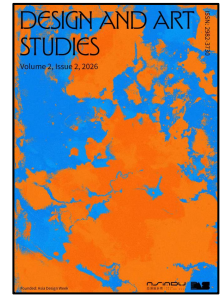




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Research Article

Costume Design for Feng Wenzheng, a Late Qing Huizhou Merchant, in *The Feng Residence*: A Legend of the Past

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Abstract

The seventh episode of "National Treasure · Season 4 " led the audience into the Anhui Museum. As one of the important contents of this section, " *The Feng Residence*: A Legend of the Past " tells the story of the protagonist Feng Wenzheng who was ordered to take over the ancestral property that was already bankrupt, one to maintain factory production, and the other to improve the silk loom to increase productivity and fight against foreigners and sell the ancestral house. Feng Wenzheng, who lived in the late Qing Dynasty, studied at a Western school. He dared to size up the situation, to think deeply, and to act on the opportunity. He also contained the pioneering spirit of challenging the fate that originated from the blood of Huizhou merchants. Based on careful role-setting, this paper conducts a comprehensive analysis and textual research of old photos, paintings, documents, and physical materials from the late Qing Dynasty. According to Feng Wenzheng 's growth background, personality characteristics, social status, and characteristics of the times, this paper makes a targeted combination from the aspects of clothing construction, fabric, pattern and color, enhances the correlation between attire and historical background and character roles, and outlines the image of young Huizhou merchants with a Western education background in the late Qing Dynasty.

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1. Introduction

Since its premiere, "National Treasure " has consistently won acclaim from audiences for its unique, dramatic approach to bringing historical stories to life through cultural relics. In the production of Season 4, the program's team incorporated naked-eye 3D and virtual reality technologies to create an immersive experience that transcends time and space, allowing viewers to touch history through an audiovisual feast where reality and fantasy intertwine, and to deeply appreciate the timeless charm of Chinese civilization. As a model of contemporary Chinese cultural heritage storytelling, the program employs multi-dimensional artistic presentations—from lighting and projection technology to stage aesthetics, and from auditory design to visual storytelling—to successfully create a cultural space for dialogue between the past and the present. It not only inspires viewers to reflect deeply on national traditions but also awakens a sense of cultural stewardship in the new era.

The core value of the program is to build a path of cultural root-seeking through cultural relics as the medium. This innovative expression is reflected in *"The Feng Residence: A Legend of the Past,"* interpreted by Feng Jiayi, the "Guardian of National Treasure." This chapter focuses on the innovation road of Feng Wenzheng, a descendant of Huizhou merchants in the late Qing Dynasty. Feng Wenzheng, a young man with both traditional Confucian heritage and a modern Western education, demonstrated the transformation and breakthrough of traditional business groups during China's modernization by selling property to maintain factory operations and upgrading the silk loom to enhance productivity. As a bearer of the times, Feng Wenzheng's costume design must meet three demands: the identity of a Huizhou merchant, the imprint of Western learning spreading to the East, and the spiritual externalization of innovators.

This paper will examine the evolution of costume during the social transition of the late Qing Dynasty, drawing on the collective images of students and merchants from that era to systematically document and analyze the design of Feng Wenzheng's attire. Through the examination of contemporary historical documents and physical artifacts, this study will analyze his life, the historical period in which he lived, and the characteristics of his attire, color schemes, and fabric patterns. It will then provide a detailed argumentation regarding the design of the sartorial image of Feng Wenzheng, a merchant from Anhui Province during the late Qing Dynasty, thereby achieving a harmonious balance between historical authenticity and artistic expression.

2. Feng Wenzheng 's life and the relevant definition of his historical period

2.1 The relevant definition of Feng Wenzheng 's life

The drama centers on Hui-style architecture and depicts the unique social landscape of the late Qing Dynasty. The character Feng Wenzheng is portrayed as a man in his late twenties from Hongfei Village in She County, Huizhou, who once studied at a Western-style school. His grandpa was a traditional merchant. Unable to bear the relentless exploitation by foreign merchants and the Imperial court, the elderly patriarch passed away in despair. Faced with this crisis, Feng Wenzheng was tasked with taking over the family estate, which was on the verge of bankruptcy, and was willing to sell the ancestral home to resolve the immediate predicament.

Since ancient times, there has been a saying: "A place cannot emerge as a town without natives of Huizhou." She County, located in Huizhou, has a hemp textile industry in the Tang Dynasty; in the Song Dynasty, a newly added silk weaving industry. In the Yuan Dynasty, Hui City established a dyeing and weaving bureau; in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Huizhou cloth merchants established operations throughout Jiangnan and Suzhou. Therefore, Feng Wenzheng, who was born in She County, Huizhou, and has been engaged in the silk weaving business for generations, naturally has an indelible feeling for silk weaving. As a family descendant engaged in business for generations, he brings a unique business approach and a spirit of innovation and self-improvement. *According to the Ming-Qing era literary sketches, it was a local custom in Huizhou that, upon reaching sixteen, a person had to leave home to learn a trade* (Ai, 2001). It demonstrates that Huizhou people cultivate a business mindset in their descendants from a young age. Feng Wenzheng, having received Western-style schooling, possessed a broader perspective on business management. He excelled at seamlessly integrating traditional commercial practices with Western knowledge.

The decline of Huizhou merchants began in the late Qing Dynasty. On the one hand, the Qing government introduced new regulations that broke the long-standing salt merchants' monopoly. On the other hand, the establishment of treaty ports along China's coast after the Opium War allowed Western industrial goods to flood the Chinese market. *The businesses operated by Huizhou merchants struggled to compete with Western imports. Not only were native banks no match for foreign banks, but other industries, such as textiles, also struggled against machine-manufactured goods marketed by foreign firms* (Li, 1982). Under the combined weight of these factors, even the silk weaving industry in She County was significantly affected. Amidst this decline, Feng Wenzheng dedicated himself to establishing a modern factory. His efforts aimed to revive his family's enterprise and ultimately rewrote the fate of She County's textile industry.

2.2 The relevant definition of Feng Wenzheng 's historical period

The previous legend of Feng Mansion, an ancient residence of Huizhou, dates to the late Qing Dynasty (1840-1912). During this period, domestic troubles and foreign invasion, frequent wars, and the flooding of the domestic market with foreign goods gradually led to the replacement of some domestic industries by foreign capital. It was difficult for Huizhou merchants to survive, and they eventually declined. Guided by the bourgeois reformers of the Westernization Movement, China was swept up in a wave of early modernization. In the late Qing Dynasty, the Western industry, civilization, science, and technology began to affect the country. The introduction of large amounts of Western knowledge changed the clothing, food, shelter, and means of travel for Chinese people, and some of them failed due to the influence of the business family.

In the realm of culture and education, a significant cohort of new-school intellectuals began advocating for reform and national strengthening. They promoted Westernization and the advancement of Western science. Subsequently, the

School of Combined Learning was established in 1862. *The school was the first Western-style school established in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty to implement a class teaching system* (Bi et al., 2023).

The late Qing Dynasty was an era of hybridity of Eastern and Western civilizations. Feng Wenzheng 's elderly gentleman, Grandpa Feng, was engaged in business in Anhui. The keenness of people in business gave him insight into the current situation, and he was sent to Western-style schools to study business. Against this backdrop, Feng Wenzheng was willing to sell his ancestral home to raise funds to improve the silk looms, paving the way for the subsequent commercial war with foreigners. It can be seen that the time when Feng Wen sold his ancestral house in the play was finally determined to be from 1862 to 1912, that is, the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China.

3. The textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's clothing style and color

3.1 Textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's clothing style

Around the middle of the 19th century, communication between China and the West gradually became more frequent. The country continuously established trade ports and engaged in foreign trade. Western cultural ideas were introduced into China through diverse media, which promoted the gradual evolution and expansion of Western learning. After the Opium War in 1840, this "Western wind " grew stronger, and the Qing government gradually began to introduce Western education. *Since China's emphasis on Western learning, the School of Combined Learning, the Fuzhou Western Learning School, and the Shanghai Guang Dialect School have all expanded Chinese and Western teaching* (Chen, 1898). Among the schools that introduced Western learning, the School of Combined Learning was the first government-run comprehensive educational institution in the late Qing Dynasty to integrate foreign-language instruction, translation of Western books, and teaching of scientific knowledge. It belonged to the Prime Minister's Office and was incorporated into the Imperial University of Peking after 40 years of existence, setting an innovative model for China's educational reform.

As Western cultural ideas gradually permeated Chinese society, their influence on traditional Chinese costume became increasingly significant. *In the late Qing Dynasty, the long robe style became simpler, with a more fitted cut, and some robes occasionally featured mandarin collars* (Bao, 2008). Men's attire in the late Qing Dynasty included long robes, shirts, waistcoats, Mandarin jackets, short jackets, overcoats, trousers, and more. *The typical way of dressing was to wear a shirt and trousers underneath, with a long robe and a waistcoat or Mandarin jacket worn over them* (Lu, 2009).

Among the precious historical records preserved at the School of Combined Learning are photographs that directly illustrate the appearance of the clothing. Figure 1 shows a group photo of Li Shanlan, the Chief Instructor of Astronomy and Mathematics, and his students taken in front of the classroom. The sixteen students are standing in staggered rows, which obscure the figures in the back row, making it impossible to identify their clothing details accurately. However, by observing the students in the front row whose clothing was fully visible, two primary styles of attire were evident. The first was a combination of a waistcoat and a long robe. In the old photograph, the waistcoat extends past the hips, features a mandarin collar and a straight silhouette, and has a right-placket front; it is worn over a long robe that reaches just above the ankles, with trousers worn below. The second style consisted of a long robe paired with a mandarin jacket. The jacket typically reached just below the hips, though some versions extended to the hips; it featured a mandarin collar with a right-placket front or a mandarin collar with a double-placket front. It was worn over a long robe identical to the one in the first style, with trousers at the bottom.

In 1897, China organized a group of students to travel to the United States to attend the World Student Christian Federation. It can be seen from the remaining photos (Figure 2) that the dress of the Chinese student representative is the same as the first type of dress in the photos of the teachers and students of the School of Combined Learning, that is, the waistcoats are matched with the robe, and the bottom is dressed in trousers.

The waistcoat of the Qing Dynasty, also known as a vest, is a sleeveless, tight-fitting garment. In the Qing Dynasty, the waistcoat was highly refined in its materials and craftsmanship, and patterns changed frequently. The waistcoats can be divided into symmetrical placket, pipa-style placket, horizontal-stroke placket, and stroke-and-curve placket. The waistcoat was originally collarless, and the stand collar was a feature of Han-style cloth. In the late Qing Dynasty, the mandarin collar appeared on the waistcoat. *The baturu waistcoat is popular in the capital. Its style resembles the southern horizontal-stroke waistcoat, featuring a placket with row buttons on the front and buttons under the arms on both sides.* (Dai and Lu, 1998). The blue satin embroidered tile-shaped waistcoat of the Manchu Lake in the Qing Dynasty (Figure 3), collected by the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, and the bean-sand flower-patterned silk vest (Figure 4) collected by the China National Silk Museum are standard baturu waistcoats, that is, horizontal-stroke waistcoats.

Before the Opium War, the long robe of the Qing Dynasty was popular for its loose-fitting bodies and sleeves. After the Opium War, under the influence of Western learning, the body and sleeves gradually became more fitted, with

a round or collarless collar. Until the late Qing Dynasty, the mandarin collar slowly appeared. Figure 5 is a scene taken from 1890 to 1920. A student is standing on the bridge, and many students are sitting on the railings and benches. All of them are wearing mandarin collar robes or collarless robes with a right placket. The robes fit well and reach up to the ankles. The cuffs are narrow and flat.

Founded on August 16, 1909, Picture Daily recorded the life scenes of the late Qing Dynasty through a combination of manual painting and textual description. The figure shows the back of the man's whole body. The man wears a straight-style robe with a slit opening; the cuff is flat-sleeved; and the robe is worn with pants (Figure 6). The handed-down object from the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, men's round-collar, narrow-sleeved robes (Figure 7) in the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology Museum, is consistent with the characteristics of the old photos and pictorials. The modeling characteristics of breaking the middle seam provide a reference for Feng Wenzheng's attire style.



Figure 1. Students of Li Shanlan (a sit-in) and the Imperial College of Astronomy and Arithmetic. Source: John Thomson, "Illustrations of China and Its People"



Figure 2. Chinese students went to America in 1897. Source: Beijing Daily's "Old Beijing Pictures"



Figure 3. The blue satin embroidered tile-shaped baturu waistcoat of Manchu Lake in the Qing Dynasty. Source: Cultural Palace of Nationalities



Figure 4. A bean sand flower pattern silk vest in the Qing Dynasty. Source: China National Silk Museum



Figure 5. Chinese students from 1890 to 1920. Source: "Morizon's Chinese Archives Collection", New South Wales State Library Collection



Figure 6. The Superstitious Saying ' part. Source: Late Qing Dynasty News Pictorial Collection



Figure 7. Late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, snow-cyan jacquard male gown. Source: Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology Museum

After the British photographer John Thomson arrived in China in 1867, he recorded numerous local customs and geographical features. The building in the background of the photo of Jiujiang Wharf is the real estate of Russell & Co. Russell & Co was the most famous American-funded company in the Far East in the 19th century. In 1862, the second year of the opening of Jiujiang and Wuhan, Russell & Co. opened up China's first shipping company, the Shanghai Steam Navigation Co. In the figure, the two stewards are civilians dressed in mandarin jackets, trousers, and cloth shoes, and the workers behind them are similarly dressed (Figure 8). The pants worn in the Qing Dynasty were mostly crotch pants. Crotch pants are available in waist- and body-type models. The main features are crotch, high waist, leg hypertrophy, and a wide waist (Figure 9). *According to the season, there are single, clip, and cotton* (Zhang and Zhao, 2014).

Feng Wenzheng, an ancient Huizhou resident, was a Huizhou merchant in the late Qing Dynasty and had received a Western education. Combined with the literature, the old photos of the School of Combined Learning, the museum collections, and the works of photographer John Thomson, it can be seen that from 1862 to 1909, men wore long robes, pants, outer waistcoats, mandarin jackets, and so on. Therefore, Feng Wenzheng's attire can be worn as an inner shirt with a right placket and a long robe with a mandarin collar. The robe is straight-cut, reaching above the ankle. It features slits at the side seams, and the sleeves are flat, extending to the wrist. It is paired with a waistcoat featuring a mandarin collar, a horizontal-stroke placket, and a horizontal-stroke front placket with row buttons. The placket has two pairs of row buttons on each side. The waistcoat extends to the abdomen, with patchwork and edging. It also features slits at the side seams and two decorative row buttons sewn on the right side. Wear the crotch pants.



Figure 8. Jiujiang Wharf Local. Source: John Thomson, "Illustrations of China and Its People"



Figure 9. Blue linen pants in the Qing Dynasty. Source: China National Silk Museum

3.2 Textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's clothing color

At the time of the Qing Dynasty, the hierarchy of clothing color reached its peak, and the class was the highest (Zhou et al., 2022). The colors of clothing in the Qing Dynasty were relatively rich. Based on differences in identity levels, national color preferences, regional aesthetic preferences, social fashion, and other factors, different colors are popular at different times. In the early Qing Dynasty, blue was popular, and people took it light and bright, so sky blue, treasure blue, and other colors were loved, and even influenced the palace courtyard. In the middle of the Qianlong period, rose purple was advocated, and people loved its "red fire", so red, true red, jujube red, pink, and so on became the preferred colors for men's, women's, and children's clothing. In the late years of Qianlong, Fu Kangan liked to wear dark crimson, and people competed to follow suit, a phenomenon known as "Fu color". "Fu " not only represents the crimson, but also contains the blessing. People are willing to use "Fu " to achieve happiness, so crimson is popular for a time. *At the end of the Jiaqing period, another color emerged, reflecting the darkness of crimson and pursuing bright, clean light gray, bright gray, silver gray, and other colors* (Dai and Lu, 1998). *During the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, under the influence of Western culture, other colors emerged through inheritance, such as olive green, grayish green, and dark purple, each with distinct characteristics* (Zhu and Zhu, 2022).

From the portraits of European merchants drawn by the Guangzhou art gallery in the late Qing Dynasty, it can be seen that the chair recommenders were dressed in gray-green robe with dark gray trousers; lotus sellers dressed in silver gray robe, white pants; selling posts with dark purple robe and yellow pants; sell Shandong snow pear paste personal dark purple robe, with white pants; the flower seller wears a yellow short coat with blue trousers, and the flower buyer wears a light red robe and gray green trousers (Figure 10). The costumes worn by characters in the late Qing Dynasty were diverse in color, including gray-green, silver-gray, dark purple, blue, orange, and light red.

According to the photos taken by Li Shanlan, the head teacher of astronomy and mathematics, and the students of

the School of Combined Learning (Figure 1) and the old photos taken by the representatives of Chinese students in the United States (Figure 2), intellectuals in the late Qing Dynasty preferred to wear light color robes with dark trousers, sometimes, it can be paired with outerwear such as mandarin jackets or waistcoats in contrasting or matching colors. In summary, the neutral color with implicit warmth is more suitable for the role setting of Feng Wenzheng, a Huizhou merchant. Therefore, the color of the role attire is: beige robes, a beige waistcoat with a patchwork gray-green waistcoat, and black pants.



Figure 10. Album of Figures from the Late Qing Dynasty. Source: Jean Theodore Royer Collection

4. The textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's clothing fabrics and patterns

4.1 Textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's clothing fabric

Since ancient times, China has been based on agriculture, and agriculture and mulberry are the foundation of the country; the Qing government is no exception. From the Shunzhi period onward, the Qing government encouraged mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing. *Emperor Kangxi often encouraged people to cultivate, promoted sericulture, and issued a series of decrees to support the textile industry* (Zhao et al., 2014). It promoted continuous innovation in the textile industry during the Qing Dynasty, building on the innovations of the previous dynasty. The silk industry in Jiangsu, Anhui, Guangdong, and other places developed, making the Qing Dynasty silk industry more abundant, including brocade, satin, silk, voile, Luo, crepe, and more.

The fabric has the following styles: such as brocade, there are brocade, Song brocade, Shu brocade, Hui Hui brocade, Zhuang brocade, etc.; satin has tribute satin, jacquard satin, copy satin, raccoon satin, big cloud satin, gold satin, Yin and Yang satin, etc.; Silk has Ning silk, palace, spinning, Chuanda silk, Lushan silk, Qu silk, Bian Silk, wrapped silk, water, Wanshou, etc.; Luo has Jinyinluo, Shuluo, Shengluo, Chunluo, Sansuoluo, Wusuoluo, Hualuo, Suluo, etc.; yarn has Ku voile, Guan voile, solid bottom voile, sesame voile, bright voile, straight voile, sunflower voile, Fu weaving voile, bun voile, crepe voile, etc. Crepe type wired crepe, flat crepe, lake crepe, crepe, east crepe, crepe, plain crepe, etc., satin type has slip, line satin, satin, plain satin, brocade satin, etc., silk type has flower silk, official Silk, basket silk, plain Silk, zhang silk, hua Silk, etc., which are dazzling and colorful (Wu, 1996).

The four categories of Song brocade of the Ming and Qing dynasties: double brocade, silk brocade, box brocade, and tiny brocade. The four types of Song brocade were determined according to refinement of technique, fabric quality, fabric thickness, and fabric function (Chen et al., 2020).

The dyeing history of ancient textiles in China originated in prehistoric times (Zhao et al., 2025). The cotton textile industry in the Qing Dynasty was more developed than that in the Ming Dynasty. The cotton textile industry gradually expanded, and cotton cloth was produced in many parts of the country. Among them, the cotton textile industry in the Susong area of Hebei and Shandong, south of the Yangtze River, was among the best. In the Kangxi period, Songjiang cloth in Jiangsu was famous nationwide. *The fine-line silk, three-cloth, lacquer voile, square towel, and cut-velvet blanket produced by Songjiang cloth are the first of their kind in the world* (Chen and Gu, 1512). The place is rich in cotton cloth; the names of the cloth are rich. There is kapok cloth, flying flower cloth, three-shuttle cloth, twill cloth, ant cloth, medicine spot cloth, purple cloth, silk cloth, willow cloth, flannelette, watering cloth, patchwork cloth, and so on.

Anhui Huizhou merchants are the main content of Huizhou culture, originating in the Tang and Song Dynasties and flourishing in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Among them, Huizhou She County is the hometown of tea silk, and the Feng Wenzheng family is engaged in the silk weaving industry. The silk fabric is more in line with Feng Wenzheng's role identity. The robe material should be selected for a gorgeous, understated plain tribute satin. The lining material and pants should be made from skin-friendly, comfortable cotton. The waistcoat should be selected in jacquard satin to enhance the overall character's image texture, which is more in line with Feng Wenzheng's role setting.

4.2 Textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng's clothing patterns

The Qing Dynasty was the last in China, and it was also an era of seclusion from the eastward spread of Western learning. Therefore, the development of silk fabric patterns in the Qing Dynasty was affected. In the early stages, the traditional styles of the Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties were continued. *In the design of the Qing Dynasty palace clothing pattern, was widely and skillfully used, creating a stylized composition of many flowers, presenting a visual image with uniform rhythm and uniform rhythm* (Chang, 2025). Gradually integrate the culture of multiple ethnic minorities in China, and then absorb Western culture. Under the influence of many factors, the Qing Dynasty pattern style is diverse. In general, the development of silk pattern style in the Qing Dynasty can be roughly divided into three periods: early, middle, and late. The style of each stage is consistent and unique, showing distinct characteristics of the times.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, influenced by Western culture, clothing patterns became simpler, and geometric patterns were used in men's and women's attire. For example, men's long robes fabrics are biased toward plain or dark flowers in spring and summer, and the choice of dark flowers generally follows a circular distribution of small geometric patterns (Figure 11). *In autumn and winter, plain and dark colors are most commonly used in fabrics. The dark flowers are mainly geometric patterns, and the fabric is mostly striped* (Yu, 2017).

The geometric patterns in the silk fabrics of the Qing Dynasty can be divided into two categories based on the form of composition and the presence of a skeleton. The one with a skeleton is a combined geometric pattern with a complex form and a variety of patterns. *The other is a relatively simple type without a skeleton, arranged in a four-party continuous manner by a separate pattern, such as a disc tape pattern, water ripple pattern, lock pattern, Wanzi pattern, Hui pattern, Fangsheng pattern, diamond pattern, etc* (Han and Zhang, 2016). Among them, the Wanzi symbolizes strength. In the Eastern Han Dynasty and later in the Liang, Tang, and other Buddhist dynasties, the Wanzi pattern was combined with local culture. *Because of the power of belief in each generation, the Wanzi pattern itself conveys the symbolic meaning of auspicious blessings* (Zheng and Liu, 2023). And then, during the Qing Dynasty, there were also related descriptions of the Wanzi pattern in literary works.

As a descendant of Huizhou merchants, Feng Wenzheng received a Western education and was introverted and unassuming. He did things low-key but boldly, and dared to reform, innovate, and change the fate of the present people. Combined with the literature, the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology Museum collection, the Shanghai Museum collection, and the China National Silk Museum collection, it can be seen that Feng Wenzheng, who was in the late Qing Dynasty, favored dark patterns, and the Wanzi Qushui pattern (Figure 12) was selected as the fabric pattern. The

Wanzi pattern adopts a shape of deformation and innovation, forming the Qushui pattern through two-party continuous superposition. The first is in line with the family's economic strength, whose main business is commerce; the second, to fit Feng Wenzheng's modest style; and the third, to reflect Feng Wenzheng's spirit of innovation.



Figure 11. Gray geometric jacquard silk round-necked robe in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China. Source: Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology Museum

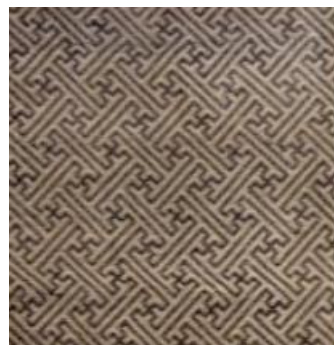


Figure 12. Double-layer brocade with black and white swastika pattern in the late Qing Dynasty. Source: Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology Museum

5. The textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's headwear and footwear

5.1 Textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng 's headwear

The hat of the Qing Dynasty is the most complicated part of the Manchu clothing system(Li et al., 2023).The formation and evolution of men's hairstyles in the Qing Dynasty were inseparable from the conflict between Manchu and Han cultures. They were shaped by the game of political power and the integration of social customs. In the second year of Shunzhi's reign (1645), after the Qing soldiers marched into the south of the Yangtze River, Dorgon issued the Change Manchu hairstyle order again, seeking to establish the dominant position of Manchu system culture in the Central Plains by high-handed means. On June 5, it was stipulated that: " Everywhere, the military and civilians, as far as possible to shave, if not, to military law. " Therefore, in the Qing Dynasty, the hair was shaved and braided. "Album of Figures from the Late Qing Dynasty" depicted people shaving their heads (Figure 13), leaving only a long braid at the back.

British photographer John Thomson took one of the photos that preserved the appearance of the streets in the late Qing Dynasty. It is described as: on the far left is Ah Hong, a soup vendor who spends his every day on the street. In the middle is the gentleman who wrote the letter, next to the mobile barber and the car carpenter. The barber is removing the hair around the barber (Figure 14). In the image data of the characters shown above, there is also braided hair. Shaving the head is a Manchu custom. *Men shave a circle of hair around the top of their heads, leaving only the hair at the top, which is braided into a plait and hung behind their backs. Except during family funerals and national funerals, when it is not allowed to shave for 100 days, the surrounding hair cannot be allowed to grow long* (Chen, 2009). By

1912, with the establishment of the Republic of China and the promulgation of the "Braid Cutting Order," the Qing Dynasty's braid hairstyle was finally abolished. It can be seen that men in the Qing Dynasty wore "Manchu braids".



Figure 13. Album of Figures from the Late Qing Dynasty: Shaving. Source: Jean Theodore Royer Collection



Figure 14. Street vendor, Jiujiang. Source: John Thomson, "Illustrations of China and Its People"

In the late Qing Dynasty, men's hats were roughly divided into top hats and caps, as well as those for different statuses. The hats were divided into warm and cool, with most being skullcaps. The skullcap follows the "Six-in-One Unity" cap of the Ming Dynasty, which carries strong political implications regarding the unification of the world. The skullcap is divided into flat-top and sharp-top varieties. The material is light, comfortable, and breathable, making it suitable for daily wear. *The Ming Dynasty's skullcap is taller, with a depression between the six petals; the small hats of the Qing Dynasty were shorter, with no depression between the six petals, and there was no difference except for the semi-circular body* (Gao, 2001). Skullcap, then a crown also. *The spring and winter wearer, with satin for it; the summer and autumn wearer, with the voile, the color is black* (Xu, 1928). The Qing Dynasty "Six-in-One Unity" skullcap style is simple, with little decoration (Figure 2).

Figure 14 is a Chinese street scene photographed by John Thomson in Jiujiang. The people in the photo wore hats such as warm hats and skullcaps according to their own preferences. Founded in 1842, the Illustrated London News extensively uses woodcuts and prints to record facts. In 1873, the Illustrated London News depicted students taking the exam at Beijing's exam venue. The students were wearing skullcaps and mandarin collared robes to concentrate on the exam (Figure 15).

Li Fang was a Chinese photographer in the late Qing Dynasty. The Huafang Imaging Building, founded by Li Fang, is located on Queen's Road in Hong Kong. It is one of the earliest photo studios in Hong Kong. Li Fang is also known as one of the most important Chinese photographers of the 19th century. His photography studio began operating in 1859, and his son later inherited his business. He continued to operate for 82 years before closing in 1941. From Li Fang's portrait, it can be observed that the skullcap on her head is made of the same fabric as her clothes

(Figure 16). It can thus be concluded that the fabric used for the skullcap in the late Qing Dynasty was similar to, or identical with, that used for clothing at the time.

From the latter half of the 19th century to the early 20th century, the standard hairstyle for men in the Qing Dynasty was the Manchu braids, and the skullcap was the most common headwear. Whether merchants, students, or laborers, all wore this hat; therefore, Feng Wenzheng's hairstyle is styled as a Manchu braids, his headwear features a "Six-in-One Unity" skullcap, and the fabric used for the hat matches that of his clothing, with its color echoing one of the colors in his outfit, creating a harmonious overall ensemble that aligns with the late Qing Dynasty men's dress code.

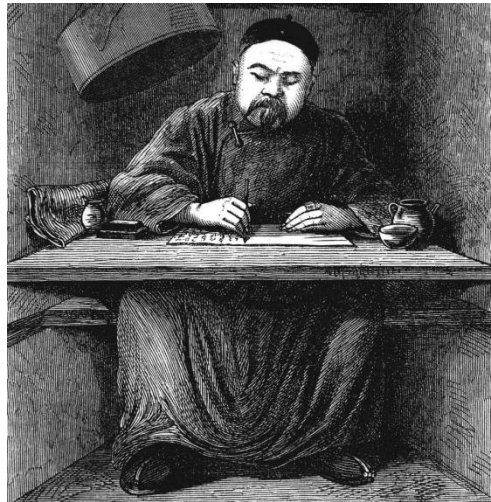


Figure 15. Illustration of 'London News Illustrated' in 1873. Source: Illustrated London News.



Figure 16. Li Fang. Source: 'Li Fang Chinese Photography Collection' National Gallery of Scotland Collection

5.2 Textual research and analysis of Feng Wenzheng's footwear

The shoes worn by men in the Qing Dynasty exhibited diverse characteristics in materials, shapes, and social functions. They were influenced not only by the Manchu traditional costume system but also by the practical needs of the Han people. The shoes were divided into three categories: official boots, civilian daily shoes, and special-purpose shoes. In the late Qing Dynasty, a large number of Western textiles and leather shoes entered the Chinese market. In the collision of Chinese and Western cultures, new ideas emerged in an endless stream, transforming attire in the late Qing Dynasty.

The rich or the official can wear black satin (velvet) shoes, while the poor and the soldiers can only wear black cloth shoes, such as double-beam shoes, also known as multi-face shoes, which are commonly worn by ordinary men (Figure 17). *The front face of the shoe is inlaid with two black strips, and the tip protrudes beyond the sole. The side view is like a boat, with a thick bottom and a thin bottom* (Ye, 2011). Boden Krauss's collection of photos of Chinese couples in 1900, in which men wear traditional costumes of men in the late Qing Dynasty, general civilian shoes on their feet, and light-colored socks (Figure 18). According to historical records and old photos from the Qing Dynasty,

from 1861 to 1900, civilian men's footwear was cloth shoes, with styles including double-beam and ordinary. Therefore, Feng Wenzheng 's role in the play used ordinary cloth shoes and white socks, which were in line with Feng Wenzheng 's status.



Figure 17. Photographs of shopkeepers and their families in Guangdong from 1861 to 1864. Source: Clark Worswick, Jonathan Spence. *Imperial China: Photographs 1850-1912*, New York: Pennwick Publishing, 1978. p. 94.



Figure 18. A Chinese couple in 1900. Source: Boden-Kloss Collection

6. The overall presentation of Feng Wenzheng 's clothing image design

As a new generation of Huizhou merchants in the late Qing Dynasty, Feng Wenzheng's characterization reveals a characteristic cultural complexity. He not only inherits the traditional spirit of Huizhou merchants, but also receives a systematic Western education. When the family's silk industry was hit hard, he resolutely sold his ancestors' property to buy silk looms. This choice not only reversed the decline of the family business but also provided an important opportunity to promote technological innovation in the modern Chinese silk industry.

The overall costume design for Feng Wenzheng is based on a cross-referenced analysis of late Qing dynasty historical texts, documentary paintings, and historical photographs. It recreates the character's appearance in accordance with the plot and Feng Wenzheng's personality traits (Figure 19). For costume design, a light-brown skullcap is worn, with a cotton shirt underneath. An outer layer consists of a right-placket beige mandarin collar robe made of satin, and a gray-green contrasting Wanzi-pattern jacquard satin baturu waistcoat is worn over it. Black cotton pants are paired with ordinary cloth shoes. The skullcap continued the shape of the "Six-in-One Unity" in the Ming Dynasty. The right placket robes maintained the tradition of Han costumes, while the Baturu waistcoat originated from Manchu riding and shooting costumes. The overall image reproduces the multiple integration of costume culture in the late Qing Dynasty.

In terms of color matching, the whole is dominated by neutral colors such as beige and light brown, supplemented by a gray-green color scheme that not only aligns with the gentleman's implicit aesthetics but also, through the waistcoat's color palette, embodies the characters' innovative spirit. In terms of fabric selection, tribute satin and jacquard satin were used to highlight the economic strength of the merchant, while cotton shirts and crotch trousers continued the simple style of Huizhou merchants.

Consequently, Feng Wenzheng's overall costume design not only captures the distinctive characteristics of late Qing-era merchants from Huizhou. But also, through subtle details in the attire, it portrays the cultural dilemma faced by intellectuals who had received a modern education as they navigated the tension between tradition and modernity. The layered costume structure aptly symbolizes the complex mental state of late Qing intellectuals amid the clash between Chinese and Western cultures, achieving a harmonious balance between historical authenticity and artistic expression.



Figure 19. Feng Wenzheng 's costume modeling stage presentation

7. Summary

Costume culture, as a material embodiment of historical evolution, employs stitch as pen and textile as canvas to chronicle the convergence trajectories of diverse civilizations. Among them, the Qing Dynasty costume system formed a unique cross-cultural aesthetic system through the collision between the traditional shape of the Han nationality and the Manchu riding and shooting elements, and the infiltration of Western industrial civilization in the late Qing Dynasty, which not only carried the wisdom of national survival, but also reflected the pain of social transformation. The imprint of this cultural blending can be visualized in film and television creation. The play "National Treasure · Season 4", based on the narrative background of Huizhou architecture in the late Qing Dynasty, "The Feng Residence: A Legend of the Past", through the core event of Feng Wenzheng, a descendant of Huizhou merchants, to resolve the family crisis and sell ancestral homes, relying on literature archives, old photos and pictorial images of the late Qing Dynasty, the costume shape, color matching, fabric patterns and even the details of the first dress of male characters are rigorously restored. Naked-eye 3D and virtual technologies are used to present the architectural space and costume symbols to the audience, thereby forming the social appearance of the late Qing Dynasty.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Author's Contributions

Conceptualization: H.J., C.Z.; Methodology: H.J.; Investigation: H.J.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: H.J.; Writing—Review & Editing: C.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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