

## Analysis of Traditional Zhuang Costume Inheritance and Development in Yunnan-Guizhou Corridor

Shunliang Li<sup>1,\*</sup>, Liangliang Guo<sup>1</sup>, Weiming Chen<sup>2</sup>, Jingyan Huang<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Fine Arts and Design, Baise University, Baise, China

<sup>2</sup>School of Art and Design, Shihezi University, Shihezi, China

### Abstract

Zhuang costumes are known as the "living fossils" of the Zhuang people for their beautiful colors, individuality, exquisite craftsmanship and rich cultural connotations. Through field research, we measured, organized and summarized the styles, structures, colors and shapes of Zhuang costumes in Tunlitun Village, Napo County, Yunnan-Guizhou Corridor. The results show that the Zhuang costumes are tight and short on the top, fat on the bottom, short and thin on the human body, complex and complicated in production process, exaggerated in structure, and pure and rich in color. It reflects the Zhuang people's simple, frugal and self-sufficient living concept, and at the same time harbors the Zhuang people's worship of nature, people, animals and plants. In preserving the traditional Zhuang costume genetic elements at the beginning, extracting applicable costume modeling and color elements in the modern clothing design of inheritance and innovation, so that the national costume elements towards fashion, popularization and life.

### Keywords

Yunnan-Guizhou Corridor; Zhuang Costume; Costume Design.

### 1. Introduction

The Zhuang of Napo County is located at the border of southwest China and Vietnam, bordering with Funing County of Yunnan, at the stage of rich ethnic culture of Yunnan-Guizhou corridor. Yunnan-Guizhou corridor Zhuang culture Zhuang, as one of the most populous ethnic minorities in China, is also one of the ethnic groups with many branches and complexities. Napo Zhuang, whether they call themselves or others, have 12 ethnic groups such as Bu Zhuang, Bu Yang, Bu Dong, Bu Nong, Bu Tax, Bu Yi, Bu Ow, Bu Province, Bu Decision, Bu Cong, Long An and Zuo Zhou [1]. This Zhuang ethnic group has always maintained the most primitive, traditional and ancient black dress in the course of historical evolution [2], and the solid black dress has become the emblem of the Zhuang ethnic group [3], a symbol that distinguishes our ethnic group from others in many Zhuang branches, forming a solid [4], simple, natural and national view of color, i.e., "still black, black is beautiful". The idea of "black is beautiful" is the "living fossil" of Zhuang national costume in black through time and space. Therefore, both men and women wear black clothing, women wear black headscarves, stand-up collars, right overlapping tight-fitting tops [5], plus high collar coats, and large wide-legged pants and long skirts with jackets underneath.

Through field research on Zhuang costumes in Tunlitun, Napo County, this paper collates, summarizes and analyzes the style, structure, color and shape of the costumes, and explores the feasible elements and development prospects of Zhuang costume elements that can be integrated into modern women's fashion design, hoping to provide useful reference and inspiration for the integration of ethnic costume elements into modern fashion design.

## 2. Analysis of Zhuang Costume Styling

### 2.1. Headwear

Headdress is an important part of costume, and in the costume form of ethnic minorities, headdress has an important national identification role and can be said to be a national iconic part. The Zhuang headdress has a long history, and Liu Xifan's "Lingmiao Jiban" also says: "Zhuang men and women used to wear them in the past", and now "women's heads are covered with handkerchiefs, old women are still black, and young women are still white with flowers." Zhuang women's headdress is more exaggerated, complicated and unique, with their hair coiled into a bun and rolled on top of their heads to wrap the bun.

Then use the white turban along the hair to wrap the head, so as to be able to insert a variety of headdress, and then a length of about nine feet, six inches wide black cloth folded over the head, covered in the head folded into the shape of a large diamond, the ends of the turban hanging down on the shoulders, summer shade, winter can keep warm, farming can be loaded with things, play a decorative and practical function [6].(as shown in Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Black strong headdress (photo by the author)

### 2.2. Tops

Women's tops mainly have two pieces of single garments and vests, single garments are standing collar right overlapping lapels and cross collar lapels with narrow sleeves, and vests are a black lapel garment with seven red one-piece panelled buttons [7]. The single coat style consists of the traditional right-overlapping form with a standing collar, long sleeves, lapels, three pieces of body, and three panelled buttons, and the black garment has been continued and relied on the traditional and ancient waist loom equipment to weave the fabric. A 2 cm white piping is sewn on the side seams, a red edge of about 10 cm long and 0.5 cm wide is sewn on the white cloth with red cotton thread, a blue border is sewn on the edge of the front and back pieces of the hem, three red disc buttons, and a 1 cm wide white cloth is sewn on the inside of the cuffs, which need to be folded over the cuffs to be visible (Figure 2 and 3). According to the data of each part of the garment made by Li Qingmu, the inheritor of the Black Cloth Zhuang Costume Technique in Tunlitan, the author can see that the single garment is relatively slim

and short, reflecting that the body shape of Zhuang women is thin and their height ranges from 150 cm to 165 cm (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Women's Tops Data

Single clothes		Horse armor	
Name	Size (cm)	Name	Size (cm)
Length of clothing	51	Length of clothing	45
Sleeve length	35		
Leader	38	Leader	42
Collar width	3.5	Collar width	6
hem	128	hem	95
Side seam length	20	Side seam length	17



**Figure 2.** Costume top, style diagram (photographed and drawn by the author)

### 2.3. Underwear

Traditional Zhuang women's pants have a high waist and large leg outline, the shape of which is exactly the opposite of the tight shape of the upper garment, the pants are as long as the back of the feet, straight and wide [8]. For the convenience of working life, the waist of pants is changed from the traditional wide yoke to an elastic band, and because of the limited width of the hand-loomed fabric, the pants are made of one piece each of the front and back outside, one piece each of the inside, and two pieces each of the front and back of the crotch, and a total of four pieces of fabric are needed, making the overall reality wide and comfortable. The skirt is divided into three sections: waist, yuk and skirt (Table 2), forming a distinctive color of waist, yuk and skirt, which is easy to sew and repair. As the skirt is made of more materials, wearing it is natural to produce a large number of broken pleats (such as Figure 3). The overall looseness and comfort of the lower dress reflects the importance Zhuang women attach to physiology and life, and reflects the wisdom and intelligence of Zhuang women.

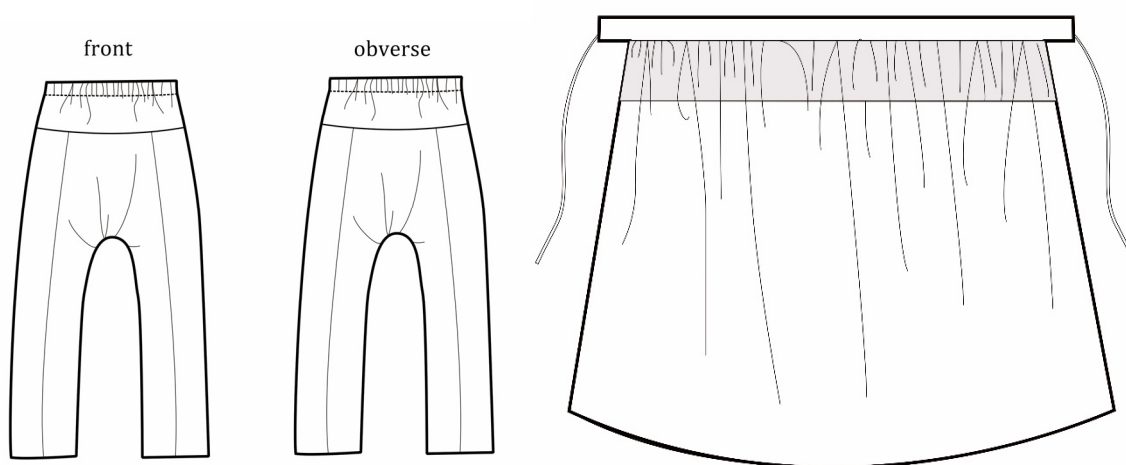


Figure 3. Skirt, pants (photo by the author)

Table 2. Lower loading data

Pants		Skirt	
Name	Size (cm)	Name	Size (cm)
Pant length	85	Skirt length	45
Trouser head	8		
Wide leg	30	Skirt width	42
stall depth	31		6

## 3. Zhuang Costume Artistic Features

### 3.1. Costume Modeling Features

In the style and shape of the dress, the same shape and different details of the ethnic clothing [9], wearing the effect of obvious differences, the most characteristic is the skirt and pants they wear, the black dress Zhuang people wear skirt and pants is one of the characteristics of their clothing. It is said that there are three kinds of arguments for wearing pleated skirts, one is because the waist of the pants made by the old people in the past was not beautiful, so it was necessary to cover the pants with fabric; the second is that the skirts could be folded up and used as pockets during farming; the third is because there are more mountainous roads in the area and it is inconvenient for the old people to walk in the mountains, so they would fold up their skirts. In the series of clothing, the design is carried out through the style characteristics of the skirt and pants, rationalizing the ethnic characteristics and the pursuit of modern style,

integrating the traditional costume elements into the design and also taking into account the practicality of the clothing.

### **3.2. Costume Color Characteristics**

The rich and colorful costumes with distinctive primary and secondary colors, the red coiled buttons on the lapels, the red, yellow and green cotton piping on the hem of the vest and regular clothes make the large area of black and the local red, yellow and green form a sharp contrast, highlighting the symbolism, importance and authority of black, forming a stable and harmonious color system of the Black Cloth Zhuang costumes. The simple and pure black costume color is the result of the continuous exploration, understanding, pursuit and practice of the people of Black Cloth Zhuang in the course of thousands of years of historical development, forming a distinctive national, regional, territorial and unified costume color, condensing the aesthetic interest and cultural connotation of the Zhuang people. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously inherit, carry forward and excavate the excellent dress colors, make full use of, inherit and develop the excellent and valuable dress colors, combine the modern fashionable dress design color concept, extract the hidden strong national culture black, red, yellow and green as the main colors of modern women's dress color design, take the clothing as the carrier and medium, make Zhuang dress colors out of the mountains and embark on the world fashion stage.

### **3.3. Apparel Fabric Characteristics**

Zhuang people live in a place where the climate is suitable for growing cotton and linen, and have mastered the art of cotton and linen spinning since ancient times. To this day, Zhuang people living in Napo County still insist on growing cotton and linen, which is used to make all kinds of clothing items through tedious and complicated weaving techniques and dyeing procedures. The spinning fabric is repeatedly dyed with indigo until it becomes black, so that the fabric is rich in color, smooth and soft, and then pounded and soaked with cow glue and pig's blood, the effect of cow glue can remove the hair ball on the surface of the fabric and firm the toughness of the thread, pig's blood is mainly to enrich and brighten the color level, and the final fabric is smooth with red color in black.

## **4. Zhuang Costume Inheritance and Development**

### **4.1. Styling Applications**

Loose garment shape is the current trend, the shape is the most intuitive expression in the garment, the style is pursuing comfort while adding innovative points and details to the design. We retain the genes of traditional clothing elements and use a variety of styling methods flexibly by incorporating the characteristics of current fashion trends [10], with a variety of styling features and implementation methods. The silhouette of the style is mainly loose, using asymmetric design techniques, the top and bottom collide through different fabric textures to increase the sense of layering of clothing, and the shape of the clothing uses gentle curves and strong and simple straight lines to express the national confidence and simplicity, integrating the concept of national cultural confidence with artistic design to create a modern ready-to-wear with both national elements and fashion style.

### **4.2. Color Application**

We analyze the traditional and classical color symbols in depth, extract the original typical color individual or symbol unit, recombine the design, and make the generalization, summarization and reorganization with formal beauty on the new work according to certain intention, and reassemble the new form with design tendency on the basis of retaining the essence of color symbols [11]. Color is the first and most sensitive element among the elements of dress beauty.

It can be said that color is the first partner of dress beauty [12]. Modern women's clothing design using the traditional black clothing Zhuang color, clothing color is an important part of clothing design, color to retain the Zhuang people Chong beauty, love beauty, respect the beauty of black.

### 4.3. Fabric Applications

The choice of fabric and black clothes strong fabric characteristics have a key role. In order to highlight the effect of the theme, the fabric selection of thick texture jacquard fabric, highlighting the texture, according to the characteristics of the fabric to break the sense of flatness, so that the design presents a rich visual aesthetics, texture jacquard fabric is shaped by a Zhuang people's reverence for the natural environment and protection consciousness, reflecting the indomitable Zhuang people's spirit of progress and creativity.

## 5. Garment Production and Display

### 5.1. Production of Sample Clothes

This series of sewing technology mainly uses rolled hem, come and go seam, rolled hem, press pleat, bright line process. The use of simple and smooth line technology not only increases the stability of the garment, but also plays a beautiful and decorative effect; the bright line can outline the garment outline, enrich the sense of clothing layers, the flowing lines present a gentle sense of curves, express the national self-confidence and simple connotation, and narrate a different storyline. We are looking for the starting point of inspiration to combine the ready-to-wear design with the rhythm of the current times, and explore the innovation in the ready-to-wear pattern to meet the current dressing needs.

The prototype was made and adjusted according to the effect presented in the design, and the style structure was made according to the human proportion.

### 5.2. Complete Clothing Display



**Figure 4.** Complete clothing display (produced by the author)

The finished garment as a whole incorporates Zhuang colors, style and shape, accessories and other elements (Figure 4). Style 1 jacket retains the structure of Zhuang vest and skirt, and incorporates the collar, placket, dividing line and irregular cutting method of modern fashion; Style 2 uses the regular and irregular pleats in Zhuang costume; Style 3 draws on the left overlapping placket structure of Zhuang costume; Style 4 imitates the tight top and wide bottom shape of Black Cloth Zhuang, the shape of lapel and the element of coiled button.

## 6. Conclusion

The unique slender Zhuang dress structure, heavy colors and silhouette reflect the strong, traditional and ethnic fashion style of the region. Applying Zhuang traditional costume elements to modern clothing design promotes the integration of the obsolete ethnic costume culture with modern fashion elements, so that it can be inherited, developed and brought into fashionable life. It is hoped that through the analysis of its structure and practical design research, the traditional Zhuang costumes can be promoted and publicized, so that more people's understand, pay attention to and inherit the protection of the outstanding national culture, while enhancing the national cultural self-confidence.

## Acknowledgments

Guangxi First-class Discipline (Cultivation) Construction Project (Gui Textbook Research [2018] No:12) Funding.

## References

- [1] Shengzhen. Z. History and Culture and the Zhuang Studies Series - General Preface to the Zhuang Studies Series . Guangxi Ethnic Studies, 2003(01):38-54.
- [2] Maotang.H. et al. The anthropological investigation of the Black Cloth Zhuang. (Nanning: Guangxi Ethnic Publishing House, 1999), p.11-13.
- [3] Xiujian. F. The Aesthetics of Black Cloth Zhuang in the Period of Social Transformation . Journal of Liuzhou Teachers College, Vol. 23 (2008) No. 1, p.8-12.
- [4] Ping. L: Wang Dun. Aesthetic analysis of "black as beauty" in black Zhuang costume. Gehai, Vol.68 (2010) No. 5, p.91-94.
- [5] Jing. Z. The interpretation of the decorative elements of black clothes, Big Stage, Vol.126 (2014) No. 06, p.249-250.
- [6] Yanmei. H. Research on the inheritance and protection of black clothes and Zhuang costume craft. Writer, Vol. 49 (2012) No. 14, p.239-240.
- [7] Wei.W. Research on the structural characteristics of black-clothed Zhuang women's clothing. Light Industry Science and Technology, Vol.30 (2014) No. 508, p.109-110+112.
- [8] Wei.W. Research on the structure and process of black and Zhuang women's clothing. (MS. Changsha: Hunan Normal University, 2014), p.21-22.
- [9] Fengye. C. Qian Xiaoming, Wang Lijing. The application of visual illusion in women's clothing design. Woolen Technology, Vol.48 (2020) No.03, p.71-75.
- [10] Xiaoling. C. Peng Xiaoqin, Xie Xiandong. The art of Dong brocade pattern and its design application in modern dress. Woolen Technology, Vol.49 (2021) No. 01, p.66-70.
- [11] Ruixia. Z. Mongolian traditional costume color symbols and clothing design applications. Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition), Vol.43 (2014) No. 01, p. 165-167.
- [12] Ping. D. On the color of Chinese national costumes. Drama Art, Vol.68 (2000) No. 01, p.75-84.