

孪生姊妹

· 赵 缨 ·

为陈香梅缝旗袍

深秋的一个傍晚，一对从事服装行业的孪生姊妹逛街逛到了电影院门口。电影院内正在放映电影《花样年华》，当姊妹俩看到影院门口那张电影海报时，顿时被《花样年华》中张曼玉身上的那袭旗袍吸引住了。她们以职业的眼光打量着那袭旗袍，两人兴致勃勃地议论起那袭旗袍的式样、布料、光泽以及种种的美丽。议着议着，姊妹俩顿时产生开家旗袍店为众姊妹缝制美丽旗袍的念头。

孪生姊妹叶建英和叶丽英，出生于浙江省杭州郊区。外婆是个有名的“缝纫婆”，两姊妹受到外婆的熏陶，从小就喜欢跟着外婆裁裁剪剪，到了15岁便能缝衣裤、做盘扣、绣花样，有了一手好手艺，20岁以后，双胞胎便合开起一家服装店。此际，张曼玉身穿的那袭旗袍刮起一股“旗袍风”，这对双胞胎抓住机会，筹划开一家旗袍店。

旗袍店开张之后，第一位女顾客穿上孪生姊妹做的旗袍，感到十分满意，觉得无论从哪个角度看，这袭旗袍都能将她高挑的身材、优美的曲线更好地衬托出来，使她显得更加俏丽秀美。姊妹俩第一件旗袍的缝制成功，为她们开的旗袍店做了生动的广告。姊妹俩旗袍店顿时红火起来，门庭若市。没多久，更是名扬杭城，孪生姊妹成了杭城旗袍界的领军人物。

2001年5月一个阳光明媚的日子，一个曾在这家孪生姊妹旗袍店里做过旗袍的浙江女篮运动员，陪着一个个子更为高大的女运动员进来，姊妹俩定睛一看，呀，这不是大名鼎鼎的郑海霞么！姊妹俩又激动又高兴，赶忙搬来凳子，高高地站在凳子上替像座山似的郑海霞量尺寸。量完尺寸，姊妹俩忽然想到要和郑海霞合影。郑海霞爽朗地笑了，她说：“可以！不过要到我穿上你们做的衣服之后。”

郑海霞在杭州只能停留3天，姊妹俩用了2.5米布料，连夜为她赶制中装。第二天上午，郑海霞笑呵呵地来了，穿上了姊妹俩为她赶制的中装，便和她们合影。郑海霞实在太太高了，双胞胎站在她的身边，就像体育老师带着两个小学生立在操场上一一般，直引得旁人笑个不停。

2001年10月杭州举办第二届西湖博览会，会上有一场“旗袍秀”，西博会组委会要姊妹俩为模特做旗袍。这是一场向中外友人展示杭州丝绸和旗袍工艺的精彩表演。两姊妹为众模特精心设计和缝制了36套不同款式的旗袍，模特儿穿上这批旗袍上场表演，使在场的中外观众赞叹不绝。

西博会引来高朋满座，国际知名人士陈香梅也来到杭州。陈香梅非常喜欢杭州丝绸，她想用杭州丝绸做一套旗袍。她的心愿在浙江媒体披露之后，这对孪生姊妹自然是替陈香梅度身缝

制旗袍的首选目标。两姊妹忙着为陈香梅量体裁衣，忙了一个通宵，终于在第二天清晨为陈香梅缝制了一袭雅致而时尚的旗袍。陈香梅接过旗袍，欣喜之情自不待说。几天后，这对孪生姊妹收到了陈香梅从美国寄来的一封感谢信，感谢两姊妹为她缝制了一件得体而又典雅的旗袍，信中写道：

建英、丽英女士：

万分感谢您的盛情招待，使我们在杭州过了一个非常愉快的旅程，也多了解了浙江省的概况，并看到了浙江各方面的进步。我们现在已回美国华盛顿。在中国度过了近六个星期，看到祖国近年来惊人的发展，无限感慰。再次致谢，后会有期，并欢迎台端有机会访美，我们将尽地主之谊。谨祝

康乐

特别感谢你们俩为我作的旗袍

陈香梅

2001年11月5日



姊妹俩与陈香梅合影

Twin Seamstresses with Anna Chan Chennault

陈香梅(左)在杭州楼外楼
Anna Chan Chennault at Louwailou Restaurant



Twin Sisters ' Business of Qipao

By Zhao Ying

Ye Jianying and Ye Liying are twin sisters. It was purely an accident that they got their inspiration for starting a Qipao* business in Hangzhou. One autumn evening after their business closed, they were doing window-shopping in downtown Hangzhou. They stopped in front of a movie poster for In a Mood for Love. The poster featured the leading lady Maggie Cheung in an elegant Qipao. The twin were fascinated there and then. Standing in front of the prototype of the Qipao, they studied its style, fabric, luster, and discussed possible colors, patterns, and materials they would use to make Qipaos. The idea of starting a Qipao business took shape in their minds in front of the movie poster.

It might have been accidental to have some instant inspiration for a business, but it is by no means an accident that the twin sisters have turned the business into a huge success. Born in the suburbs of Hangzhou, the twin sisters have a grandmother who used to be a locally famed seamstress. They learned the art of tailoring from the grandmother when they were still very young. At the age of 15 they became experienced tailors themselves. The twin started their own tailor shop in their 20s. When the Qipao was making a comeback and became a new rage in China as Maggie Cheung stylized the traditional fashion in the hit film, the twin sisters caught on and their business took off.

With their superb mastery of traditional tailoring skills, the sisters make perfect Qipaos. The first Qipao they made for a young lady was a success. It brought out all the glamorous contours of the slender body, making the customer look more charming. The first Qipao they made became something like a walking advertisement. Orders snowballed and before long, the twin's shop became a leading Qipao business in the town.

A popular business often attracts unusual customers. The twin's tailor shop is no exception. A bright day in May 2001, a

basketball player who had a Qipao tailor-made in the shop accompanied a giant woman to the shop. The twin tailors were astonished to see the huge woman. It was no other than Zheng Haixia, a famous player on the national basketball team. Excited, the sisters stood on chairs to take her measure. After Zheng placed the order, the twin sisters wanted to have a picture taken with the player. Zheng laughed, "Okay, okay, but only after I put on the new dress!" Zheng Haixia planned to stay in Hangzhou only for three days. In order to make a traditional Chinese garment for the player, they bought 2.5 meters of fabric and worked overnight. At noon next day, Zheng arrived. With all the smiles on her face, the player happily put on her new dress. Facing the camera, the twins stood beside the tall woman like two primary school kids with their sports teacher on the sports ground. Onlookers all laughed over the striking contrast of their sizes.

In October 2001, Hangzhou was to hold the second West Lake Expo. The organizing committee was to put on a Qipao fashion show and commissioned the twin Qipao masters to make 36 Qipaos of different styles. The fashion gala was to showcase Hangzhou's superior silk materials and the state-of-art Qipao making skills. The sisters worked hard. When models walked in these Qipaos, they caused a sensation.

The 2001 West Lake Expo attracted a great many guests both from home and abroad. One of the celebrities was Anna Chan Chennault. She likes Hangzhou's silk very much. While in Hangzhou, she wanted to have a Qipao made for her. When the local media disclosed her wish, the twin sisters were naturally picked out as her first tailors. They worked overnight and made a Qipao that was both exquisite and tasteful. Anna Chan Chennault was very pleased. Several days later, the twin sisters received her thank-you note from USA.

*Traditional Chinese gowns for women

(Translated by David)