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## AESTHETICS OF KESI STYLE CLOTHING: COMBINING TRADITIONAL APPROACHES AND MODERN DESIGN CONCEPTS

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*This paper delves into the aesthetic characteristics and cultural connotations of the Kesi garments style, a traditional Chinese silk-weaving art. By examining historical records, extant artifacts, and modern interpretations, it analyzes the unique visual elements and symbolic meanings of Kesi costume patterns. Drawing on aesthetic theory and craft innovation, the paper focuses on how the Kesi garments style bridges traditional and contemporary design concepts. Studying successful cases of integrating Kesi elements into modern fashion design reveals how contemporary designers draw inspiration from conventional Kesi to create innovative and fashionable works that meet the needs of modern consumers while maintaining cultural identity.*

**Key words:** Kesi; Costume Design; Aesthetics; Cultural Heritage; Traditional and Contemporary Design.

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, Kesi, a traditional Chinese silk weaving art known for its complex weaving techniques and high-quality finished products, has regained popularity in the fashion industry[1]. Historically, Kesi was used for a variety of purposes, including decorative hangings, clothing, and rank badges[2]. This study combines historical research with design practice. The core problem is how to bridge traditional and contemporary design with the aesthetic and cultural elements of Kesi. Answering this question can guide designers and protect cultural heritage.

### PURPOSE

This research aims to explore the aesthetic and cultural elements of Kesi garments style. Analyzing historical and modern cases, it uncovers how Kesi bridges traditional and contemporary design, guiding designers to create innovative, culturally rich fashion works.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a paragon of traditional craftsmanship, Kesi garments encapsulates profound cultural legacies and artistic essences. In the contemporary context, it unfolds unique allure and diverse values. This segment delves into the innovative evolution of Kesi garments during the process of inheritance from three dimensions: aesthetic attributes, cultural connotations, and the integration of traditional cultural



elements and modern design concepts. It further expounds on the innovative values and development potential it manifests in the modern-day transformation of traditional craftsmanship.

From the perspective of aesthetic characteristics, Kesi clothing forms a strong visual contrast and harmonious unity of beauty, shows a solemn and gorgeous dress temperament, and profoundly carries the design aesthetics and aesthetic concepts with Chinese characteristics. It embodies distinct Chinese design aesthetics. For example, the front-opening, sleeveless kesi-woven vest with three blue ink-wash orchid motifs on imperial-yellow ground. In color, it vividly merges liveliness and solemnity. In the strict feudal hierarchy, imperial yellow was exclusive to high-ranking royal women. This color palette offers a vivid visual experience and elegance, reflecting the aesthetic pursuits of wearers and viewers. In composition, it adheres to aesthetic principles. The motif layout, symmetric and uniform, complements negative space, creating a harmonious rhythm and refined ambiance. The Qing court favored orchid motifs, with vivid flowers, leaves, and exposed roots, which imply vitality and stability. These motifs, in an elegant literati-painting style, follow Chinese painting's cultural and brush-ink nuances, as seen in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1.** Woman's Informal Court Vest [3]



**Fig. 2.** Yellow Kesi orchid robe [4]

Regarding cultural connotations, historically, the kesi-waving technique was predominantly employed in royal court attire. While it served as a symbol of social status, it also spotlighted the unique allure of Chinese culture. The weaving technique gives the apparel a delicate texture, making it a symbol of luxury. In Chinese culture, orchids, growing in secluded mountains, symbolize nobility. With the character of "secluded", this "secluded" is not only a natural attribute, but also endowed with profound cultural implications. Empress Dowager Cixi loved orchids. Her nickname "Lan'er" was related to orchids, and her title "Noble Lady Lan" echoed this. During her reign, orchid-patterned clothing was popular in the palace. The yellow kesi-woven shirt with orchid patterns from the Qing Tongzhi era is exquisitely designed, with fine and three-dimensional threads, as in Fig. 2. The use of orchid patterns in Kesi garments not only enhances its aesthetic value but also spreads traditional Chinese pattern symbols, strengthening cultural connotations and inheritance. Each orchid-patterned garment is a cultural symbol, recording the past.

Regarding the integration of traditional and modern design concepts, the design of Kesi garments has evolved since ancient times. Through continuous innovation, it has become a cultural bridge connecting the past and the future. In



the past, Kesi patterns had a symmetric and elaborate layout, beautifying clothes and respecting traditional culture. In contrast, contemporary HEAVEN GAIA designers blend orchid elements with modern fashion, creating "New Chinese-style" garments. A woven dress with an orchid pattern debuted spectacularly at Paris Fashion Week, featuring fine craftsmanship and unique pattern design. Designers simplify or abstract orchid patterns into a minimalist style, integrating traditional and modern ideas to suit modern aesthetics. Modern Kesi apparel combines traditional and modern design, with a more form-fitting cut and modern style elements. HEAVEN GAIA's Kesiwoven orchid-pattern works showcase the charm of Kesi-weaving in modern fashion. The Kesi-waving technique makes each piece a unique art treasure. By integrating traditional and modern elements, Kesi garments can create a distinct look and thrive in the modern fashion world. HEAVEN GAIA's designs enhance the art value of clothing, infuse cultural connotations into modern fashion, and meet consumers' demands for personalization and culture. This is not only the respect and inheritance of traditional crafts but also a powerful expression of confidence in Chinese culture so that the world can appreciate the unique charm of Chinese culture, as shown in Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3.** Application of Orchid Kesi Patterns in HEAVEN GAIA's Spring/Summer 2019 Paris Fashion Week Collection [5]

Overall, Kesi garments distinguishes itself through its unique aesthetic, cultural symbolism, and fusion of traditional and modern design. It provides valuable examples for innovating traditional craftsmanship in contemporary contexts. Case studies of late-Qing garments and HEAVEN GAIA's modern pieces highlight its enduring design aesthetic. Looking ahead, Kesi garments is expected to evolve by integrating cultural heritage with modern concepts, fostering a uniquely Chinese design language that meets contemporary demands, thrives in global fashion, and exemplifies harmony between tradition and modernity [6].

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This research has comprehensively explored the aesthetic characteristics, cultural connotations, and the integration of traditional cultural elements and modern design concepts of Kesi garments style. By analyzing its evolution from royal symbolism to modern "New Chinese-style" fashion, Kesi is revealed as a



dialectical bridge between tradition and innovation. The unique color, pattern, and texture features, along with rich cultural symbolism, have established Kesi as a significant part of Chinese traditional culture. Through the exploration of integrating traditional and contemporary design concepts, we have found that by adapting patterns, innovating materials, and combining styles, it is possible to create fashionable clothing that respects traditional culture while meeting modern aesthetic and practical needs. The integration of Kesi into contemporary fashion has the potential to revitalize traditional cultural art forms and promote cross-cultural exchange in the global fashion industry.

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**СЮАНЬ Ютін, КРОВОТА Т.**

### **ЕСТЕТИКА ОДЯГУ В СТИЛІ КЕСІ: ПОЄДНАННЯ ТРАДИЦІЙНИХ ПІДХОДІВ І СУЧАСНИХ ДИЗАЙНЕРСЬКИХ КОНЦЕПЦІЙ**

У дослідженні розглянуто естетичні особливості та культурні конотації стилю одягу Кесі, традиційного китайського мистецтва ткацтва шовку. На основі вивчення історичних записів, збережених артефактів та сучасних інтерпретацій аналізуються унікальні візуальні елементи та символічне значення візерунків костюмів Кесі. Дослідження зосереджене на поєднанні традиційних та сучасних концепцій дизайну одягу в стилі Кесі. Вивчення успішних прикладів інтеграції елементів кесі в сучасний дизайн одягу показує, як сучасні дизайнери черпають натхнення з традиційного кесі для створення інноваційних і модних творів, що відповідають потребам сучасних споживачів.

**Ключові слова:** Кесі; дизайн одягу; естетика; культурна спадщина; традиційний і сучасний дизайн.