

Study on the Evolution and Development of Baina Clothing to Shuitian Clothing in the Ming and Qing Dynasties*

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Abstract—Chinese people have taken saving as the virtue since ancient times. The poor people of the Ming and Qing Dynasties stitched pieces of cloth to make daily necessities by various methods. The optimistic people also gave the beautiful meaning of this kind of splicing clothes. The splicing clothes of monks is called "Baina clothing", which means the clothes are obtained from the common people's giving; the children's splicing clothes is called "Baijia clothing" ("Baijia" means a hundred of families), and wearing this kind of clothes stitched from cloths of different families can get everyone's blessings; adult splicing clothes also has a beautiful name, called "Shuitian clothing" ("Shuitian" means paddy field). This kind of clothing from the poor was also favored by the nobility at that time. It was popular in the upper class, but it has lost the essential meaning of "Shuitian clothing", just for the beautiful and deliberate stitching. The people of all walks of life in the Ming and Qing Dynasties used their unique aesthetics and wisdom to interpret the warmth of the costumes, re-giving the pieces of cloths to the beauty and auspiciousness, and living a poetic life in the poor days.

Keywords—"The Plum in the Golden Vase"; Baina clothing; Shuihe winter jacket; Baijia clothing; Shuitian clothing

I. INTRODUCTION

Most of the fashion trends of clothing are popular from the upper society to the lower society, and occasionally there would be reverse fashions. In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, this rare fashion phenomenon appeared. The "Shuitian clothing" popular among the poor was highly respected by the upper class, and then all walks of life were eager to follow suit and became a "fancy flower" in the history of Chinese clothing development. At first, the monks got a variety of useless cloths from the folk to make clothes called "Baina clothes", which is also known as kasaya. Women call this kind of cloth-stitched clothes "Shuitian clothing", and the children's stitching clothes are called "Baijia clothing". Even the men of the Ming Dynasty wore "Baina clothing". In the second section of "The Plum in the Golden Vase", there is an expression as "(武松) 随即解了缠

带, 脱了身上鹦哥绿宁丝衲袄。(Wu Song immediately solved the entanglement and took off the parrot green winter jacket.)" This stitching costume was originally designed to save cloth.

However, people also gave the beautiful names and beautiful meanings of these splicing clothes. The ingenious women put their minds on splicing the pieces of cloth into beautiful patterns and unique shapes. Just like today's deliberate transformation of fabrics, intelligent people gave these useless pieces of cloths a new life, making countless poor or wealthy women yearn for it.

II. MONKS' "BAINA CLOTHING"

"衲 (na)" can not only refer to monks' clothes, but also refer to the monks. Many monks call themselves as "老衲 (lao na)". At first, the Buddha prescribed that the clothes of the disciples should be stitched together with the useless pieces of cloth from the folk, and then dyed. The Sanskrit transliteration is called "袈裟 (jia sha)", meaning "not upright, bad, turbid, dyed, miscellaneous" and so on. And it is not only used to describe the robes, but also reflected in other supplies of Buddhism. Therefore, "Baina" has an inseparable relationship with Buddhism. "Shuitian clothing", this was used to describe the shackles of the monks. Because it is stitched with a number of rectangular pieces of cloth, like the border of the paddy field, so it is named as "Shuitian clothing". In the Tang Dynasty, Tang Yanqian's poem "西明寺威公盆池新稻 (New Rice of Weigong Basin in Ximing Temple)", there is: "得地又生金象界, 结根仍对水田衣。[I have known that the temple has gotten another field of golden Buddha, when the rice is growing, it is still faced with the monks (Shuitian clothin).]" In the Ming Dynasty, Yang Shen's "Collection of Sheng'an · Shuitian Clothing", there is: "水田衣: 袈裟名。水田衣又名稻畦被, ……又名逍遥服、又名无尘衣。[Shuitian clothing: the name of kasaya. Shuitian clothing is also known as 稻畦被 (rice field short cape) ... also known as Xiaoyao (free and unfettered) clothing, as well as the Wuchen (dust-free) clothing.]" In the Qing Dynasty, Qian Daxuan's "New Record of the Rest in Shijia Zhai": "释子以袈裟为水田衣。(The monk takes the kasaya as Shuitian clothing.)" In the 93rd section of "The Plum in the Golden Vase", there is: "一日, 杏庵头戴重檐幅巾, 身穿水合道服, 在门首站立。(One day, Xing'an wore the double eaves headband

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and Shuihe dobok and stood in front of the door.)" The "Shuihe dobok" is the "Baina clothing" worn by the monks. In the "Aphorisms to Awaken the Public", there is man like:

"头戴箬叶冠，身穿百衲袄，腰系黄丝绦，手执逍遥衫。(He's wearing indocalamus corona, and Baina coat, tied with a yellow silk sash, as well as a Xiaoyao shirt in his hand.)"



Fig. 1. Qing Emperor Qianlong, Color-blocked satin 卍 pattern Taoist nun clothes, collection of the Palace Museum (pinbu.cc).

In "Fig. 1", it is a Taoist nun clothes used in traditional opera in Qing Dynasty. The collar selvage is made of color satin stitching. In the square made of light bean-paste and mineral blue satin, it is matched with bluish white and mineral blue, grass green and lilac satin. The satin is cut into a diamond shape, and the angles are opposite to each other to form a six-diagonal pattern in the square. The body is made of green and lilac satin into two-color squares. In the square, the mineral blue and the flesh pink satin are used to make the "卍" pattern. In terms of patchwork skills and color matching, this costume is not inferior to many outstanding contemporary patchwork works, which shows the ingenuity and artistic accomplishment of the ancients.

III. WOMEN'S SHUITIAN CLOTHING (SHUIHE WINTER JACKET)

Shuihe winter jacket is also a kind of Shuitian clothing in the folk, and a kind of "fashion" popular in the Ming Dynasty. The Shuitian clothing comes from the natural imagination of the earth, and is named after that the whole clothing fabrics are intertwined in color like paddy fields. The poet Wang Wei once recorded such a craft: "顺着水田构图，认识裁缝艺术。(It is a craft to composite as the paddy field and knows the art of tailoring.)" The Shuitian clothing has special effects that other costumes can't have, simple, naive, unique, and rhythmic.

"Shuitian clothing" is about the art of stitching and folding which is made up of various pieces of cloth. It originally originated from poor people. For the purpose of saving, people used the left cloth to stitch into clothes. The Shuitian clothing was initially popular only among the poor women. Later, because the aristocratic women also thought it

beautiful, they began to consciously cut the cloth into a design shape and then sew it into Shuitian clothing.

Poor people's Shuitian clothing makes the best use of everything. What fabrics they have are what they will use. Generally, the large pieces of fabric are not intentionally cut into small pieces for beautiful combination. But the aristocratic Shuitian clothing is designed with ideas and they will destroy the entire brocade for a particular piece of brocade. Li Yu's "Notes in Leisure: Clothing" records in detail: "……则零拼碎补之服，俗名呼为‘水田衣’者是已。……毁成片者为零星小块，全帛何罪，使受寸磔之刑？缝碎裂者为百衲僧衣，女子何辜，忽现出家之相？(…so the clothing of fragments is called 'Shuitian clothing' in the folk...They destroyed the whole into pieces. What was the crime of the whole silk so that it was punished as slicing?)" It explains that the popular female Shuitian clothing in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties is imitating the Baina clothing of the monks. Moreover, in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, people often wear costumes of monks and Taoists at home, and people's beliefs are very secular and practical. From this record, it can also be understood that the woman at that time did not hesitate to cut the complete fabric in order to make such a Shuitian clothes. This anti-saving and extravagant production method was strongly opposed by Li Yu. According to historical records, at the end of the Ming Dynasty, the extravagant and decadent winds prevailed. In order to make a unique Shuitian clothes, many women in the noble families often cut the complete brocade just for a small piece of cloth.

In the Qing Dynasty, Cui Hao wrote in "Popularity: Costume": "王维诗：‘乞饭从香积，裁衣学水田。’按，时俗妇女以各色帛寸翦间杂，缝以为衣，亦谓之水田衣。[There is such a saying in Wang Wei's poem: '(The monks) follow the smell of the rice to fulfill their meals, and their cutting for clothes

is like the paddy clothes.' According to this, when the common women mixed the cloth of different colors and sewed them together into the clothes, which they called it Shuitian clothing.] (See "Fig. 2") In the 63rd chapter of "A Dream of Red Mansions", it was written as: "芳官满口嚷热, 只穿着一件玉色红青驼绒三色缎子斗的水田小夹袄。(Fangguan is

saying that he is hot, just wearing a Shuitian lined jacket in the stitching color of light green, deep blue with red and deep orange red.)" Here, the "Shuitian lined jacket" is stitched with satin in three colors of light green, deep blue with red and deep orange red.



Fig. 2. Shuitian clothing in Qing Dynasty, collection of Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN (pinbu.cc).

The popularity of Shuitian clothing in the nobility was only popular in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. It was a beautiful stroke in the history of clothing development. However, because of its practical value and aesthetic value, the form of Shuitian sewing has been popular in the public. Generally, it is used in the tailor of underwear, and it is more often used in small household items, such as embroidered purses, uppers and pillows.

IV. CHILDREN'S BAIJIA CLOTHING

Shuitian clothing is also called Baina clothing or Baijia clothing. "衲" (na), means "纳" (na), which means the clothes that is sewn by various colors of brocade fragments taken from the senior of the relatives, friends and neighbors. What it has taken ("纳") is not only the piecemeal fabric of the elderly clothes, but also the life time of the elderly, and the praying for the juniors on the clothes, which is the hope of the elders' ideals for their children's lives and dreams. In ancient times, the form of five-color and Baina (take things from many families) can be the blessing for children's disasters and allow children to thrive. Based on this belief, more of the use of Baina in the children can be seen. It is used for the making of clothes for children, or the jewelry, toys, etc. for children. In the 51st section of "The Plum in the Golden Vase", there is: "李瓶儿正在屋里与孩子做端午节戴的绒线符牌, 及各色小粽子并解毒艾虎儿。(Li Pinger is making the woolen signboard worn with children on the Dragon Boat

Festival in the house, and all kinds of small Zongzi and the detoxifying Aihuer.)" The "detoxifying Aihuer" made by parents is a kind of accessories usually worn on the body that drive evil or evil spirits, or a kind of shoes worn on the feet. From the piece of cloth, to the cloth head with embroidery, and then to the high-quality way of brocade or silk, all these show the effect of the Baina, from which the ancients' love for the Baina is not difficult to be seen.

In ancient times, medical conditions were poor, and children were difficult to survive. Parents, in order to pray for their children to grow up peacefully, would give their children meals and clothes from many different families. They hoped to use the blessings of the elderly to bless their children and grow up safely. Eating meals is that the parents ask some families for food to cook for their children. Wearing clothes of hundreds of families is also to ask some elders to find some small cloth fragments and go back to sew them into clothes, usually the underwear of children.

The following picture is a Baijia clothes made by parents for children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The overall color of the clothes is lively and bright pink and white. It is set with bold purple and orange red, and then blue, which fully shows the children's innocent and lively personality. (See "Fig. 3")



Fig. 3. Color satin rhomboids Baijia clothes, late 19th century and early 20th century (pinbu.cc).

When the economy is underdeveloped, generally, what been used to make clothes for children are the fabric left by the adults, or to change the old clothes of adults. On the one hand, because children's clothes cost less cloth, it is more cost-effective to use cloth fragments. On the other hand, it is also for the blessings from the people who had worn the old clothes. Today's children wearing clothes that others pass through is more from a perspective of health. Nowadays, the clothing is mostly added with chemical ingredients in the production process. The new clothes will have some chemical residues. The old clothes worn by others are relatively safe. The children's most important thing is their healthy growth.

V. CONCLUSION

This kind of aesthetic art of women's clothing "Shuitian" in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties seems to be a kind of transcendence to the traditional Chinese "harmony" model, with a little bit of modernism. From this, the degree of social openness in the late Ming Dynasty can be seen. Today, when abstractism and retro-style thoughts prevail, the degree of openness of people's minds is unprecedented. Any form that believed as beauty can be applied to costumes by today's people. The once-popular form of paddy field has naturally been exhibited by people in various ways and techniques, and now it is more often referred as patchwork art. Because of the differences in aesthetic needs and economic strength, the craftsmanship, fabric texture, and even the form demand for the production of clothing in the form of paddy fields are different, but the clothing in the form of paddy fields produced by various techniques is being loved by people of all walks of life. Moreover, this kind of clothing in the form of paddy field will not withdraw from the historical stage, and will only change with the times, affecting the clothing industry more or less.

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