



The Application of the Miao's Batik in Modern Clothing Design

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Abstract. Batik is one of the ancient traditional printing and dyeing techniques of the Chinese nation. With a long history, Miao's batik is characterised by unique and diverse patterns, which record the history, religion, and nature of the Miao people. As an intangible cultural heritage, it has rich national connotations and cultural heritage. This research discusses batik techniques and explores the creative application of traditional batik techniques in modern design, thus giving new life to batik patterns and showing the charm of traditional culture. Eventually, traditional culture will be passed down and spread widely. The conclusion of this research: The Miao's batik embodies the ethnic minority's artistic charm and mindset in pattern composition and style, enjoying high research value. Inheritance and development of the Miao's batik can be realised by doing the following things. We can improve the income of inheritors and boost regional economic growth, expand new application areas, put forth new ideas based on public aesthetic conception, and strive to make batik more popular in the market and people's minds, exhibiting precious cultural value.

Keywords: The Miao; Batik; Clothing Design; Innovation Application

1 Introduction

The Miao is an ethnic group in the Chinese nation and a cosmopolitan ethnic group spanning more than 10 countries across five continents, including Asia, Latin America, Europe, North America, and Oceania. There are currently more than 10 million Miao people in the world, of which more than 8 million live in the People's Republic of China, densely populated in Guizhou Province, Yunnan Province, Hunan Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Sichuan Province, Hainan Province, Hubei Province and so on [1]. The Miao people have formed a self-sufficient lifestyle amid a long-term isolated and difficult environment, creating diverse culture and arts as well as distinct handicrafts, including embroidery, batik, brocade... (Figure 1~Figure 3) [2]. Like Miao's embroidery, the batik technique is also on the list of State-level intangible cultural heritage items. As an ancient art, batik displays its oriental glamour in form and colour. Batik culture is part of the display and summary of the Miao people's beliefs and primitive culture [3]. Over a long development history, the Miao people have accumulated abundant experience in batik and created a unique artistic style. As society

develops, the Miao people in many places tend to be integrated with the culture and customs of the Han people, however, the Miao people still wear their clothes. Marriage, fertility, funerals, etiquette, and social communication of the Miao are closely connected with batik [4]. The Batik technique used to be widely spread in China. However, it gradually disappeared due to the replacement of the traditional handicraft industry by the newly developed industry [5].



Fig. 1. Embroidery of the Miao



Fig. 2. Batik of the Miao



Fig. 3. Brocade of the Miao

The Miao people have accumulated abundant experience in batik and created a unique artistic style over a long development history [6]. It is unique in the folk arts of Guizhou Province because of its elegant hues, complex processes, and profound culture. However, most batiks are distributed in the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, where most places are remote and isolated, and gain little access to the market [7]. As a result, symbols of local original culture are disappearing. In addition, with little creativity and practical function, it is extremely hard for batik to be integrated with modern clothing. With the slow innovation of batik technology, complicated production processes, and high cost, consumers are reluctant to purchase products. Meanwhile, problems such as

an immature market, fund shortage, brand issues, talent issues, and business management issues, as well as the construction of policy support system problems, are hindering batik from thriving in the market [8].

2 History and distribution of the Miao's batik

Traditional resist-dyeing involves four main techniques, including batik (also called wax resist-dyeing), tie-dye, ash-resist dye, and clamp-resist dye, which are known as the four major printing techniques in China; meanwhile, wax resist-dyeing, tie-dye, and clamp-resist dye were called “three figured silk fabrics” [9]. In particular, “缬” means figured silk fabrics based on the Chinese dictionary. Moreover, in historical documents, “batik” first appeared in volume fifty “Various Figured Silk Fabrics” of *Yiqiejing Yinyi* (the Sound and Meaning of the Tripitaka) compiled by Huilin in the Tang Dynasty, which wrote that people drew patterns on the cloth with beeswax, imitating that people drawing patterns with light astrigent juice in Western Regions [10].

Batik techniques became popular during the Six Dynasties and thrived during the Tang Dynasty when batik techniques were spread to Japan. In the Tang Dynasty, an important innovation was made in the batik technique, which included monogenetic dye and multi-color dye. Many fancy patterns were created during this period (Figure 4). After the Song and Ming Dynasties, batik was spread rapidly in Southeast Asia and became popular in Indonesia, Malaysia, etc. [11]



Fig. 4. Batik in Dang Dynasty-Butterfly and Flowers

Batik boasts a long history in minority areas of South-central China and Southwest China. During the Qin and Han dynasties, the Batik Song was popular among the Miao people, which demonstrates the Miao's ancestors had already mastered the batik technique at that time. Guizhou Tong Zhi records that “Draw on a piece of cloth with wax, the pattern left on the cloth looks like a painting after removing wax.” The Miao people display their spirit and emotion through batik, which contains profound cultural connotations and cultural value [12]. The Miao people had no systematic ethnic characters, so they invented special symbols for records. These symbols were passed down from generation to generation to develop into a printing and dyeing technique [13]. Batik is a traditional skill passed down from by the Miao People in Guizhou Province, including Danzhai County, Huangping County, Kaili City, Rongjiang County, Anshun City, and Zhijin County. The Miao's batik is mainly distributed in Guizhou Province, Hunan

Province, Yunnan Province, and Hubei Province. The most typical batik is in Danzhai County of Guizhou Province and Southeast Yunnan (Figure 5, Figure 6).



Fig. 5. Batik of Danzhai County in Guizhou Province



Fig. 6. Batik in Southeast Yunnan Province

3 Tool Materials, Production Method, and Pattern Meaning of the Miao's Batik

The main tool materials of batik techniques include a staining jar, indigo paste, wax melting furnace, natural beeswax, wax knife, and pure cotton fabric. Production methods are as follows [14]:

Firstly, previous preparation is done. Then, the design is drawn on a piece of white cloth, without an underlying graph, compass, and ruler. Make a rough draft in mind and draw a general scope with fingernails. Next is the wax boiling process. Heat water to around 40°C, and put ash into it, then stir the water and filter it. Put indigo grass and herb into the water and add the right amount of liquor and peppers. Put indigo of 2 jin (bought in a store, 3 Yuan per jin), liquor of 2 jin (homemade corn liquor), and five or six kinds of herbs, which are collected on the mountain. Cover it with a cap to lead to fermentation. Cover it for 5 days in summer and over ten days in winter. After that is the wax drawing process. Put the white cloth on the table. Get a container for a small amount of wax, then put it on fire to form a wax solution. Dip the wax knife into the solution and draw on the cloth with the wax knife. Then, dye the cloth by soaking the white cloth with warm water and put it into a staining jar after the wax is softened. Gently turn the whole cloth to contact with the dye. Take it out after about 30 minutes and dry in the air. This is followed by the dewaxing process, by washing in cold water

to remove some flooding. Lastly, dewaxing under high temperatures. Remove the wax on the cloth.

The Miao's batik is rich in patterns, including geometric patterns, animal patterns, and fabric patterns.

Geometric pattern (Figure 7). The most typical patterns are bronze drums, mountains, and rivers as well as the sun, which originates from daily life. Miao women simplify and summarize the shape of animals and plants and natural phenomena to create various patterns. These patterns record the ancestor's knowledge and views on objective things and the hard migration history, paying tribute to the Miao's ancestors.



Fig. 7. Geometric Pattern of the Miao's Batik



Fig. 8. Animal Pattern of the Miao

Animal pattern (Figure 8). The most representative pattern is the butterfly, fish, bird, and dragon. Rich in style and form, these patterns can be concrete or abstract, showing respect for ancestors and expressing good wishes of living in abundance.

Plant pattern (Figure 9) Plant pattern appears as a supplementary pattern. The most representative pattern is pomegranate, water plant, and pear blossom. Pomegranates have many seeds, meaning the family will have many children and blessings. The abstract and deformed representation of plant images adds interest and expresses good wishes through encaustic paintings. [15]



Fig. 9. Plant Pattern of the Miao

4 Application of the Batik Pattern of Guizhou Province in Modern Design

The batik pattern of Guizhou Province enjoys widespread use in modern design. Many designers apply batik patterns to clothing, household items, and other things. For example, A Ming, a designer of Acho.M, designed reversible clothes integrating different ethnic crafts, including batik, persimmon dyeing, and embroidery (Figure 10~Figure 12, Table 1) [16].



Fig. 10. Plant Pattern of the Miao



Fig. 11. Batik Pattern of the Miao

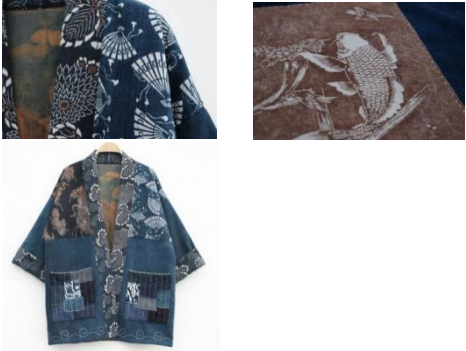


Fig. 12. Persimmon Dyeing



Fig. 13. Embroidery

Table 1. Application of Miao's Batik in Modern Design

Num ber	Brand name/ Name of de- signer	Design	Design name and features
1	Brand: Acho.M Designer: A Ming		Reversible clothes integrate different ethnic crafts, including batik, persim- mon dyeing, ka- tazome and em- broidery.
2	Designer: Zhang Yang		One Wax One Dye makes sig- nificant innova- tions and inte- grates with mod- ern clothing, re- moving the old- fashioned, sin- gle, and plain image and main- taining original cultural conno- tation.

3	Christian Dior		Christian Dior Spring 2021 We traditionally manufacture wax cloth, characterized by our brand style. The application of batik is not limited to clothing. It can be applied to handbags in combination with brands.
4	MIUM		Miao. Aizome Virtual clothing We make virtual clothing through software, from daily outfits to formal dress. The dress is featured by Chinese garment, whose collar uses elements from cheongsam.

5	Laurence. Xu		The butterfly series use elements from new Chinese-style outfits. Besides women's apparel, we apply batik to handbag and cross-body bag.
6	Christian Dior		Christian Dior Spring 2020 Design feature. Batik is applied to hair accessory, overall fabric and pattern are inspired by batik and ethnic printing.

5 Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, we can come to the following conclusion:

5.1 Composition of the Miao's batik on clothing

Overall application: large-area application on clothing, so that the produced clothing has a coordinated and unified visual impact; partial application, different high and low batik positions and batik sizes can reflect different clothing styles [17].

Traditional batik patterns are cut artistically and integrated with modern design. Even if batik is now incomplete in pattern, its performance in texture and meaning can pass down and innovate the artistic essence of traditional batik. In practical application, component elements of complete traditional patterns are redispersed and decomposed. After reintegration, batik patterns still contain diverse artistic features of Chinese culture. Significant innovation is made by continually changing pattern composition, and integration is ingeniously completed. Key points, including the composition of traditional patterns, content and theme, composition method, and colour performance, are

under control to retain the natural independence of batik patterns and promote the artistic essence of traditional batik [18].

5.2 Style presentation of the Miao's batik in clothing:

Batik in various heights and sizes displays different fashion styles.

Batik patterns of the Miao's are featured by acknowledged aesthetic characteristics. The Miao's batik has withstood baptism over a long history and remained the artistic essence of the nation in composition rules. This unique styling feature possesses internal inheritance [19]. The expression of a single pattern or design of an overall pattern is based on the styling concept of the ethnic group and branch.

Batik patterns possess an abstract and natural aesthetic expression. Among the different pattern categories, most batik patterns of the Miao are derived from natural images, not in a direct way, but in a creative method. The common method is to comprehensively represent concreteness and abstraction, reality and illusion, which are a high degree of unity between the subjective creation and objective cognition of the Miao's ancestors.

All things inspire batik patterns. Based on outstanding imagination and creativity, the Miao people mix animals, plants, and scenery to generate distinct patterns, showing their nation's "animistic" view of nature. These patterns exhibit a close link between humans and nature through the combination of human and object, animal and plant, object and object [19]. Pattern-making methods enrich the content and connotation of batik and trigger the vitality of national art and culture [19].

In order to achieve a better inheritance effect, we need to solve problems, including contemporary development and design innovation of Miao's batik skills, so as to meet the aesthetic demands of modern people. First, the income of the inheritor needs to be raised, and local economic development needs to be boosted. Besides, we need to broaden application areas and create new products based on public aesthetics. Eventually, we need to expand popularity on the market to make the public see batik, giving full play to its precious cultural value. People barely see the beauty of ethnic fashion, so we should make efforts to protect batik techniques better, allowing the traditional batik techniques of the Miao people to be passed down from generation to generation.

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