

Cultural Significance of Xi Qin Embroidery and Its Application in Fashion Design

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Abstract: *Xi Qin embroidery, as a treasure of Chinese ethnic culture, holds profound cultural significance and contemporary relevance, offering a vibrant source of inspiration for modern fashion design. Xi Qin embroidery has a long and rich historical background and is gradually moving towards a scientific and systematic approach to its preservation and promotion. In this new era, we can delve into the cultural essence of Xi Qin embroidery through its stylistic features, pattern characteristics, and embroidery techniques. Fashion design has become a focal point in contemporary life, and the application of Xi Qin embroidery culture in clothing design primarily focuses on integrating diverse designs with popular elements, infusing innovative decorative styles, and enhancing visual appeal.*

Keywords: *Xi Qin embroidery, cultural significance, fashion design, specific applications*

1. Introduction

The development of Xi Qin embroidery has a long and illustrious history, making it a significant cultural gem in the history of Chinese civilization. Xi Qin embroidery itself possesses a profound cultural heritage, and this cultural heritage's radiance injects vitality into the application of modern fashion design. In the field of modern fashion design, the organic combination of traditional patterns and embroidery techniques better showcases the beauty of clothing design.

2. Overview of the Development of Xi Qin Embroidery

In studying the application of Xi Qin embroidery in modern fashion, we can conduct a scientific analysis based on its historical origins and preservation efforts.

2.1. Historical Origins

Xi Qin embroidery originated in the northwest region of China and is a traditional embroidery technique primarily practiced by the Han ethnic group in Baoji, Shaanxi Province. Its long history is intimately connected to the region's history, as Baoji, situated in the western Qin area, has a rich cultural background that was the birthplace of the Zhou and Qin cultures, providing the foundation for the cultural richness of Xi Qin embroidery. The primary location for preserving and promoting Xi Qin embroidery is Qianyang County, which is strategically located in the Hexi Corridor and served as an essential station on the Silk Road. Its historical and cultural significance, along with its position at the crossroads of agricultural and nomadic civilizations and the fusion of Han and minority cultures, lays a solid foundation for the development of Xi Qin embroidery. ^[1]

In the 21st century, Qianyang County, as a vital town on the northwestern border of China, not only preserved its traditional culture amidst diverse economic and cultural waves but also resisted the influences of court art and urban commercial society. It became a living fossil of history and a valuable material resource for contemporary folk culture industries. In 2008, Xi Qin embroidery was officially recognized as a representative project of China's second batch of national intangible cultural heritage.

2.2. Preservation Efforts

Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, Xi Qin embroidery has gone through a long period of historical inheritance and innovative development. It has achieved significant progress in materials, techniques, content representation, and application. During its heyday, Xi Qin embroidery incorporated various

advanced techniques such as flat embroidery, suspended embroidery, and produced works with flat, three-dimensional, and relief styles, covering multiple fields like animals, landscapes, and culture. A range of common items for daily life gradually appeared, laying a solid foundation for the transition of craftsmanship from home use to emerging markets. Despite experiencing the ravages of war during the Republican era, Xi Qin embroidery maintained its original charm. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, as society underwent significant changes, traditional embroidery techniques faced challenges. The number of skilled artisans decreased, and the variety of patterns was reduced, but in the context of a socialist market economy, folk culture arts like Xi Qin embroidery received strong support and began to flourish, providing a boost to the development of traditional arts.

3. Cultural Significance of Xi Qin Embroidery

The cultural essence of Xi Qin embroidery is primarily reflected in its stylistic features, pattern characteristics, and embroidery techniques.

3.1. Stylistic Features

Overall, Xi Qin embroidery exhibits a sense of simplicity and authenticity in its stylistic features, emphasizing powerful exaggeration and rich emotions while showcasing a strong regional and artistic appeal. The construction of elements in Xi Qin embroidery aims for the completeness of patterns, typically presented symmetrically to create a powerful visual effect and sensation (as shown in Figure 1). Therefore, when analyzing the stylistic features, Xi Qin embroidery's cultural significance is built upon a rugged and primitive style, conveying a sense of naivety, while preserving the cultural patterns of traditional folk embroidery (as shown in Figure 2). The stylistic features of Xi Qin embroidery are closely related to the creators. Ancient rural women of Xi Qin were not professionally trained in linear drawing of designs, but rather expressed themselves in an impressionistic style. This naivety reflects the organic grasp and profound inspiration of women in the agricultural era for artistic creation. On the other hand, Xi Qin embroidery has a quirky style that brings about aesthetic pleasure. After a high degree of simplification and refinement, geometric patterns emerged, providing a unique visual experience (as shown in Figure 3).



Figure 1: Five Poisonous Creatures



Figure 2: Tiger Head Hat, Pig Head Shoes, Tiger Head Shoes, Bellyband



Figure3: Tiger Head Shoes

3.2. Pattern Characteristics

The pattern characteristics of Xi Qin embroidery are deeply rooted in the local customs and habits, representing various aspects of life.^[2] Today, Xi Qin embroidery features a wide range of patterns, each with rich symbolic meanings. For example, square patterns like pillow covers symbolize blessings for the elderly to have a long and healthy life. Animal patterns given to children have profound protective symbolism. For young couples, patterns like lotus and mandarin ducks are used to create scenes of harmony and prosperity in family life. Children often use embroidered items like shoes and hats to express their wishes for their families, reflecting their inner sentiments. Therefore, Xi Qin embroidery shows an optimistic attitude in its stylistic features, reflecting the people's praise for life and their desire for a better life.

3.3. Embroidery Techniques

Xi Qin embroidery is characterized by its meticulous craftsmanship. Traditional folk techniques, including "stitching flowers" and "needlework," have a long history. In the process, the threading and coloring of threads are highly valued, and specific patterns or texts are created through embroidery. Xi Qin embroidery includes a variety of finished products from folk embroidery work, which not only has a deep historical background but is also closely related to people's daily lives. The saying "A daughter skilled with needles and threads" is a testament to the popularity of Xi Qin embroidery among the people. Therefore, the techniques of Xi Qin embroidery have gained popularity throughout China, and its embroidery themes are diverse, spreading across the country and reflecting various regional styles. In addition, Xi Qin embroidery uses a rich variety of materials, including cotton fabric, gold and silver threads, fabric scraps, and cotton. Main tools include embroidery frames, embroidery needles, tweezers, awls, scissors, and various fabrics such as cotton and silk, which are used to create three-dimensional items. They are filled with fabric scraps, cotton, and buckwheat husks and then sewn using various colored embroidery threads and gold and silver threads. Common techniques in Xi Qin embroidery include embroidery, patchwork, piecing, and appliqué.

4. Specific Application of Xi Qin Embroidery Culture in Fashion Design

Today, the application of Xi Qin embroidery culture in fashion design can be explored and practiced through diverse design, innovative decorative styles, and the enhancement of visual appeal.

4.1. Incorporating Diverse Designs with Popular Elements

By skillfully integrating artistic elements, Xi Qin embroidery offers a solid foundation for deepening embroidery techniques in the field of fashion design. Designers must follow the principle of uniqueness in the design process, using modern and intricate techniques to maximize the intrinsic value of Xi Qin embroidery. With the continuous improvement of people's aesthetic standards, diverse designs and a wide range of colors have become popular features in fashionable attire. Therefore, Xi Qin embroidery artisans play a crucial role in understanding and recognizing the diverse needs of the public. They conduct targeted market research analysis to meet the demands of different age groups for clothing that embodies Xi Qin embroidery elements. Craftsmen also focus on using suitable color combinations, frequently employing fresh patterns and icons to provide organic energy for redefining trends and breaking traditional boundaries. These efforts are essential for the successful integration of modern fashion elements into Xi Qin embroidery, creating the necessary conditions for the

development of innovative clothing design.^[3]

4.2. Expressing Personalized Styles for Innovative Decorative Patterns

Thin and lightweight fabrics have long been associated with traditional embroidery, reflecting the prevailing fashion of their time. However, with the rapid advancement of science and technology, new materials such as synthetic fabrics and emerging fibers, have gained increasing attention and popularity. Traditional soft woven fabrics have gradually been phased out. In contemporary Xi Qin embroidery, the materials used are popular and characterized by fine structures, providing a high-quality texture that does not compromise the desired patterns. These materials offer greater comfort, ensuring that the fabric's touch does not affect the quality of the embroidery. Furthermore, contemporary Xi Qin embroidery artisans maintain traditional techniques while introducing new materials and modern technological advancements, providing the necessary conditions for integrating embroidery into fashion design. This fusion of modern clothing and embroidery technologies at the forefront has gained widespread recognition from domestic and international designers, setting a solid foundation for presenting various artistic styles.

4.3. Enhancing Distinctive Embellishments for Visual Appeal

The decorative function of fashion items is vital, and Xi Qin embroidery apparel often features a variety of embroidery patterns.^[4] The structural design and details are essential to solidify the overall effect of clothing. With the rapid development of technology and in keeping with traditional fashion styles, contemporary Xi Qin embroidery utilizes popular materials. These materials not only feature fine structures but also provide a high-quality tactile experience that does not compromise the desired patterns. The adaptability of Xi Qin embroidery for use in different parts of fashion items and the versatility of Xi Qin embroidery add a unique visual appeal. Increased standards of living directly affect people's aesthetic preferences. Therefore, contemporary clothing is meticulously designed on the front, sides, and back, and this creative transformation and innovative development enhance the three-dimensional appearance of contemporary clothing while providing technological support for satisfying the spiritual and cultural needs of the public.

5. Conclusion

Xi Qin embroidery is steeped in historical and cultural significance, offering insights into the beliefs, values, and ideals of local farmers concerning life, nature, and society. It provides valuable material for the study of regional culture in modern China. The simplicity and exaggeration, imaginative concepts, vivid colors, and subtle health symbolism of Xi Qin embroidery's fabric art make it a rich source of image materials for studying and learning the aesthetic consciousness of ethnic groups. Xi Qin embroidery, as a practical art form used for items, gifts, toys, and offerings, promotes ethical values among the people and imparts education through its influence, effectively conveying emotions, love, and friendship through artistic forms.

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