

The Spread of “New Hanfu Culture”:

A Study of Hanfu Academic Dress on Xiaohongshu

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Abstract

In the era of traditional Chinese cultural revival, Hanfu culture, which has gained popularity on social media, is increasingly sought after by Chinese youth. This paper examines the intricate and complementary relationship between the rise of Hanfu Academic Dress—a new type of attire that combines Western academic dress with Chinese Hanfu culture—and the patriotic fashion tastes of Chinese youth. Utilizing textual analysis and supplemented by semi-structured interviews, this study explores the performance and deep cultural connotations of Hanfu Academic Dress as a New Hanfu Cultural (NHC) phenomenon within a new communication context, based on the Chinese lifestyle social media platform Xiaohongshu. By integrating the theory of the triple path of ‘Maintaining Circle, Breaking Circle, Expanding Circle’ within the new era’s communication context, this paper not only explains the communication dynamics of NHC in contemporary society but also offers new perspectives on the development of popular and youth culture within the context of localization. As a process of ‘Breaking Circle’ from niche culture to mainstream culture, NHC exemplifies the strong adaptability and vitality of traditional cultural symbols, reflects the increasing cultural centripetal force and cohesion of contemporary society, and provides insights for promoting the sustainable development of traditional culture in the years to come.

Keywords: New Hanfu Culture, Academic Dress, Xiaohongshu, Breaking Circle