Be Referred To As Fashion*

In the third paragraph of ‘Geng Yi Ji’ and second paragraph of ‘Chinese Life and Fashions’, Eileen Chang wrote down ‘We cannot really imaging the world of the past-so dilatory, so quiet, and so orderly that over the course of three hundred years of Manchu rule, women lacked anything that might be referred to as fashion.’ (Jones, 2003, p. 429) Or ‘Imagine the reign of Queen Victoria prolonged to the length of three centuries! Such was the stability, the uniformity, the extreme conventionality of China under the Manchus that generation after generation of

women clung to the same dress style.’ (Chang, 1943, p. 54) Then, Eileen Chan talked about the boring clothes in these two articles. It seems that Eileen Chang thought the clothes style was never changed, and very boring. Eileen Chang was a fashionable lady; she purchased new things and loved fashion very much. She even designed and made clothes for herself. At that time, she was obviously a fashion leader. For her, she hated the old and unchanged clothes; she thought they were boring and out of date. In this point, she was a part-time fashion designer as well as a full-time writer.

While, from the historiography perspective, there did were fashion for women in Qing dynasty. Here we need to talk about the scientific definition of ‘fashion’, maybe it would be different from Eileen Chan’s view of fashion. In *HanDian*, there are two meanings of fashion. Firstly, fashion means fashionable clothes, which are very new and innovative, such as the new western clothes or Qipao in the Republic Period. In the very beginning, only fashionable leaders wear it, and then the common people will follow them. At this time, when most people accept it, this fashion is end; secondly, fashion means the common clothes, which are worn by most people at that time, such as the common clothes of Manchu women in the late Qing dynasty. It can be seen that during the ancient time of China, fashion clothes mainly coordinated with the second meaning of fashion, because the clothes system was very strict in China, every clothe was decided by clothes system, including style, colour, pattern, material, accessories, etc. While, in ‘Geng Yi Ji’, Eileen Chan indicated the first meaning of fashion, the new and innovative clothes. In fact, when we mean the second meaning of fashion, the clothes of Qing dynasty were changing constantly, such as fashion style and fashion patterns.

For the women’s clothes of HanChu nationality, in the early of Qing dynasty, the common clothes were traditional jacket and skirt; in the middle of Qing dynasty, the common clothes were skirt and leggings, the servants and labour women only wore pants rather than skirt. The common people wore simple long skirt, while the rich women’s skirts were various, such as ‘Yue Hua Skirt’ (Moonlight Skirt) with embroidery flower pattern in the pleats, ‘Feng Wei Skirt’ (Phoenix Tale Skirt) using golden and silver thread to sew the skirt’s parts together, looking like phoenix’s tale. In QianLong period, women preferred light yellow blouse with pink embroidery border, matching with embroidery lace skirt. In XianFeng and TongZhi period, the ‘Feng Wei Skirt’ (Phoenix Tale Skirt) was reformed to ‘Yulin Baize Skirt’ (Fish Scales Pleats Skirt), adding treads on the skirt hemline to let the skirt shrinking and stretching, looking like fish scales. In the late of GuangXu period, there were streamers on the skirt, the sharp ending decorated with gold, silver or copper bells, when the women moving, the bells will ring. In the late Qing dynasty, the HanChu royal women imitated ManChu women’s Qi robe and decoration, which made ManChu and HanChu clothes fuse gradually. In the end of Qing dynasty, the red Dou Du (an undergarment covering the chest and abdomen) and pants with embroidery lace were popular for HanChu women. Manchu women preferred embroidering auspicious pattern such as flower, fragrant grass, crane and deer, dragon and phoenix on the clothes, shoes, pouches, and pillows etc.

ManChu women’s clothes were ‘Qi Zhuang’ (women’s dress of ManChu), Qi Zhuang were changed constantly, the top grade Qi Zhuang was wide, straight and flat, very stressing decoration, there were colourful laces on collar, cuff and clothes, the style and crafts were both particular. Later, the four slits of Qi Zhuang reduced to two slits, and the hemline was narrower. The cuff was changing from narrow to wide, and wind to narrow alternatively. In XianFeng and TongZhi period, the border decoration was in its peak time, the decoration of women’s robe was very complicated. In the end of Qing dynasty, Qi robe was wide, the line was straight and tough, the hemline was long to ankle. Eileen Chang referred that ‘Yuan Bo Collar’ (Sycee Collar: a tall, stiff collar reaching to the level of the nose.) was very popular, there were lots of wide embroidery border on collar, sleeves, clothes etc. (Chang, 1943, p. 57) All in all, Qi Zhuang was simple to make, saving fabric, easy to wear, which were the main progress of Chinese fashion. (Wang, 2013, pp. 175-194)

Except style and silhouette, pattern and colour are other factors of fashion. The pattern of Qing dynasty clothes was changing constantly, which included early, middle and late period. In the early Qing dynasty, the pattern inherited Ming dynasty’s patter, mainly geometry frame, little flowers; the pattern was very light and plain. (Congwen, 2011, p. 695) In the middle Qing dynasty, the pattern was complicated, very colourful and influenced by Baroque and Rococo arts. In the late Qing dynasty, the pattern was sprays flowers, big flowers, which were simple and extensive.

The classic thing will last forever. The aesthetic is according to culture, different times with different fashion aesthetic rule. If we think that the governors made the aesthetic rule and fashion system, why people wear almost the same clothes today? Even it is very free to choose our fashion style. Though there was strict fashion system in ancient China, for common people, the benefit was that they could wear the clothes suitable for them, very clearly. While at present, people are very puzzled what kind of clothes they should wear in different occasions. It is very embarrass as naked if you wear unsuitable clothes in the important occasions. What’s more, in the free

atmosphere of fashion, our Chinese even have no national costume for us, it is shame for fashion freedom. Fashion is born for human beings, human's body can't change any more, so the silhouette no more than 'adorn, bundle, cover, twine, hang, pullover, wrap and body type (wrap top and down body separately)'. (Li, 1998, p. 66) So the very convenient and useful way to be fashionable is changing the pattern, colour and silhouette of clothes. Only the generally accepted clothes can be inherited for a long time. The ancient scholars and women also commented their fashions at that time. Beauty is human's nature, no matter their fashion is beautiful or not now, for themselves, the fashion was beautiful in their eyes.

2.2 The Details of Ancient Chinese Clothes Were Completely Pointless, Such as the Soles of Cotton Shoes Inscribed with Patterns

In the seventh paragraph of 'Geng Yi Ji', Eileen Chang indicated that 'an excessive attention to detail characterized the costume of that era.' (Jones, 2003, p. 432) From the former part of 'Geng Yi Ji', this time indicated middle seventeenth century to end nineteen century, from Qing dynasty to the Republic Period. Eileen Chang also thought that 'modern western fashion also has lots kinds of ornaments. In modern hats and dresses the details always have a point-to bring out the colour of the eyes, to create the illusion of a bosom, to lengthen, to shorten, to call attention to the waist, to annihilate the hip, etc.' (Chang, 1943, pp. 55-56) In this point, Eileen Chang said that 'The details of ancient Chinese clothes were completely pointless. You might say that they were purely ornamental, but then why were even the soles of cotton shoes inscribed with intricate patterns?' (Jones, 2003, p. 432) It can be known that 'the pointless' was compared with western clothes' structure function in Eileen Chang's mind. While, it definitely ignored fashion's culture function, maybe it is because of Eileen Chang's western knowledge background. In fact, the details and ornaments of Chinese clothes expressed fashion's culture connotation, which is fashion's culture and spirit nature.

Maybe the difference of aesthetic culture and value between east and west influenced Eileen Chang's prejudice to old Chinese clothes. The western fashion puts a high value on pragmatism, such as clothes structures. While, China puts a high value on fashion spirit, implicit and reserved, harmonious with nature. The wide fashion silhouette covered women's body, showing the implicit character of China. Therefore, the details and ornaments of fabric and clothes helped to make up the shortage of structure design. While, the general accepted idea was that the various pattern on the fabric expressed Chinese culture implied meanings. In China history, the research of pattern on fabric is very important, which expressed ancient Chinese people's good wishes to the life. Most of these implied meanings use homophonic method of Chinese characters. Such as Xi Que (magpie) and Mei Hua (winter sweet) represents 'Xi Shang Mei Shao' (good news is coming, just on the eyebrow. Xi means good news, Mei means eyebrow.) Chinese people's modest attitude makes them put a high value of the tiny details and ornaments, elegant but not high-profile. When you enjoy it very carefully, you just realize that these details are so creative and exerting their utmost effort.

As to the decoration on the shoe soles, it was very common in China history. Archaism said 'shoes, manners, decoration of feed are a good manner.' In the literature of 'Yan Zi' (《晏子》), Qi Huan Gong's (a king in China history) shoes were very precious, the shoelaces were made by gold, using silver and jewelry as decoration, the top quality jade used to decorate the toe cap. It can be seen that shoes were as important as clothes in China history. That's why Chinese people paid much attention on shoes in ancient time. According to the archaeology, in Han dynasty, when Chinese people already knew the embroidery method, women had used embroidery skills to show their love and emotion, for example, they embroidered different patterns on the perfume satchel, gloves, even boots' soles and socks. What's more, the clouds pattern on the boots' soles of XiongNu royalty in Han dynasty proved the old tradition of embroidery on shoes' soles. Figure 1. (Huang & Chen, 1999, pp. 123-127)

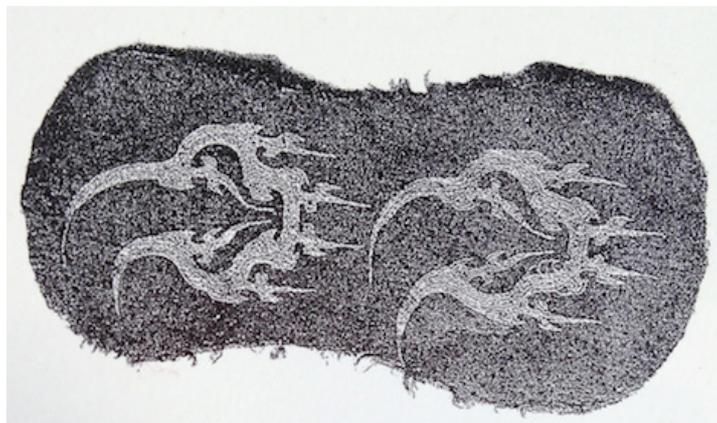


Figure 1. The boot's sole with embroidery clouding pattern unearthed from the Han dynasty Attila Tomb in Nuoyin Wulashan, Mongolia

It was very extravagant in Qing dynasty sometimes, so it was very reasonable to embroidery on the shoes' soles. For Qi shoes, only royalties enjoyed this kind of luxury shoes, which expressed their royal status. Figure 2. (Huang & Chen, 1999, p. 472) For example, Ci Xi's Qi shoes were the most honorable and luxury in Qing palace, the materials were very extravagant. The shoes vamp were made by top tribute satin silk, the details were very abundant, such as pearl, jewelry, jade, and so on precious ornaments. Ci Xi's favorite jewelry was pearl; almost all her shoes were decorated with pearls. The smaller pearls were stringed by silk thread to laces, which were pinned tortuously on the shoes' vamp. The bigger pearls were pinned on the shoes' vamp directly, instead of the colour threads, to form kinds of beautiful patterns. Some shoes' soles were also surrounded with pearls. This most pearls on Ci Xi's shoes were three to four hundred, the most limited were twenty to thirty, the ordinary were seventy to eighty. It cost at least one month to complete one pair of shoes for Ci Xi. Her pearl shoes were all decorated by big pearls, which cost seven hundred thousand Liang (50g) silvers.



Figure 2. Woman's light green satin horseshoe sole shoes inlaid with gem flower, collected by Beijing Imperial Palace Museum

As to embroidered shoes, Qing dynasty preferred embroidering patterns on clothes, even on the invisible shoes' and socks' soles, which was related to women's social status. The earliest book, which systematically advocated female's breeding 'Nǚ Jie', wrote that 'concentrating on spinning, not being keen on playing, good at cooking to servant guests, these are women's achievement.' ('专心纺绩, 不好戏笑, 洁齐酒食, 以奉宾客, 是谓功。') Here 'Fang Ji' means spinning and weaving, which are typically women's job. In the ancient time, the spinning and embroidery work were through women's whole life. No matter the common women, royal women, even the king's wives, needlework was their compulsory lesson. The delicate pursue of needlework made lots of embroidery work too perfect to be a practical goods. In fact, these needle works expressed women's inner emotions. In ancient time, many nationalities had the rite-using embroidery shoes to prove women's needlework skill. For example, when the new bride got married, she should give a pair of embroidery shoes to mother-in-law. In Suzhou, such as XieTang and ShengPu countries, this rite is still kept until now.

In ancient China, young unmarried girls and married women always stayed at home, they spent all their time on needlework. Their needlework were very delicate and full of women's emotions and wishes, always as a gift to lovers or important friends and relationships. It was said 'Nan Yang oversea Chinese women leads nature feet, their shoes were embroidered with flowers by golden threads. The virgins' work is the best, which oversea Chinese trade as presents. The price of one pair is almost tens of silver coins.' (Xu, 1986) In Qing dynasty, Han women loved embroidery shoes very much, even the prostitutes in Shanghai fall in love with embroidery shoes; they made the shoes by themselves. According to the literature, 'In TongZhi and GuangXue period, Shanghai prostitutes' shoes soles were hollowed out, with a little drawer in it. The drawer was full of fragrance and decorated by beautiful carving. When they were walking, the feet and socks were very sweet.' (Xu, 1986) Meanwhile, during the friendships, the needlework could show their skills. Therefore, the needlework was already over the practical function, but including folk culture and art crafts connotation.

It can be seen that embroidery on shoes' soles is not a luxury life of rich groups, for common people, it is a kind of folk culture, which can express women's wonderful skill on needlework. Other typical example is the existing of shoe-pad. Compare with shoes vamp and shoes sole, shoe-pad is much more invisible. While, embroidery on shoe-pad even exists now, which is closely related to Chinese implicit culture.

2.3 The Dissipation of Energy on Irrelevant Matter, Marked the Attitude toward Life of the Leisure Class in China, Such as the Three or More Pippings and Trimmings on Coats

The complicated pippings and bindings on jackets is the further interpretation of 'details of ancient Chinese clothes were completely pointless'. Today, the governors of feudal societies in ancient China are seriously blames by people. While, when we overturned the government, we should inherit their art crafts, which were created during their leisure time. Going back to the history, all the material civilization and art cultures were stimulated in leisure time. In Han dynasty, the society was very prosperous, which gave birth to the famous 'silk road'. In Tang dynasty, the society was one of the strongest ones in China history; the stable politic and developed economy pushed the development of textile industry. Fashion style, colour and pattern were very innovative at that time.

Clothes of Tang dynasty were very typical in China history, which was the third revolution of Chinese clothes. The clothes and make up were very gorgeous, women could wear men's clothes, and perfume also appeared in Tang dynasty. The peak time of clothes at that time owed to Tang dynasty rich society. The peaceful atmosphere also leded the high development of poems, lots of which were famous of commenting clothes. These poems offered a huge reference of Tang dynasty clothes history. For example, Du Fu's poem 'the ladies' red skirts are wet, and the green black eyebrow are sorrow. ('越女红群湿, 燕姬翠黛愁'); Du Shenyang's poem 'pink face and black eyebrow, wearing a Shiliu skirt' ('红粉青娥映楚云, 桃花马上石榴裙'. Shiliu is a kind of fruit--pomegranate.) The most famous skirt all over the world in Tang dynasty was princess An Le's Feather Skirt, which was too extravagant to imaging. When princess An Le got married, she got a skirt made by hundreds of birds' feather, which cost more than ten thousand silver coins. The colour was very bright; it showed different colours in different direction. The colour was also different from under sunshine or in the shadow; the shapes of hundreds of birds were clearly visible. Lots of rich people and royal women imitated princess An Le's skirt later. The result was that there were no rare birds or beasts in the forest. It can be seen that the leisure class used their leisure time to create the wonderful fashion, of course, the craftsmen paid painstaking effort to it.

From Tang dynasty to Qing dynasty, the decoration of clothes went to the peak time. As to the 'three pippings, three bindings', or 'five pippings, five bindings', or 'seven pippings, seven bindings' Sequins sparkled at the hem and the flapped-over opening in patterns of orchid, chrysanthemum, or plum blossom, was closely related to the extravagant society atmosphere, and also part of Chinese fashion beauty. In fact, the first function of laces was

adding the fastness of fashion, which made clothes more wearable. That's why the laces were always added on the easy vulnerable parts, such as collar line, cuff, front and back part of clothes. Later, laces became decoration. (Bao, 1998, p. 13) As early as Han dynasty, when women began to wear long robe, they began to embroidery patterns on collar, cuff, front and back part of clothes. Some women decorated these parts heavily to show the delicate pattern to other people. (Zhou & Gao, 1997, p. 203)

In early Qing dynasty, Chinese wide traditional clothes were instead by Jian Yi, very popular. (Chen & Xu, 2002, p. 505) In middle Qing dynasty, the fashion trend changed a lot. Extravagant was the main trend; wide clothes were popular again. According to 'Qing Xuan Zong ShiLu' (《清宣宗实录》), in DaoGung Period, 'our country has certain fashion system, to be simple to save materials. At present, Qi women prefer wide clothes, which cost several times fabric than before. The reason is advocating extravagant.' (Xu, 1986) In QianLong period, advocating extravagant became the main trend, people felt shame if they wear plain and simple clothes, the fashion aesthetic value preferred wide and luxury clothes. This phenomenon was related to the folk custom, which was from simple to luxury. Meanwhile, it was also coordinated with people's psychology. In peaceful and rich society, people preferred flexible society and better life. Such wide clothes with huge sleeves were very blank and boring without decoration. The best way to make it more beautiful and interesting was adding some details and ornaments on the clothes. The result was that the clothes' edges were embroidered by patterns. This trend was too popular to stop. As a result, the pipings and bindings almost took most part of the clothes. When the culture began to look down upon simple clothes, the complicated 'three pipings and three bindings', 'five pipings and five bindings', even 'seven pipings and seven bindings' were necessary factor of beauty, which were also the symbol of self-esteem and society status. For us, for today, maybe the decorations are unnecessary, while it was necessary for them at that time.

3. Conclusion

This article analyzed Eileen Chang's Qing dynasty clothing review in 'Geng Yi Ji' through historiography point, briefly including 'over the course of three hundred years of Manchu rule, women lacked anything that might be referred to as fashion', 'the details of ancient Chinese clothes were completely pointless, such as the soles of cotton shoes inscribed with patterns', 'the dissipation of energy on irrelevant matter, marked the attitude toward life of the leisure class in China, such as the three or more pipings and trimmings on coats'. Actually, Eileen Chang's reviews of Qing dynasty fashion were reasonable. These reviews were all influenced by her life and education background and the times. This article doesn't mean to judge her reviews correct or wrong, because fashion reviews were subjective and influenced by society context. In fact, it is all know that Eileen Chang was a very great writer in China history, and is respected by lots of people until now. This article just ignored Eileen Chang's subjective clothing reviews, to explore the fashion system and culture of Qing dynasty.

The conclusions were: firstly, in Qing dynasty, women's clothes were changing; especially the patterns' change enriched the simple silhouette of the clothes at that time. Secondly, the details and ornaments on clothes expressed beauty and wishes, which carried women's emotions and spirits. So embroidery on shoes' sole and shoe-pad were very popular until now. Finally, the leisure class in ancient China did wasted lots of time on fashion details, but it also enriched Chinese fashion, which were very amazing and wonderful. The peaceful society and good economy leads the luxury life of ManChu royalties, which gave a chance to the labours to create quite unbelievable fashion art crafts, and containing human being's intelligence and work.

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