

# A Study on the Historical Transformation of Miao Women's Dress in Guizhou Province, China

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## 概要

ミャオ族は中国で4番目に大きな少数民族で、その半数は貴州省で暮らしている。ミャオ族は最も豊かな衣装文化を持っていると言われている。ミャオ族の衣装は、民族そして各支系の識別のシンボルだけではなく、民族の歴史や神話・伝説を記録している。そのため、ミャオ族を研究するには、衣装は非常に重要な役割を担っていると言える。近年、中国の学者によるミャオ族衣装の研究は大きく進展しているが、その成果は日本ではタイムリーに紹介されていない。そこで本稿では、貴州省のミャオ族女性の衣装に焦点を当て、中国での最新の知見を取り入れつつ、批判的な視点でその変遷を論じる。本稿は次のことを主張する。すなわち社会環境の変化により、ミャオ族の社会における女性の伝統衣装に対する認識は重大な変化が生じた。ミャオ族女性の伝統衣服は、もはや生活必需品ではなく、民族の文化を披露するためのパフォーマンス衣装、あるいは外部と交換するための商品となっている。一方、日常生活で使うカジュアルな民族衣装は次第になくなり、重要な場面や冠婚葬祭の時だけ着るドレスが、制服のように頻繁に使われるようになっていく。そして衣裳の紋様は、民族の歴史と文化の記録としての機能は次第に弱まり、外界のニーズに応える所謂「東洋少数民族風のデザイン」が好まれるようになっていく。

キーワード：中国貴州省 ミャオ族女性 衣装 伝統 変遷

The Miao are the fourth largest ethnic minority in China, with a population of 110,679,929, living mainly in Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangxi, and Hunan. Among them, Guizhou province has the largest Miao population, with about 4.3 million people, accounting for almost half of the total Miao population in China. The Miao are also the second largest ethnic minority in Guizhou Province after the Han Chinese. They live mainly in the 11 minority autonomous prefectures and counties in Guizhou Province<sup>1)</sup>. In Guizhou Province, the Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Qiandongnan is also home to the largest Miao settlement in the world, the Xijiang Thousand Household Miao Village. It can be said that “Miao in Guizhou collects the main cultural characteristics of Miao in China.

Among China’s ethnic minorities, the Miao women have the richest dress styles (Yang 1997). The Qing Dynasty publications “Royal Qing Dynasty Tribute Pictures (皇清職貢圖)” and the “MiaoWanTuCe (苗灣圖冊)” depicted the Miao people in a variety of costumes, known as the “Hundred Miao Figures”, and according to the characteristics of their costumes, especially the characteristics of women’s costumes, the Miao are divided into “Colourful Miao”, “White Miao”, “Red Miao”, and “Black Miao”, etc. The Miao do not have their own written language, but often record their ancestral history and ethnic legends through the patterns of their clothing. Therefore, Miao costumes are also known as the epic poem worn on the body<sup>2)</sup>. Costumes are not only an important part of Miao culture, but also a key to understanding the history of the various branches and ethnic groups of the Miao. It plays a very important role in the study of the Miao.

In the past, scholars in both China and Japan have conducted studies on Miao costumes, for example, on the Japanese side, Torimaru Sadie and Torimaru Chiko, a mother and daughter, have been Pioneers in the study of Miao costumes. They have published a series of five books entitled “A Visit to Miao Dyeing and Weaving in Guizhou, China”, and later in 2017, Torimaru Chiko published “One Stitch, One Thread (ミャオ族の民族衣装刺繍と装飾の技法)”<sup>3)</sup>. These books introduced the Embroidery techniques of the Miao

1) The Miao people in Guizhou province mainly live in Weining Yi Hui Miao Autonomous County of Guizhou, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou, Qiannan Buyi Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou, Songtao Miao Autonomous County of Guizhou, Zhenning Buyi Miao Autonomous County of Guizhou, Ziyun Miao Buyi Autonomous County of Guizhou, Guanling Buyi Miao Autonomous County of Guizhou, Qianyanan Buyi Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Guizhou, Yinjiang Tujia and Miao Autonomous County of Guizhou, Guizhou Daozhen Gelao Miao Autonomous County, Guizhou, and Guizhou Muchuan Gelao Miao Autonomous County.

2) For example, the Chinese government’s website People’s Daily Online (Japanese version) published an article praising the Miao’s clothing as an epic poem worn on the body. <http://j.people.com.cn/n3/2021/0416/c94638-9840051.html>.

3) The following books were written by Sadie Torimaru and Chiko Torimaru: *布の風に誘われて：中国貴州苗族染織探訪 13年*, published by The Nishinippon Shimibun *時を織り込む人々：中国貴州苗族染織探訪 15年*, published by The Nishinippon Shimibun *布に踊る人の手：中国貴州苗族染織探訪 18年*, published by The Nishinippon Shimibun *ミャオ族の民族衣装 刺繍と装飾の技法*, published by Seibundo Shinkosha.

people carefully. Sato Wakana discusses the changing Mother-daughter relationship of the Miao people in the process of making clothes in Guizhou Province (Sato 2020).

In China, the Miao costumes were recorded in the local ethnographies as early as the Ming and Qing dynasties, such as the “Guangxu Guizhou Tingzhi (光緒貴州序志)”, “Guizhou Tujing Xinzhi (貴州圖經新志)”, “Wanli Guizhou Tongzhi (萬曆貴州通志)”, and “Qianlong Guizhou Tongzhi (乾隆貴州通志)”. The “Hundred Miao Map (百苗圖)” of the Qing Dynasty provided colourful pictures of the Miao costume, which vividly introduced the costumes of the main branches of the Miao people at that time.

Since the 1980s, the study of Miao costume has become more active, a lot of monographs on Miao costume have been published<sup>4)</sup>, scholar have conducted a more extensive and in-depth research on the evolution of Miao costume, costume design, style characteristics and production techniques, and have also made some new discoveries.

However, these research results have not been introduced in Japan in time. Therefore, this paper will provide a comprehensive overview of the dress variations of Miao women in Guizhou, taking into account the latest research results of Chinese scholars in recent years. This paper is divided into three parts: first, it introduces the dress style of modern Guizhou Miao women and their characteristics. Secondly, it analyses the historical changes of dress from two aspects: dress and pattern, dressmaking and social functions. Finally, to summarise this paper.

## The dress style of Miao women in Guizhou

### 1 The main dress styles of Miao women in Guizhou

Many scholars believe that Miao women's dress can be divided into three main categories, namely Guanshou dress, Duijin dress and Dajin dress (Xi 2000; Yang 2011). According to “The Book of the Jiu Tang Dynasty – Nanping Liao Zhuan (旧唐書·南平僚傳)”, the traditional Guanshou dresses (貫首衣) (see Fig. 1) were made of two horizontal yarns of whole cloth, with only an opening in the middle for the head, so the shape of the clothes was square. At present, this form of dress is still preserved in Miao women's clothing. However, there are some changes compared with ancient times, For example, the “flag suit (旗幟服)” is a kind of Guanshou dress which is a traditional style

4) such as Xi Keding's “Study of Miao Women's Costumes”, Zhang Yongfa's “Study of Miao Costumes in China”, Long Guangmao's “Miao Costume Culture in China”, and Yang Guo's “Hmong Costumes: Symbols and representation”. “Miao Costume Map – Qiandongnan” by Jiang Bizhen and Fang Shaoneng, “Miao Costume Map in China” by Wu Shizhong, “Bird Pattern and Feather Clothes – A Study of Miao Costumes and Their Production Techniques” by Yang Zhengwen, “Miao Costume Research in China” by China Nationalities Museum, the study of Miao Women's Costumes by Xi Keding, and “The structure of Miao Women's Costumes” by Li Yan have been published.

with a rectangular piece of green cloth on the collar and white cloth around the edge of the green cloth. Since the shape of the collar is similar to a flag, it is called “flag suit” (Wu 2000). At the beginning of 21st century, the Miao wearing Guanshou dresses were mainly concentrated in Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, as well as in Xifeng, Zhenning, Xingren, Anong, Zhengfeng, Luodian, and Pingxuan.



Fig. 1 Guanshou dress



Fig. 2 Duijin dress

The Duijin dress (对襟装) is the most common style of Miao women’s clothing (see Fig. 2). The tops are a kind of collarless, buttonless and long-sleeved jackets. Several other styles have evolved on this basis, For example, by adding ornaments, the Duijin-beipai dress (对襟背牌装), Duijin-dudou dress (对襟肚兜装), and Duijin-pijian dress (对襟披肩装) were formed. From the development of the form itself, Xiejin dress (斜襟装) and Jiaojin dress (交襟装) were formed.

The Duijin-beipai dress (see Fig. 3) is also a collarless, buttonless and long-sleeved jacket. But women dressed a unique back decoration called beipai (背牌) over it. The beipai (see Fig. 4) consists two rectangular or square pieces of cloth, one at the front and one at the back, connected by a cloth belt and worn around the neck. The front piece of cloth is smaller and the back piece is larger. The pieces of the cloth are beautifully embroidered. There are also some areas where they do not wear beipai., but they have embroidery similar to the pattern of the beipai in the same place as the tops.

The lower part of the duijin-beipai dress is a black or orchid – coloured pleated skirt, and in some regions the under-skirtapron is also tied outside the skirt. In Guizhou, the Duijin-beipai dress is mainly found in the Yunwu Mountain area and Guiyang City, Qingzhen, Xiuwen, Huishui, Pingba, Changshun, Longli, Guiding, Jianhe, etc.



Fig. 3 Duijin-beipai dress



Fig. 4 beipai

The Duijin-dudou dress (see Fig. 5) is a long-sleeved Jacket without a collar and button. However, women usually wear a bib called dudou (肚兜) (see Fig. 6) inside the jacket. The bib hangs around the neck, with straps on either side, and is tied at the back of the waist. The bib has a variety of embroideries and decorations. Although the bib is mostly worn inside the jacket, but there are also some branches open the jacket, deliberately leaving the bib exposed. In Guizhou, the Duijin-dudou dress is mainly found in Congjiang, Rongjiang, Liping, Leshan, Danzhai, Sandu and other counties.



Fig. 5 Duijin-dudou dress



Fig. 6 dudou (bib)

The most distinctive feature of the Duijin-pijian dress (see Fig. 7) is to put a shawl over the jacket. The shawl, known as pijian (披肩) (see Fig. 8) is made from two large pieces of woollen cloth, and embroidered with many beautiful patterns. In Guizhou, the the Duijin-pijian dress is mainly found in Weining, Hezhang, Bijie, Weaving, Dafang, Nayong, Liuzhi, and other places in northwestern Guizhou.



Fig. 7 Duijin-pijian dress

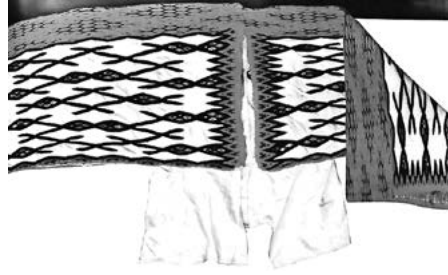


Fig. 8 pijian (shawl)

The Xiejin dress is a style based on the Dduijin dress. It is a kind of collarless and buttonless jacket, but the left side or the right side is longer than the other side, appearing as a diagonal line and covering the other side. The lower part of the dress is a long skirt decorated with wax paint and embroidery at the waist of the skirt. In Guizhou, the slash dress style is mainly found in Weaving Jin, Qianxi, Bijie, Anlong, Panxian and other places.

The Jiaojin dress is also a style based on the Duijin dress. Both sides of the dress are diagonal. Some branches use the left side to cover the right side, some branches use the right side to cover the left side.

In general, the Duijin dress is the most common dress for Miao women, but it has its own characteristics depending on the region and the faction within the nation. In addition to the Duijin dress, there are some regions where Miao women often use the Dajin dress (大襟装) (see Fig. 9).



Fig. 9 Dajin dress

The top of the Dajin dress is very similar to the clothing worn by Han Chinese women in the 18th and 19th centuries. The top of the dress is a standing collar with wide, short sleeves, buttoned to the right or the left, with embroidery on the collar and cuffs. Women also usually wore an elaborately embroidered waistband around the top. In terms of the lower part of the Dajin dress, some branches wear trousers with embroidered patterns on the leg-bottoms, while others wear puffed skirt. In Guizhou, the Dajin dress is mainly found in Bijie, Dafang, Zhijin, Puding, Zhenning, Pingba, Xiuwen, Guiyang, Sandu Shui Autonomous County and Duyun, Danzhai, as well as Songtao and Rongjiang.

In short, the Miao women have an amazingly colourful dress culture. In addition to the three main types introduced above, their clothing can also be divided into formal and casual. Formal dress is mainly used for important occasions such as festivals and rituals, while casual dress is worn in everyday life. Formal dresses were embroidered and colourful, while the casual dresses were very simple, with little decoration or embroidery. In many branches of the Miao, there are even clear distinctions between the dress of married and unmarried women, and between older and younger women.

## **2 Patterns of Miao Women's Clothing in Guizhou**

The most distinctive part of Miao women's clothing in Guizhou is the embroidery and patterns on the garments. Not only are they bright and gorgeous, but they also record the history of the Miao people. As the Miao have no written language, they are accustomed to expressing their history and legends through the embroidery and patterns on their costumes. Some experts point out that "to know everything about the Miao's past, we must study the patterns on their costumes" (Huang 2000: 260). Since the men's costumes are relatively monotonous, the embroidery patterns on Miao women's costumes show their ethnic culture and ethnic history more completely.

The embroidery patterns on Miao women's costumes can be divided into animal, plant and geometric patterns. Among them, butterfly, dragon, fish and bird are the most common animal patterns. The Miao consider butterflies to be their ancestors and call them 'mother butterflies' (Cong and Ning 2022: 65). To show respect for the mother butterfly, there are many butterfly patterns of different shapes on the dresses of Miao women (see Fig. 10).



Fig. 10 mother-butterfly patterns

The Miao people believe that the dragon can bring good weather to the people. This guarantees good harvests. This is why Miao women's clothing often has dragon designs, which they call "Miao dragons" (see Fig. 11). Although Miao dragons come in a variety of shapes, most of them do not have claws. This differs from the Chinese depictions of dragons (He and Jin 2015).



Fig. 11 Miao dragon pattern

Like the Han Chinese, the Miao see the fish as a symbol of fertility, happiness and development. Most of the newlywed women's clothes are embroidered with fish patterns, expressing the women's prayers for a prosperous family and many children (Liu and Wang 2019). The Miao people also worship birds, for example the Miao clan living in Danzhai County called themselves "Ga Ha", which means the clan of birds, and they wear various embroidered bird costumes for festivals and celebrations, and this embroidered bird costume is called "Hundred Birds Clothing" (see Fig. 12). It is known as one of the representative costumes of Miao women.





Fig. 12 Hundred Birds Clothing

In addition to animal patterns, there are also many plant and flower patterns on Miao women's clothing, such as cockles, pomegranate flowers, tea oil flowers, water plants, trumpet flowers, and other plant and flower patterns. The geometric patterns include crosses, swastikas, back patterns, tic-tac-toe patterns, water wave patterns, diamond patterns, etc. which can exist alone or are often combined with other patterns to create a picture and tell the story of the Miao people. For example, the continuous triangles symbolise the mountains, the water waves symbolise rivers, the combination of diamond shapes of different sizes symbolise mountains and rivers.

The horizontal lines of different colors symbolize plains, Yangtze River, and Yellow River. These patterns show the Miao's memory about the history of the great migration of their ancestors (Xin 2016: 88–89) (see Fig. 13). There are also some verifiable historical events that are expressed in the dress patterns. For example, in the fifth year of Xianfeng (1855), the Miao people of Guizhou, Influenced by the Taiping Rebellion and led by their leader Zhang Xiumei, broke out into a large-scale uprising against the Qing Dynasty. This uprising lasted for 18 years and finally failed completely in the 11th year of Tongzhi (1873). Among the costume patterns of the Miao people in Taijiang, there are scenes of the Miao uprising leader Zhang Xiumei and their battles (see Fig. 14). Since the Miao do not have writing, and the patterns in Miao costumes become the key to understanding their history and legends, which is why some scholars also jokingly call it the secret language (An 2012: 52).

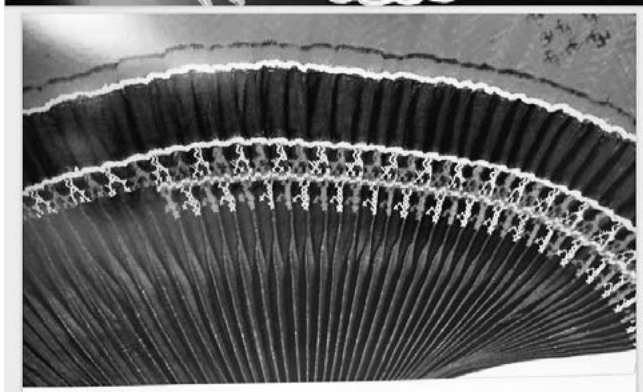


Fig. 13 patterns about the great migration of Miao  
(Many human figures are walking on the lines symbolizing the rivers and mountains)



Fig. 14 the Miao uprising leader Zhang

## Historical changes in the dress of Miao women in Guizhou

### 1 Historical changes in dress styles

The Guanshou dress is often considered to be the original form of human clothing because it is simple and easy to make. Considering the background of the time and culture, it can be considered that Guanshu dress is also one of the early costumes of Miao women.

The earliest record of the southwestern ethnic group's female Guanshu dress can be found in the Book of the Hou Han Shu – Dong Yi Lie Zhuan (後漢書·東夷列傳). The first clear record of the Miao Guanshou dress is found in Chinese literature of the Ming Dynasty. called Guizhou Tujing Xinzhi (貴州圖徑新志), at the Volume 11, it says “The

Miao women of the Dongyi area wear dress which is like a piece of cloth folded in half, making a hole in the middle of the cloth.

Today, there are still Miao branches that use the style of Guanshou dress. Such as the mentioned “flag suit”. Compared with ancient times, the most significant change is that the top and bottom are separated from each other, and the collarless is changed to a lapel, but the original linear rectangular structure of Guanshou clothes is still retained.

The Miao women's Duijin dress obviously retains the ancient Chinese clothing system of upper and lower garments (Yang 1997: 87). According to Xi Keding (2001), the styles of Miao duijin dress were formed when the Miao moved to the mountains of Guizhou and adapted to the living environment and natural conditions, so the formation period should be from the Song Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty (Xi 2001). However, Yang Dongsheng argues that the earliest type of Miao dress was not Guanshou dress, but the Jiaojin dress, and that it was formed during the Stone Age, while also pointing out that the Duijin dress was already produced before the Miao moved into Guizhou, and that it appeared around the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (Yang 2011).

Since the Miao do not have a written language, there is no textual information to confirm when the Miao costume style was originated and evolved. Most scholars have based their conclusions on Miao legends, songs, or comparisons with interethnic costumes of the same origin, all of which are all reasonable but not entirely convincing. Therefore, it is still not possible to precisely define the changes in the form of Miao women's costume.

However, it is clear that the evolution of Miao women's clothing is strongly influenced by the terroir of the place where they live. For example, in the hot climate of Congjiang and Rongjiang in Guizhou, local Miao women use Duijin-dudou dresses that are easy to put on and take off, and leaving the bib exposed is also conducive to ventilation and heat dissipation. The Miao of Qianxi North live in a high altitude area with a cold climate, their clothes are Duijin-pijian dresses, the style of adding a shawl at the top is good for protection against wind and cold.

In addition to being influenced by the terroir, the reason why Miao women's clothing is so rich is also closely related to their history of great ethnic migration. The ancestors of the Miao can be traced back to the Chi You Jiuli tribe 5000 years ago, when the Han leader Huang Di fought a war with the Miao leader Chi You, the war called the Battle of Zhuo Lu, in which the Han tribe won the war. The Miao tribe began to move south to escape from the Han Chinese. The Miao ancestors have experienced numerous migrations. In order to escape from the Han regime, they finally choose to live in deep mountain valleys in seclusion.

According to the oral tradition of the Miao, the Miao came to a place called “Tiaoxi”

after a long and dangerous journey, and in order to facilitate their escape, they agreed to lead their children to find a way to live, and to come back to this place after 13 years, for which they set a big stone as a marker. But when they met again after thirteen years, it was impossible to distinguish the branches because of the large number of people. Therefore, it was decided that to make it easier to identify each branch of the Miao, each branch would wear a different color, pattern and style of clothing. This led to the formation of the distinctive costume culture among the Miao branches (Wu and Wu 1987).

In Jiulian Village, Taiyong Township, Jianhe County, Guizhou, the big stone that confirms this legend still exists today. In addition, like other ethnic groups, the Miao were inevitably influenced by other ethnic groups in the process of their own historical development and great migration. Evidence of this ethnic mixing can be seen in the clothing worn by Miao women. For example, the round-necked jacket buttoned on the right which Miao women in Qiandongnan wear may have originated from the Tang suit. The waistcoat maybe related to the waistcoat worn by the Han people in the Wei-Jin and North-South Dynasties (Yang 1997). The Dajin dress was influenced by the clothing of the Han and Buyi ethnic groups (Xi 2009: 391–392).

In addition, Miao women's clothing in Sandu and Danzhai areas is similar to that of the Shui ethnic group. The costumes of some Miao in Rongjiang and Congjiang are similar to those of the Dong. The dress of Miao women in Zhenning, Anshun, Ziyun, Mashan and Lewang is generally similar to that of local Buyi women (Yang 1997: 87). These similarities in dress can be seen as a result of interethnic exchange.

## **2 The evolution of tailoring and its social function**

Since the Miao live in mountainous highland areas with harsh environments. The constraints of the natural environment and the influence of humans have created a state of isolation between the Miao tribes and the outside world, which has largely restricted the cultural and economic exchanges and development of the Miao, but this has allowed the Miao costume to be less influenced by foreign culture and the original form of the costume of Miao women to be preserved in a relatively complete manner.

Until the 1990s, the clothing of Miao women was mostly made by the families themselves. "Miao people have a clear division of labor in family production activities, with men mainly in charge of "eating" and women mainly in charge of "dressing". "To eat, they work in the fields; to wear, they weave at home (Zhang 2000). As many researchers have found in their fieldwork, in traditional Miao society, a family's clothing, from growing cotton and drawing thread to reeling and dyeing cloth, from paper-cutting and embroidery to the final sewing of the garment, is done by the women (Sato 2020; Zhang 2000) In the traditional Miao society, a good woman is judged by her ability to

make clothes (Yin 2021).

However, with the popularity of television, geographical boundaries have become less important, and under the influence of industrialization and urbanization, Miao youth have begun to aspire to an outside life, and traditional dress and traditional aesthetic concepts have been largely disappeared. At the same time, as Miao youth began to go out of the mountains to work or go to larger counties to receive junior high school, high school or even college education. Their dressing habits have changed significantly. Inexpensive and easy-to-wear ready-made clothes from the market became their daily dress (Wu 2014). Miao traditional clothing is only used during ethnic festivals and ceremonial celebrations such as weddings and funerals.

On the other hand, in 1984, the Beijing Palace of Ethnic Culture held an exhibition of Chinese Miao costumes, and the following year, based on the items of that exhibition, the Beijing Palace of Ethnic Culture compiled and published a picture book of Chinese Miao Costumes (中国苗族服飾).

This pictorial book showed the Miao costume culture systematically for the first time both at home and abroad, and it received a great response. Based on the clues provided by the exhibition and the picture book, the Institute of Weaving and Clothing Research of Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan came to Qiandongnan to organize a rather large scale field survey of Miao costumes and collected some local Miao costume items. They later held two exhibitions of Miao costumes in Taipei and published a book entitled Miao Ornamentation (苗族紋飾). Museums in Beijing, Shanghai and other places and art colleges such as the Nanjing Academy of Fine Arts, the Beijing Academy of Arts and Crafts and Beijing Institute of Fashion began to acquire Miao embroidered costumes, and some areas in Guizhou Province built Miao embroidery museums (Feng 2006: 63–70).

The interest of the outside world in Miao costumes and Miao embroidery directly gave rise to a market for buying and selling Miao costumes. Buyers from home and abroad began to actively acquire Miao costumes with preservation value, and in those tribal villages with little communication with the outside world, Miao people with access to the outside world acted as middlemen to buy and sell.

This trend reached a new peak with the wave of protection of intangible cultural heritage. The 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference was held in Paris in October 2003. The session adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Subsequently, the Chinese government also formulated the “Opinions on Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in China” in 2005, the next year, China officially announced 518 national-level intangible cultural heritage items, and since then many representative items of intangible cultural heritage have been announced one after another. In Guizhou, a total of 140 items have been inscribed on the

national intangible cultural heritage list in Guizhou. Miao embroidery was listed as the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage in the category of traditional art, and Miao costumes were listed as the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage in the category of folklore. Several Miao women who are good at embroidery, such as Zhang Guiying, Wang Qiping, Yang Meiyang, and Longnu Sanjiu, have been selected as national heirs of Miao embroidery (Zhou 2016). This has transformed them from rural women into state-recognized experts, and in addition to receiving regular economic support from the state, their social status has been greatly enhanced. They often attend various activities as representatives of their own village and even Guizhou province<sup>5)</sup>.

local Governments throughout Guizhou are also developing the Miao costume culture as an important industry that can lift Guizhou out of poverty. The government encourages the vigorous development of the Miao costume manufacturing industry (as it has been reported in many news articles)<sup>6)</sup>. It also combines the display of Miao costume culture with tourism. In various ethnic cultural tourism festivals, the display of ethnic costumes is the most important performance to attract tourists. For example, the display of ethnic costumes in the Dragon Boat Festival and Sister Festival has become the most popular part.

The prosperity of the Miao dress industry has led to a renewed recognition of the value of Miao women's dress. As a result, the economic and social status of women in the family has risen as a result. Some of the women who had worked outside the village have also returned to the home and to relearn traditional Miao embroidery techniques under the guidance of the older generation. However, because Miao women's clothing, especially dressy clothing, requires slow embroidery stitch by stitch, it takes at least a year to complete a garment. Therefore, a large number of machine-made Miao clothing has flooded the market. From the overall trend of Miao women's clothing production, machine production has replaced hand production as the main means of Miao clothing production. Not only that, the design of patterns in Miao costumes, which are considered to be historical record, also began to lose its significance. The emphasis is no longer on recording history, but rather on designing patterns and colors, which are often adapted to the needs of the market. In fact, many of the designs were created around the impression of the so-called "mysterious primitive tribes of the East", and they became separated

5) For example, Zhang Guiying is a member of the CPPCC of Leshan County. Shi Liping (石丽平), the inheritor of Miao embroidery in Songtao County, is a member of the 13th National People's Congress. Wu Xiuying was interviewed by CCTV and was hired by local schools as a professional arbitration judge for special projects.

<https://new.qq.com/omn/20220228/20220228A02BSF00.html>

6) for example "Guizhou vigorously develop women's handicraft industry fingertip skills to help rural revitalization (贵州大力发展妇女手工业指尖技艺助力乡村振兴)" *Guizhou Daily* December 26, 2021. July 21, 2022, accessed. [http://jgz.app.todayguizhou.com/news/news-news\\_detail-news\\_id-11515115798258.html](http://jgz.app.todayguizhou.com/news/news-news_detail-news_id-11515115798258.html)

from the emotional expression of the Miao women themselves.

On the other hand, the trend of de-dailyizing Miao women's clothing continues. The casual dresses used in the daily life tend to fade away. However, the dresses used for festivals, weddings and funerals are frequently used for business and tourism. Thus, casual dress began to disappear from daily life, while formal dress became a daily routine.

## Conclusion

Miao clothing is a symbol of the Miao people and a marker to distinguish the various branches. The Miao have no written language, and they often record the history and legends of their ancestors through the patterns of their clothing. Therefore, Miao costumes are also the key to understanding the history and culture of the Miao people. However, with the development of social and economic development, the Miao people have also been greatly influenced by foreign cultures, and many young people have started to think negatively about their own clothing and culture, considering them as a manifestation of backwardness.

However, since the 1980s, the traditional costume culture of the Miao people has gradually received attention both in China and abroad. Later, with the rising wave of intangible cultural heritage protection and the need for local governments to promote the development of tourism and sightseeing industry, the understanding of Miao women's costumes in Miao society has undergone a fundamental change, and Miao women's costumes are no longer daily necessities, but have become performance costumes for show or commodities for money. In the life of Miao people, the casual clothes for daily use gradually disappeared, and the dresses worn only on important occasions or at weddings and funerals were used as frequently as uniforms.

As a kind of commodity the high-class Miao women's dresses for the rich, which are characterized by handmade, and the general clothing for the public, which are made by machine, are both popular in the market. This has led to two trends in the production of Miao women's dresses, one is the family style or the handmadeworkshop of master with disciples. They are interested in ethnic traditions and embroidery techniques, which play a positive role in preserving ethnic culture. The other type is the machine production in the factory. The garments produced are often crude and do not play a role in preserving the traditional embroidery techniques. This production method is currently the main way. The common feature of both high-quality Miao women's dresses and machine-made products is that the patterns in Miao women's dresses no longer serve the purpose of recording Miao history and culture. On the contrary, the so-called "design" with minority style to meet the needs of the outside world is valued.

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### Graphic Source

- Fig. 1 National Costume Museum Collections of Beijing Fashion Institute, accessed at <http://biftmuseum.com/about/into>, 20 July 2022
- Fig. 2 Ibid.
- Fig. 9 Ibid.
- Fig. 3 楊波攝影 2000年8月6日に貴州省中部龍里県の果里ミャオ族祭祀会の写真  
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- Fig. 4 Ibid.
- Fig. 5 Wu, Shizhong (吳仕忠).2000. A picture Album of China's Miao Costumes and Ornaments (中国苗族服飾圖志), p. 73, Guizhou People's Publishing House (貴州人民出版社)
- Fig. 6 Ibid., 71
- Fig. 7 Ibid., 412
- Fig. 8 Ibid., 415
- Fig. 11 Ibid., 136
- Fig. 12 Ibid., 20
- Fig. 13 Ibid., 233
- Fig. 10 Collections of Wei, Ronghui (韋榮慧), accessed at <https://ex.chinadaily.com.cn/exchange/partners/82/rss/channel/cn/columns/j3u3t6/stories/WS601d-10b5a3101e7ce973ec10.html>, 24 July 2022
- Fig. 14 Ibid.