

SNAPSHOTS



From left: A woman in a miniskirt in Dalian, Northeast China's Liaoning province (1991); A Yao ethnic boy from Tianlin county, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, shows off his suit (1986); Red dresses were a fad among young women in the 1980s (1986); Tang suits were a common scene during the Spring Festival (2002). PHOTOS BY XINHUA



On March 19, 1979, French fashion designer Pierre Cardin held a fashion show at the Beijing National Culture Palace.

DRESSING UP AND LOOKING GOOD

By ZHANG LEI

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening-up process. From 1978 to 2018, China has witnessed many changes and experienced great success across generations.

Clothing is like the external skin of human beings, and it is also the most intuitive visual experience. So, dress often directly reflects the current political and economic conditions and culture.

Before reform and opening-up, blue, black, gray and green were the "main melody" of Chinese clothes.

But on March 19, 1979, iconic French fashion designer Pierre Cardin held a fashion show at the Beijing National Culture Palace, which opened the eyes of the Chinese people to different manners of dress.

Soon, the 1970s green uniforms, tunic suits and overalls were replaced by flared pants, body-building wear and stylish shirts. In the 1990s, international clothing brands began to enter China, and people got bolder in their choices.

Now, this year's popular styles may be outdated in just a year.

Reform and opening-up has made people bolder when it comes to their sartorial choices



Fashionably dressed people take selfies in Beijing this year. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

And in the new century, dress has gradually become a way for people to express themselves. The dressing mentality of "as long as I like it, there is nothing wrong with it" is being accepted by more people.

In the past, many were afraid to dress differently from others. Later, people became afraid to dress like others.

Current society is more tolerant, and people are showing more individuality.

Clothing is the weather vane of culture, and the history of Chinese clothing is the history of Chinese culture.

There were not many choices in dress in past decades. But nowadays, all kinds of costumes flash before our eyes. And they can be selected online without leaving the house.

The change in clothing styles in the past 40 years of reform and opening-up vividly demonstrates the characteristics of the times.

Although there are different fashions in vogue at different stages, a constant is the pursuit of beauty. Reform and opening-up presented an opportunity for Chinese to integrate with the world, not only with regard to clothing but also in the deep-seated pursuit of beauty and self-expression.