HAN CLOTHING (HANFU) || 汉服

HANFU – HAN CHINESE CLOTHING – IS THE CLOTHING OF THE HAN ETHNIC PEOPLE THAT WAS WORN FOR MILLENNIA BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE QING DYNASTY IN 1644 BY THE MANCHURIANS.

HISTORY OF THE HANFU

The earliest hanfu were developed during the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC-1046 BC), making the hanfu more than three millennia old. During the rule of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC – 771 BC), the rudimentary design underwent changes, such become looser and wider. Furthermore, as clothing became more and more an important symbol of the wearer’s social status, the hanfu became more varied in its degree of ornamentation as well as its length.

Hanfu became adopted into part of the palace officials’ wardrobes during the Liao Dynasty (916 AD – 1125 AD). The Han ethnic people continued to wear the hanfu through the Ming Dynasty, until the Manchurians enforced their culture. It is the Qing Dynasty that brought the advent of the qipao, and changshan, which are what are now associated with Chinese traditional clothing. Today, hanfu are only worn at special traditional ceremonies.

A woman wearing a quju (曲裾), the women’s form of a shenyi (深衣), which was considered informal wear, and a man wearing a zhiju (直裾), the man’s form of a shenyi, and a soft cap called a jin (巾)

HANFU STYLE

Hanfu is not one single piece of clothing. Rather, it is a style of clothing that consisted of various garments, headwear, shoes, and an array of different ornaments. The general outfit was constructed from long, full-body garments, shorter shirt-like garments, skirts, and/or pants. Men wore hats to signify their profession as well as to accommodate the formality of situations. Women often combed their hair in various coils and buns and adorned themselves with pearls, flowers, and other hairpieces.

Hanfu also includes formal garments that are worn only during Confucian rituals or by certain people, such as officials or the emperor. These include the full dress ceremonial robes of Taoist and Buddhist priests, the daopao (道袍) and fusha (佛裟). The most formal clothing that civilians could wear is the xuanduan (玄端), a dark robe that is appropriate only for Chinese “white tie” events, such as meeting the emperor or attending important religious events.

Children wearing hanfu at a Chinese festival
**SIHEYUAN LITERALLY MEANS A COURTYARD SURROUNDED BY FOUR BUILDINGS; IT WAS THE BASIC PATTERN FOR ALMOST ALL ANCIENT BUILDINGS IN CHINESE HISTORY, FROM HOMES, TO MONASTERIES, TO GOVERNMENT OFFICES.**

**THE STORY OF THE SIHEYUAN**

Like *hanfu*, *siheyuan* have been a part of Chinese life for millennia. Dating back to the Western Zhou period (1046 BC – 771 BC), the *siheyuan* are present all over China and serve as the foundation for most Chinese architectural styles.

The *siheyuan* has become a culture symbol for Beijing as the city struggles between creating housings for its burgeoning population while maintaining its ancient culture and architectural treasures.

**THE LAYOUT OF THE SIHEYUAN**

The four buildings of the *siheyuan* are aligned with the four directions – north-south and east-west. The building facing the south is considered the main house while the two buildings on the east and west are the “side houses” and the building facing the north is the “opposite house.” The four buildings are connected by beautifully decorated sheltered pathways. The gate, usually painted vermilion with copper door knockers, resided in the southeastern corner of the courtyard, outside of which a pair of stone lions guarded the entrance. Such a layout corresponded to the traditional Chinese beliefs of *feng shui*, a system of rules governing spatial arrangement to maximize the flow of *qi*, energy.

Each of the buildings in the *siheyuan* served a different purpose. The head of the family would sleep in the main house and his children or lesser members of the family would reside in the side houses. The “opposite house” was reserved for receiving guests, housing the servants, or as a gathering place for the family.

The *siheyuan* is an extremely practically sound structure that defies and optimizes weather well. In areas across the country, the people would alter different components to adapt to their surroundings.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**PLAYGROUP**

BU-Dumpling Playgroups are for adopted Chinese children (ages 4-9) and their families. Through activities such as stories, crafts, and cooking, these children are exposed to Chinese culture and their families have a way to connect and network.

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center:
38 Ash St, Boston, MA 02111

Mar 10, Mar 31, Apr 28; 10:30am – noon

**ABOUT US**

MIT China Care (MITCC) and Boston University China Care Fund (BUCCF) are student-run organizations dedicated to creating life changing opportunities for Chinese orphans and locally adopted Chinese children.

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