

The subject of this bachelor's thesis is the qipao 旗袍 – the female "national apparel" that has spread in China during the Republic of China and has become both an important part of contemporary fashion and a subject of political criticism. The main sources used are articles in contemporary magazines including illustrations, and pictorial material published in secondary literature. The first part of the thesis focuses on the history of qipao and the description of changes of its particular visual form. The second part is devoted to the analysis of the meanings associated with this new clothing style. The main aspects I focus on are: modernity, national identity, relationship to tradition and to the West, a new definition of femininity and the role of women in Chinese society. The last chapter is devoted to the topic of political interference with the way of women's dress, especially in the context of the New Life Movement (1934-37).