A Study on the Fashion Images according to the Role Types of the Chinese First Ladies

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Abstract  
The purpose of this study is to analyze types of roles and fashion of the Chinese first ladies and provide basic data for fashion image-making of first ladies. As for the research methods, the concepts, role types, and fashion of the first ladies were considered by referring to the precedent studies and relevant literature. Then, the fashion images according to role types were analyzed by collecting the photos of Chinese first ladies from the period of the Republic of China until today. The results were as follows: First, when the roles of Chinese first ladies were categorized based on ceremonial, political, and policy roles, Zhuo Lin and Wang Yeping played a ceremonial role; Wang Guangmei, Liu Yongqing, and Peng Liyuan played a political role; and Soong Qingling, Soong Mayling, and Jiang Qing played a policy role while they were first ladies. While the first ladies of the Republic of China often wore classic Chinese styles like traditional qipao as well as western clothes which contained a western influence, the first ladies of the People’s Republic of China wore more colorful clothes and more accessories in the later period, and also often wore clothes that combined traditional and western elements. Second, first ladies who played a ceremonial role showed mannish and classic images; those who played a political role showed elegant, classic, and diverse images according to T.P.O; and those who played a policy role showed feminine, modern, and mannish images. Fashion images of the first ladies varied according to the level of political involvement, the sociocultural background of China at that time, and their personality and preference.  

Key words: fashion image, fashion style, first lady, role type  

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I. Introduction

First ladies exert their influence to leading to successful governments as a special advisor and companion of presidents (Yun, 2014). And they convey images to the public through internal and external activities and fashion styles (Youngsam Kim, Kim, & Jun, 2012). In other words, the first ladies’ fashion can be used as a criterion to reflect the national economy and cultural level which can be used a tool to show their own personality and will. Fashion images which are projected onto their styles have an affect on the public as the social tastes which produce individual tastes, sense of closeness, and identification by giving cultural meanings and values to the public (Sang, 2012). They communicate with people and deliver political messages to other countries by including their husbands’ political tendencies and ideology in their fashion styles.

The iconic first lady who famously utilized their fashion politically was Jacqueline Kennedy. She became the first lady when she was 31 years old. She actively utilized her young and fresh figure to promote President Kennedy’s progressive image. Her fashion style was so popular a new phrase ‘Jackie style’ was coined to both domestic and overseas women. She delivered her husband’s political message, communicated with people, and had an effect on the fashion industry through her own unique image which utilized fashion.

Michelle Obama has utilized fashion in a similar manner as Jacqueline Kennedy. She is a leader in Cheap-chic fashion. As all the clothes that she wore were very popular, the designers in the third country who designed the applicable clothes, including Jason Wu, placed them in the ranks of top-notch designers. Therefore, she had a great effect on the fashion industry by causing a change in the dynamics of American fashion. At the same time, she delivered President Obama’s political messages and communicated with people by utilizing fashion which is suitable for T.P.O. When President Obama addressed harmony and unity, she wore violet clothes which mixed the red of the Republican Party with the blue of the Democratic Party. Likewise, when he announced progressive political moves he frequently wore blue clothes (Han & Jung, 2011).

More recently, when Chinese first lady, Peng Liyuan, first appeared, she became an icon worldwide by showing elegant and refined styles through the utilization of Chinese dress and modern clothes while she was on ceremonial overseas trips. The Chinese first ladies who had been forgotten for decades since the Cultural Revolution are once again at the forefront of fashion because of Peng Liyuan. They have become the subject of studies on fashion styles.

Many studies on the fashion of the first ladies have been done since then (Chung, 2007; Y. Lee, 2011; Han & Jung, 2011; M. Lee, 2013). There have only been a few studies on role types and fashion of first ladies such as Youngsam Kim et al. (2012), ‘A study on fashion images according to the types of the Korean first ladies’ and Yoojung Kim (2009), ‘Fashion image related to the role of first lady in Korea and United States of America’. But there have been no studies on the role types and fashion of the Chinese first ladies. In other words, it is necessary to examine how the fashion style of the first ladies of China has changed according to different times, based on the fashion images. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze fashion images according to the role types of the Chinese first
ladies and provide basic data for fashion image-making of first ladies. As for the scope of the study, it was intended for fashion styles worn by 8 first ladies ranging from Soong Qingling who is Sun Wen’s wife in the Republic of China to Peng Liyuan who is Xi Jinping’s wife. As for the research method, the precedent studies on the concepts, role types, and fashion of first ladies were considered by referring to the precedent studies and relevant literature. Then a total of 194 collected fashion images were analyzed, and, for objectivity, three people who majored in fashion participated in the study by collecting the photos of Chinese first ladies from Chinese governmental Xinhua Telecom’s Internet edition, Xinhuanet (http://www.xinhuanet.com) and Xinhua Multimedia Data Bank (http://info.xinhua.org/newphmall/newindex.jsp).

II. Theoretical Background

1. First Ladies’ Concepts and Role Types

The term “First Lady” was first used when a female reporter started to call the 19th American President, Rutherford Birchard Hayes (1822–1893)’s wife the first lady in 1877 on her husband’s Inauguration Day. The term was established when the 22nd American President, Stephen Grover Cleveland (1897–1903) called his wife the first lady during their wedding ceremony. Now, it is commonly used when referring to the wives of presidents and governors (Jeoung, 2012).

The roles of first lady have changed with the times. In the past, their roles were rather passive, but at present, they take part in the society aggressively, and sometimes, they participate in important decision making (Yun, 2014). Many researchers have tried to define the roles of first lady, among whom are Karen, Bernadette, and Laura (1996), Watson (2000), Gary (2000), Ham (2001), and Choy (2012). Specifically, Karen et al. (1996) categorized the first lady’s roles into the ceremonial role, the political role, and the policy role. The ceremonial role means a basic role as traditional female role model by performing the job of the mistress of the White House. The political role is to advise the president on political issues, and act as a political partner. The policy role is directly involved in the administration management and policy-making by participating in political meetings, to be a chairperson of committees, or to be interviewed by the press (Karen et al., 1996). Watson categorized the role as full partners, behind-the-scenes partners, partners in marriage, and non-partners depending on their relationship with the presidents (J. Park & Yoon, 2008). Gary’s (2000) 6 roles based on the activity and influence were the conscript which means inactive and distant to the politic, the shield which means they advise and act passively, the courtesan that means they act aggressively as a politician, the consigliere that means presidents can share political secrets, the regent which means that they are so powerful that they are called the shadow president, and lastly co-presidents who visibly influence politics and policy. Ham (2001) categorized the roles based on intellectual and political professionalism such as the traditional helpmate who participates in only official events, a type of assistant Baegaessok who exercises political leverage indirectly rather than professionally, an active helpmate who performs official activities and political roles without specialty, a type of strategic withdrawer who only performs official
activities formally, a type of connecting participant who performs official and political roles with specialty but does not act as a policy channel, and finally a type of participatory as complete partner who aggressively performs political activities with specialty. Choy (2012), a political scientist from Hong Kong categorized the roles as the ambitious style where first ladies take over the regime, like Hillary Clinton and Nancy Reagan, the benevolent style, where first ladies participates in the public interest, like Betty Ford, the housewife style where the first ladies are faithful to the family like Mammy Eisenhower and Barbara Bush, and the fashionist style, where the first ladies politically take advantage of fashion, like Jaclyn Kennedy and Michelle Obama.

Yoojung Kim (2009) who analyzed fashion images according to the roles of Korean and American first ladies classified the first ladies by dividing them into ceremonial, political, and policy roles like classification of the role types by Karen et al. (1996) So the ceremonial roles include Kim Oksuk, Son Myeongsun, Gwon Yangsuk / Patricia Nixon, Barbara Bush, the political roles do Lee Heeho / Jacqueline Kennedy, and the political roles do Yuk Yeongsu, Lee Sunja / Nancy Reagan, and Hillary Clinton (Yoojung Kim, 2009). On the other hand, Youngsam Kim et al. (2012) who analyzed fashion images according to role types of the Korean first ladies into political counselor type, traditional counselor type, political primary responsibility type, and traditional primary responsibility type. Francesca played the role of the political counselor type. Gong Deokgwi and Lee Heeho played the role of the traditional counselor type. Yuk Yeongsuk, Lee Sunja, Gwon Yangsuk played the role of the political primary responsibility type. Kim Oksuk and Son Myeongsun played the role of the traditional primary responsibility type (Youngsam Kim et al., 2012).

This study tries to classify and stereotype role types of the first ladies into ceremonial, political, and policy roles by referring to the studies of Karen et al. (1996), which is generally used and also applied to the fashion image study by Yoojung Kim (2009), and was used as a reference for classification.

2. Studies Related to Fashion of First Ladies

As for first ladies’ fashion, studies on the American first lady, Jacqueline Kennedy and Michelle Obama have commonly been done. As for the precedent studies, Chung (2007) found that Jacqueline Kennedy was much younger than other first ladies, she expressed her changing age well, and was the representative figure who realistically expressed ‘the changing American women’ with young and bright images. She made ideal images of the American high society through the functional, active, and simple things which were not excessively decorated while still being suitable for the first lady’s role. She also created an opportunity for the US to lead the fashion world by establishing the American fashion images. At that time the American high society depended on French fashion through ‘A study on Jacqueline Kennedy’s clothing as a first lady – in the White House year.’ And Y. Lee (2011) concluded that the design characteristics of the Jackie style is simple lines which excluded ornament and luxurious materials and as this was the same with the women’s clothing of minimalism which was popular in the middle of 1960s. Jacqueline made a great contribution to fashion leaders and she created the basic
frame of the first ladies’ look which have continued after that. Through ‘A study on formation and design characteristic of the modern first lady look’. Han and Jung (2011) has found that fashion colors of Michelle Obama concentrate on Y, R, RB, B, BG, and N through ‘A study on the colors worn by Michelle Obama’. Y, R, RB, and B were strategically used for political meaning. Y was analyzed to display cheerfulness, pleasant feelings, high ideology, hope, and optimism, RB was done to show harmony, B was done to be used as a symbol of conservatism and the Democratic Party. And M. Lee (2013) found that Jacqueline presented new fashion’s criteria and vision to women in the modernism age and furthermore established the stereotype of the first lady’s look. Likewise, Michelle expanded the appearance of the fashion styles of the first ladies through coordination which communicates with the public in the postmodernism age, moreover, it is informal, and breaks down formality. Furthermore, she presented the look of communication that the new age wants as the first lady through ‘The comparative study of the first ladies’ Fashion style from a perspective of modernism and postmodernism: centering around Jacqueline Kennedy and Michelle Obama’.

On the other hand, Yoojung Kim (2009) and Youngsam Kim et al. (2012) as the studies related to fashion according to role types of first ladies. Yoojung Kim (2009) has found that the first ladies’ fashion images were stereotyped into five categories: active (active, strong, energetic, vivid, splendid, and characterful), romantic (romantic, feminine, elegant, and luxurious), natural (natural, simple, comfortable, simple, and practical), intellectual (intellectual, modern, refined), elegant (elegant, conservative, and traditional) the results were found by the use of a survey by classifying fashion image according to roles of the Korean and American first ladies. Fashion images according to role types has found that natural and elegant fashion images were high in case of the first ladies who performed ceremonial roles, political roles showed high romantic fashion image, and the first ladies of the policy roles showed the high active, intellectual, and elegant fashion images. Fashion image items by role have found that a significant relation was commonly shown in feminine images. Fashion images by role have found that conservative, elegant, and simple images were high in the ceremonial role, the elegant image was high in the political role, and active, energetic, intellectual, and modern images were high in the policy role. The romantic image was commonly shown in the Korean and American first ladies regardless of roles. The romantic and elegant images continued to be shown in Korea regardless of the age, and romantic, intellectual fashion images were shown in the US.

Moreover, Youngsam Kim et al. (2012) found that Francesca is the political counselor type and expressed androgynous and simple fashion images, Gong Deokgwi is the traditional counselor type and showed the modern and refined fashion image, Yuk Yeongsu is the political primary responsibility type and preferred the styles which emphasized feminine and graceful fashion images in the result which studied the fashion images according to role types of Korean first ladies. Lee Sunja is the political primary responsibility type and expressed the splendid and refined fashion image, Kim Oksuk is the traditional primary responsibility type expressed the elegant and polite images, Sun Myeongsun is the traditional primary responsibility type and expressed
classical, bright, and graceful fashion images. Lee Heeho is the traditional counselor type and showed the practical fashion images, and Gwon Yangsuk is the political primary responsibility type and expressed the bright and splendid fashion image. Through these analyses, the Korean first ladies usually wore jackets and skirts of the usually classical image as the basic clothes of western clothes and their tendencies and images were reflected in their styles including silhouettes and colors based on their roles and types. The materials of the clothes were diversified and colors were bright in the latter part. Youngsam Kim, Kim, & Jun (2014) found that the esthetic characteristics shown in the clothes of the Korean first ladies are femininity, simplicity, elegance, and tradition. Femininity was expressed through the A silhouette which emphasized curvaceous women or ornament effects. Simplicity was shown through H silhouette of the straight type or single colors with high chroma. Elegance was expressed through long skirts or silhouettes which added understated curvaceousness, materials of woolen stuffs, knitwear, and velvet, and harmony of warm and soft colors. Tradition was expressed by utilizing materials which reflected history, colors, or detailed ornament elements.

As described above, fashion images show the taste and aesthetics of individuals, provide a cue for self-expression in a short time, play an important role in evaluating other people, and are also so influential it can determine success and failure of an individual (Jeoung, 2012). Therefore, in this study, based on H. Park et al. (2006) and Yun (2014), fashion images were classified into 8 images – classic, elegant, feminine, ethnic, avant–garde, sporty, mannish, and modern images – to analyze fashion images of the first ladies according to the role type.

Classic image refers to traditional the image that has been popular for a long time without being influenced by the trend; elegant image means sophisticated and graceful images; feminine image means womanly, delicate, and soft image; ethnic image means simple and ethnically characteristic image; and avant–garde image means unique and the image which can be seen ingenious and trendy style; sporty image means active and simple style; mannish image means a style that adds masculine elements to feminine fashion to create a new type of femininity; and modern image refers to minimalistic and sophisticated style (H. Park et al., 2006).

III. Roles and Fashion of Chinese First Ladies

As mentioned above, the word “First Lady” was used in 1877 at the inauguration of the 19th present of America. In China, Soong Qingling, the wife of Sun Wen, the founding father, was called first lady for the first time in 1915 (Ewha Womans University Chinese Women’s history Laboratory, 2005) followed by Soong Mayling, the wife of Chiang Kai-shek. After the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, Jiang Qing (Mao Zedong’s wife), Wang Guangmei (Liu Shaoqi’s wife), Zhuo Lin (Deng Xiaoping’s wife), Wang Yeping (Jiang Zemin’s wife), Liu Yongqing (Hu Jintao’s wife), Peng Liyuan (Xi Jinping’s wife) have appeared. Jiang Qing could not perform first lady’s duty between 1949 and 1959, when Mao Zedong’s early days were not recognized as official government business, but she started to participate in diplomatic events as a first lady in 1962. In the case of Zhuo Lin, even though Deng Xiaoqing was not the president of China
between 1983 and 1993, he had real power. Therefore, she is regarded as a first lady.

1. First Ladies during the Republic of China (1912–1949)

1) Soong Qingling

Soong Qingling (1893–1981), the first first lady of the republic of China, was a modern woman who studied in America for 8 years. She was patriotic and interested in politics. She was once a secretary of Sun Wen and was able to display her superior English skill and work performance. After she got married to Sun Wen in 1915, she became his political supporter and a revolutionist. After Sun Wen passed away, she tried to make her late husband’s ideology come true. Criticizing corruption and the anti-democratic policy of the Chinese Nationalist Party, she joined the Communist Party of China. She actively protested Chiang Kai-shek’s suppression of the Communist Party, and became vice president twice. She was also a feminist. Considering the political activities of Soong Qingling, she can be classified as a first lady who played a policy role.

She usually wore qipao, not only traditional styles but also modified her clothes include to western styles. Her picture (Figure 1) preserved in Sun Wen’s old house shows that her qipao is H line style with natural shoulder lines decorated with flower patterns around the neckline and sleeves by traditional technic. She produced traditional and elegant style with feminine qipao. Figure 2 pictures Soong Qingling and Sun Wen in 1921. She wears a two pieced qipao that was popular in 1920s, which features the collars up to the neckline and wide bell sleeves, no patterns, and wide H line. She is holding a western style hand bag. Figure 3 is her wedding picture taken in Japan. In the picture, she wears a western dress with flat collared jacket and ankle-length long flare skirt. She also wears a capeline hat.

Figure 1. Soong Qingling, 1918
- http://news.xinhuanet.com

Figure 2. Soong Qingling and Sun Wen, 1921
- http://sszx.org.cn

Figure 3. The wedding picture Soong Qingling and Sun Wen, 1915
- http://news.ifeng.com
2) Soong Mayling

Soong Mayling (1987–2003), Chiang Kai-shek’s wife, is Soong Qingling’s sister. She was educated in America longer than her sister. She spoke 7 languages, including English, fluently. Because she was very ambitious about power and politics, she performed the role of Kai-shek’s secretary even after she was married to him. She was actively involved in many fields including politics, diplomacy, military, woman right, and education. Moreover, she was so good at diplomacy that she received American aid during the war against Japan. With this contribution, she is considered as the leader of modern women. Time magazine described her as ‘a flower made of steel’. Soong Mayling, who went on to the front line when China was undergoing the most chaotic period, can be classified as a first lady who played a policy role.

She owned countless qipao (Xu, 2014). She possessed not only traditional ones with flat patterns but also the modified ones with draping patterns that were popular in the 1940s (Figure 4). The picture (Figure 5) preserved in Mayling Palace in Nanjing shows her typical fashion style. She wears a modified sleeveless qipao with a busy flower pattern. She emphasized her feminine look with tight x line silhouette that highlights her waist line, and added a noble image with earrings and jewelry rings in both hands. In Figure 6, she visits some attractions with her husband during the Keino Meeting. She wears a qipao and jacket, which shows a tight silhouette. With modern fashion accessories like sunglasses, pearl earrings, broach, and high heels, she looks sophisticated and luxurious. She was a fashion leader who adopted both western and eastern styles.

2. First Ladies during the People’s Republic of China (1949–)

1) Jiang Qing
Jiang Qing (1915–1991), Mao Zedong’s wife, was an actress, but she was politically ambitious. At the time she was married to Mao Zedong, the Chinese government asked her not to be involved in any political activities because this was her 3rd marriage. However, she started political activity as a wife of the president in 1962, and after then she actively joined many political events as a prominent leader. In 1966, the Cultural Revolution occurred. During the next 10 years, the Chinese economy collapsed, and the country and people experienced a terrible period, while she was acting as a leader. Because of this, she was sentenced to death after Mao Zedong died. Because of Jiang Qing’s influence, for some time, Chinese first ladies were tacitly limited in their political activities, and, in that sense, Jiang Qing is classified as a first lady who played a policy role.

In 1960s, all aged people wore military uniform and Mao jackets for social and economic reasons. Mao jacket’s colors were mostly green and navy colors, and the material was practical cotton. Jiang Qing also enjoyed wearing these two. Figure 7 shows Jiang Qing in the military uniform, and the coat on the uniform was a part of military uniform. As shown in Figure 8, she wore Mao jackets when she watched a play in the theater with President Nixon. It is navy color with a Mao Zedong badge. The Mao jackets in Figure 9 were designed simply without shirring or accessory. She holds only a practical bag. These clothes reflect her society, and she did not show her feminine characteristics. Instead, she showed her political ambition and powerful image.

2) Wang Guangmei

Wang Guangmei (1921–2006), Liu Shaoqi’s wife, due to the influence of her father, wanted to study in Japan, but she was invited to the communist party of China as an interpreter. Later, she was married to Liu Shaoqi, and...
became his secretary. After she became first lady in 1955, she played some political roles such as interpreting when visiting foreign countries. She became the first First Lady to visit a foreign country in 1963. Therefore, Wang Guangmei can be classified as a first lady who played a political role.

In 1963, when she visited Indonesia, she wore a short sleeved qipao (Figure 10). Wearing a tight white qipao with no patterns gave a neat and elegant image, and with a handbag she completed the modern style. She wore similar cloths when she visited the Philippines (Figure 11). She also enjoyed wearing a qipao in domestic events. She showed off her feminine look by wearing a light colored modified qipao which is calf length and handbag (Figure 12) when she attended the Myanmar Defense Minister, U Ne Win’s welcoming ceremony.

As shown below she expressed her feminine look by wearing qipao that highlights her waist line, and completed her style with a handbag as a fashion accessory.

3) Zhuo Lin

Zhuo Lin (1961–2009) was married to Deng Xiaoping’s during the Sino-Japanese War. She followed her husband to the battlefields as a secretary, but after the nation was established, her husband, who became a high ranked official, asked her 'Not to work in public' and 'Not represent herself in front of the public'. Therefore she only performed official tasks, and helped her husband behind the scene. She was awarded ‘Impressing China’ in 2009. Zhuo Lin is classified as a first lady who played a ceremonial role.

She liked asexual and humble styles rather than the feminine and splendid image. During her first visit to Japan as first lady, she wore a traditional “Daegum (對襟)” green jacket and suit pants (Figure 13). Her shiny jacket with abstract patterns was decorated with traditional knot buttons. She wore a grey pants suit, which had a simple design with a boxy silhouette(Figure 14). When she visited the US, she wore a
black boxy coat and brown straight pants with a practical handbag. She pursued a classical and traditional style (Figure 15).

4) Wang Yeping

Wang Yeping (1928–). Jiang Zemin’s wife, graduated from Shanghai University of Foreign Language, and got married to Jiang in 1951. Before she became first lady, she worked for Shanghai Electric Science Research Institute for decades as an office staff worker and secretary. After she became first lady, she was not interested in political activity, and she disliked being in public. Because she had a cervical vertebrae disease, she focused on household chores rather than participating in political events. In other words, Wang Yeping was a first lady who played an ceremonial role.

She usually wore formal suits in official events. In Figure 16, she wore a Mao suit when she was visiting Myanmar. She expressed classical style through a neat and simple design. In Figure 17, she was with Mr. and Mrs. Bush when she visited the US. She wore an H silhouette formal suit similar to Zhuo Lin’s. She wore a simple blue jacket with black collars and grey pants. A brooch was the only accessory the used. In Estonia, she wore a pastel toned violet boxy skirt suit, which is categorized in the traditional and classic style (Figure 18).

5) Liu Yongqing

Liu Yongqing, Hu Jintao’s wife was born in Chongqing in 1940, and later she entered Tsinghua University in 1959. She was married to Hu Jintao, who was her classmate, in 1970. She was not originally interested in politics, but after she became first lady, she actively participated in political and diplomatic events, sometimes in place of her husband. Therefore, Liu Yongqing can be classified as a first lady who played a political role.

She usually wore skirt suits with Chinese traditional features. Almost all her clothes had traditional features such as traditional patterns, Chinese collars and knot buttons. She used vivid
colors more often than other first ladies. Figure 19 shows Liu Yongqing visiting Costa Rica. She is in a blue and orange checkered H line skirt suit with Chinese collars, which represent the traditional Chinese image, and a simple handbag. In Figure 20, she is at the welcome party of the Shanghai Expo. She wore a pink skirt suit, with knot buttons on the jacket to express the traditional China image. Figure 21 is when she visited Denmark. She is in a red skirt, and she introduced the traditional China image through Chinese collars and patterns. The overall
silhouette is straight, which is similar to other first ladies of the People's Republic of China.

6) Peng Liyuan

Peng Liyuan (1962–), Xi Jinping’s wife, was a popular singer from Jinanagungu Jeonwi Entertainment, and earned a master’s degree in ethnic vocal music for the first time in China. Before she became first lady, she was in the entertainment business as a singer, and she also spent a lot of time on public works and charity works. She was an activist on the prevention of tuberculosis, the prevention and cure of AIDS, and she was active in the WHO and the Chinese Ministry of Heath. She is loved by Chinese people. After she became first lady, she not only helped her husband by participating in diplomatic events but also played a role in politics. The Xinhua News Agency predicted that she will be the best First Lady and will be an international role model for children, women and the elderly (I. Park, 2013). Therefore, Peng Liyuan can be classified as a first lady who played a political role.

Her traditional Chinese fashion became so popular that what she clothes sold out (Yaung & Kwak 2014). Her various styles have contributed to improving the Chinese image. Her unique style created a moniker called “Peng Liyuan Style”. At her first trip abroad, she introduced Chinese style to the world. Figure 22 is when she attended the Tanzania Airport Welcome Ceremony. She wore a jacket with a Chinese collar and an ankle length skirt. The two pieced suit is overall white and the scarf is sky blue, which makes the fashion not boring. Unlike the boxy silhouette, which former first ladies enjoyed, her suit is tight around the waist, which emphasizes a woman’s glamorous figure. In Figure 23, she is attending the 50th anniversary concert celebrating the formal ties between China and France. She wears a traditional qipao with a tailcoat, which is typical of western dress. This shows a unity of tradition, modern, and the western and eastern worlds. Figure 24
shows the first lady, who is attending a welcoming ceremony for the Venezuelan president. She wears a dark brown tailored jacket and light pink flare skirt with same color corsage and a thin belt that emphasizes her waist line. She completed the feminine style by wearing accessories like pearl earrings and a handbag.

### IV. Fashion Images according to Role Types of the Chinese First Ladies

Based on Karen et al. (1996) and Yoojung Kim (2009), role types of Chinese first ladies were classified into ceremonial, political, and policy roles. Zhuo Lin and Wang Yeping were classified as an ceremonial role; Wang Guangmei, Liu Yongqing, and Peng Liyuan a political role; Soong Qingling, Soong Mayling, and Jiang Qing a policy role as a first lady. In this chapter, based on relevant literature (H. Park et al., 2006). and previous study (Yun, 2014), fashion images were classified into eight images – classic, elegant, feminine, ethnic, avant-garde, sporty, mannish, and modern images – and fashion image of the first ladies according to the role type were analyzed.

1. **Ceremonial Role: Zhuo Lin, Wang Yeping**

As examined before, the ceremonial role means that first ladies perform their roles as the lady of the house who is faithful to the traditional feminine image. The Chinese first ladies who performed this role include Zhuo Lin and Wang Yeping. Zhuo Lin was the first lady who silently helped her husband by performing ceremonial roles only. She utilized beige colors of H silhouettes or pant suits of achromatic colors including gray and black. As for her jackets, she utilized white shirts and suits or coats without patterns or achromatic colors. In the case of clothes with patterns, she utilized Chinese traditional patterns. She scarcely wore accessories except practical handbags. Taking this into consideration, her styles did not show feminity but completed an androgynous and dignified styles which can be defined as a mannish style.

Wang Yeping was the first lady who was faithful to family life by just assisting her husband simply instead of participating in the political activities actively. She utilized box-typed jackets without patterns. She emphasized feminity more than Jhuo Lin by utilizing various chromatic colors including beige, blue, light purple, etc. In case of pants, she preferred H-line silhouettes but wore skirts together instead of pants. She expressed feminity by putting simple accessories like a brooch on. Like this, she expressed the classical image through simple and gentle styling with basic items.

As above, the Chinese first ladies who performed ceremonial roles showed the mannish and classical images. This accords with the natural images which can be shown in the simple, comfortable, and practical styles that is highest in the fashion image of the first ladies who performed a ceremonial role according to the research of Yoojung Kim (2009).

2. **Political Role: Wang Guangmei, Liu, Yongqing, Peng Liyuan**

The political role means that first ladies give
political advice to their husbands and furthermore, are active as political companions. The first ladies who performed this role include Wang Guangmei, Liu Yongqing, and Peng Liyuan.

Wang Guangmei was the first lady who first participated in an overseas trip. She played the secretarial role of her husband during the overseas trip. She showed the graceful and elegant images by wearing a bright Chinese dress without patterns which were not splendid whenever she appeared on the diplomatic stages. Especially, she emphasized refined feminity by utilizing improved Chinese dress which shows her waist and hips well instead of traditional patterns. Handbags and shoes which coordinated with Chinese dress give unity to her style by using bright colors. Like this, Wang Guangmei’s fashion style which expressed dignified and elegant feminity through refined and graceful styles can be the elegant image.

Liu Yongqing was the first lady who actively participated in the political and diplomatic activities and represented her husband as a political companion. She preferred suit styles with Chinese elements. The traditional elements including Chinese colors, Chinese knot buttons, and traditional patterns were added in her jackets and she wore decent H-line skirts without patterns. As for colors, she wore the same colors on her jackets and skirts. She used strong chromatic colors including green, orange, pink, and dark red. Like this Liu Yongqing expressed the fashion style which added Chinese national traditional images in the basic, decent, and classical images.

Peng Liyuan is the first lady who helps her husband by participating in the political and diplomatic activities actively. Especially, she promotes her husband’s political ideology by utilizing fashion politics well and makes a great contribution to the improvement of the national image. She wore many Chinese clothes in the diplomatic stage and preferred modern clothes which combined Western and Eastern styles. Qipao is the item which is most shown in her Chinese clothes and shows the harmony of Western and Eastern clothes by adding Chinese traditional cultural elements in Western silhouette. When she put on suits, she kept the refined and modern style and showed a combination of Western and Chinese costume culture by adding Chinese traditional cultural elements including trading patterns and Chinese collars in the details. She showed her modern and refined image with the feminine and soft feelings when she expresses modern styles. She strategically used accessories including earrings, handbags, scarfs, and broaches to express her various styles according to T.P.O. She showed much more social graces than other first ladies. Because of this, it is understood that she utilized elegance, feminity, and traditional beauty, and modern beauty to meet T.P.O. This is due to the fact that Pen Liyuan utilized fashion as a political means like Jacqueline Kennedy and Michelle Obama have done in the U.S.A.

As above, the fashion images of the Chinese first ladies who performed the political role are various types including elegance, classical images which added traditional elements in it, elegance which meets T.P.O., feminine classical images, modern images, and ethnic images. These are different from the romantic images which can be shown in the feminine, elegant, and luxurious styles that were highest image as the first ladies’ fashion images in the research results of Yoojung Kim (2009). It is thought to be because the society’s cultural backgrounds as well as the first ladies’ individual tastes.
Wang Guangmei could comparatively utilize improved Chinese dress which emphasizes feminine beauty or the Western fashion accessories including handbags because she was not influenced by the period as the first lady who was active before the Cultural Revolution. On the contrary, Liu Yongqing could not help using humble and classical clothes only because she was active after the Cultural Revolution. However, unlike the previous first ladies, Peng Liyuan can express the various images which are different from the previous first ladies due to the social and cultural background which can actively utilize fashion.

3. Policy Role: Soong Qingling, Soong Mayling, and Jiang Qing

The policy role means that first ladies attend cabinet meetings, take the chair, or directly participate in governmental operation and political decision through press conferences. The first ladies who performed the policy role include Soong Qingling, Soong Mayling, and Jiang Qing.

Soong Qingling was active as her husband's supporter of thought and a revolutionist as the modern woman. Her key item was the traditional Qipao dress. She used loose fit clothes that did not cling to her body and bright colors and flower patterns which were not splendid. She utilized a small Western handbag as an accessory wearing the two-piece suit of qipao dress which consists of a bright jacket and a dark skirt. Like this, when she wore qipao dress, she expressed the soft styles which shows femininity to express tradition and feminity. And when she wore Western clothes, she emphasized feminity and purity by wearing A line flared skirt which do not show their body line with capeline huts and lace collars with flower patterns. Soong Qingling's fashion style expresses feminine and soft images to show a feminine image.

Soong Mayling was active in political activities in many fields as the first lady who studied in the U.S.A. and was active as a lobbyist in the U.S.A to promote national interest. She preferred improved Qipao dress unlike Soong Qingling. She left nothing to the imagination by emphasizing the female body line with a tight Qipao dress, and she wore a Chinese dress which was reinterpreted as the modern and refined image by utilizing a sleeveless Chinese dress escaping from the conservative style. She also wore a qipao dress with jackets or coats with an influence of Western clothing culture. She expressed the luxurious style by utilizing modern and splendid accessories. Therefore, Soong Mayling's style was ahead of her time by utilizing the Western and Eastern fashion styles properly and producing a modern image.

Jiang Qing was very much interested in politics and was active in political activities for almost 10 years as the leader of the Cultural Revolution. Because of the historic period, she mainly wore Mao jackets and military clothes and preferred a pragmatic style without accessories. She expressed a style which emphasized practicality without any ornament. Colors were all the navy color of Mao jackets and the green of military uniforms. Cotton was just used as the material. Therefore, Jiang Qing's decent style, which does not show femininity, is the mannish style.

As stated above, the Chinese first ladies who performed the policy role showed the feminine, modern, and mannish images. This does not accord with the active images which can be seen in the strong, active, vivid, splendid, and characterful styles that is prominent in the first
ladies’ fashion styles of the policy role in the research result of Yoojung Kim (2009). Soong Qingling and Soong Mayling showed the different fashion images even though they are the same role type as the first ladies because of their individual tastes. Both of them utilized modern styles. But in case of Soong Qingling, she sought the soft feminine image and Soong Mayling displayed a sexy and refined image. In case of Jiang Qing, it is thought that she could not show the fashion style according to individual fashion tastes or role types because of the effect of the Cultural Revolution.

As examined above, the fashion images of the first ladies who performed the ceremonial, political, and policy roles cannot be combined into one. This is thought to be because there are differences in fashion styles due to the effect of historical background or individual tastes.

The results of the analysis on the fashion images differentiated depending on the types of the responsibilities of the Chinese first lady discussed above are summarized as Table 1.

V. Conclusion

First ladies are the representatives of countries and their fashion styles reflect their own fashion and promote national images externally. The Chinese first ladies’ fashion, which previously did not receive attention from the public, was once again brought to the forefront thanks to Peng Liyuan. Therefore, this study analyzed the Chinese first ladies’ clothes and examined their fashion images according to role types.

First, the Chinese first ladies who performed the ceremonial role were Zhuo Lin and Wang Yeping. The Chinese first ladies who performed the political role were Wang Guangmei, Liu Yongqing, and Peng Liyuan. And the Chinese first ladies who performed the policy role were Soong Qingling, Soong Mayling, and Jiang Qing. The first ladies of the Republic of China expressed classical styles with traditional qipao dress and wore Western dress like coat and jacket together due to the Western influence. They completed the style which coordinated Western clothes with Eastern clothes. On the other hand, the more colorful clothes and more accessories of the first ladies of the Republic of China were shown in the latter part and styles were mannish and classical and then changed to various images according to T.P.O. After Zhuo Lin, the Chinese first ladies have tended to combine Chinese traditional clothing elements with the Western clothing elements as well as the styles which combined the Western clothes with the Eastern clothes as they have changed to be modern.

Second, the Chinese first ladies were largely found to wear two-piece suits or feminine qipao dress. The Chinese first ladies who performed the ceremonial role showed mannish and classic image. The Chinese first ladies who performed the political role showed the various images of elegance, the classical images which added traditional elements in clothes, and the image which meets T.P.O. It is thought to be because of the society’s cultural background as well as the first ladies’ individual tastes.

Finally, the Chinese first ladies who performed the policy role showed the feminine, modern, and mannish images. There are differences between the fashion styles of Soong Qingling and Soong Mayling because of their individual tastes. In case of Jiang Qing, she could not show her fashion style according to individual fashion tastes, personality, or role types because
### Table 1. Fashion Images according to the Role Types of the Chinese First Ladies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The first lady</th>
<th>Historic period</th>
<th>Fashion trend</th>
<th>Role type</th>
<th>The most preferred design</th>
<th>Design feature</th>
<th>Fashion image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soong Qingling (1915–1925 / Sun Wen)</td>
<td>Democratic revolutionary movement</td>
<td>Traditional qipao</td>
<td>Policy role</td>
<td>Traditional qipao, two-piece qipao, Western clothing</td>
<td>Feminine designs with floral patterns or without patterns</td>
<td>Feminine image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soong Mayling (1927–1949 / Chiang Kai-shek)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jang Qing (1962–1976 / Mao Zedong)</td>
<td>The cultural revolution</td>
<td>Mao jackets and military uniforms</td>
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<td>Military suit, Mao jacket</td>
<td>Undecorated designs that emphasize practicality</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhuo Lin (1976–1993 / Deng Xiaoping)</td>
<td>Reform and opening-up (改革開放)</td>
<td>Suits under the influence of Western clothes</td>
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<td>Pants suit</td>
<td>Achromatic designs that emphasize practicality</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Yongqiang (2003–2013 / Hu Jintao)</td>
<td>Modernization construction (现代化建设)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peng Liyuan (2013– / Xi Jinping)</td>
<td>Ethnic revival (民族复兴)</td>
<td>Styles showing individuality and quality</td>
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<td>Modern image, elegant image</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the effect of the Cultural Revolution. In other words, the fashion images according to role types of the Chinese first ladies have found to be different according to their participation in politics, Chinese sociocultural background, and their personality and tastes.

This study can be limited because the photo data collected contained black and white photos which made it difficult to accurately record certain data. However, the results of this study can be helpful for researching the fashion style of first ladies.

**References**


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