

The Stylistic and Cultural Implications of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) from the Perspective of Morris's Semiotics

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Abstract

Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), as a unique religious and cultural symbol, not only carries profound Buddhist teachings, but also reflects the changes of social culture. From the perspective of Morris' semiotic theory, this paper discusses the historical evolution, morphological features and cultural implications of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork). This paper studies the development process of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), from its origin in China's farming era to its wide application in Buddhist culture, and reveals its important role as a carrier of Buddhist culture. This paper analyzes the structural features, semantic connotation and pragmatic functions of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), and points out its important role in transmitting Buddhist thoughts and promoting Buddhist culture. The study also explores the cultural blending between Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) and folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork). And the application and modeling features of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) in different Buddhist fields. Through empirical case analysis, this paper clarifies the inheritance and innovation of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) in modern society, as well as its new perspective and practical significance in clothing and costume design. The research results show that Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is not only the material embodiment of Buddhist culture, but also the reflection of social and cultural changes, and at the same time, it reflects people's spiritual pursuit to a certain extent.

Keywords: *Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork); Morris Semiotics; Buddhist culture; Modeling symbol; Cultural symbol*

INTRODUCTION

BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), a fabric crafted by sewing together numerous small pieces of fabric according to a specific structure and pattern, has a long and illustrious history in China's traditional agrarian era (Mao, 2010, pp. 109-113). It not only reflects the craft aesthetics of the agrarian era but also plays a significant role in Buddhist culture. With its unique patchworking skills, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) transforms scattered fabrics into a whole with profound cultural significance. This craft has been widely applied in Chinese Buddhist practices, forming an artistic style distinctly different from that of folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork).

Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), as a cultural symbol, carries not only the religious beliefs and spiritual pursuits of Buddhism but also showcases the deep essence of Buddhist culture through its distinctive stylistic features and rich color combinations. This study adopts Charles Morris's semiotics theory as the analytical framework to analyze the stylistic characteristics, cultural implications, and the inheritance and innovation of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) in modern society, aiming to raise public awareness and protective consciousness of this traditional handicraft. It also hopes to help designers better understand and utilize the cultural connotations in clothing, thereby promoting the development and innovation of traditional clothing culture. The research findings not only contribute to a more comprehensive academic understanding of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) but also have significant importance for promoting and preserving Chinese traditional culture.

Research Questions

This paper attempts to discuss the following three questions by combining literature and empirical cases:

What is the cultural integration between the development of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) and folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork)?

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What are the stylistic characteristics of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) when applied to different fields of Buddhism?

How does Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) construct cultural implications through the three dimensions of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Historical Evolution of Buddhist Robe and BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork)

Buddhism, one of the three major world religions, has been developed for about twenty-six hundred years and has had a profound impact on contemporary social life, customs, intellectual thought, and artistic creation. Around the 5th century BCE, Siddhartha Gautama founded Buddhism in ancient India, and the Buddhist clothing system was also initially established. Buddhism advocates ascetic practice and requires monks to wear robes made from patched-together old fabrics (Hua, 1993, p. 604).

The widely circulated "Four-Part Vinaya" Volume 39 "Ge Yingying's Clothes" in China states: "There are ten kinds of scavenged clothes. Clothes chewed by cattle, clothes gnawed by mice, clothes burnt by fire, clothes soiled by menstrual blood, clothes of a woman in childbirth, clothes from temples, clothes blown away by the wind and taken from the cemetery, clothes for prayers, clothes for royal service, and clothes for traveling (Yang, 2013)." This means that the materials for the robes worn by monks should be made from discarded, tattered, old, and fragmented fabrics, which are then mended and patched together to form clothes, with sewing and patching being the main techniques, hence the term "patchwork robe."

During the period of the Two Han dynasties, Indian Buddhism was introduced to Han Chinese regions, and its clothing concepts and systems were also introduced. Early Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) was mainly used for monastic robes. The materials were primarily cotton and linen, with monks collecting old and worn fabrics, cleaning and processing them for reuse. The colors were mainly faded and discolored, avoiding bright colors. The "Four-Part Vinaya" records Buddhism's opposition to using bright colors (i.e., blue, yellow, red, black, and white) and advocates dyeing in the colors of kasaya. In the Song Dynasty, Yuanzhao's "Buddhist Monastic Regulations on the Six Articles" also recorded: "The Vinaya says. Clothes dyed in bright colors should not be worn. They should be made into kasaya colors (this means dyeing in non-bright colors) also known as 'bad colors.' That is, the three kinds of dye mentioned in the precepts are bad" (Cao, 2018). This indicates that monks could not wear clothes in bright colors, and kasaya could only be in non-bright colors, namely blue, black, and mulberry colors. In terms of shape, it was required to cut the fabric into pieces and sew them together in the shape of a field, thus forming a unique form of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) in Buddhism—scavenged clothes, patchwork clothes, miscellaneous clothes, fields of merit clothes, and sanghāṭī. Since then, the term "BaiNa" has gradually been established and spread in China.

In the historical evolution, Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) not only reflects the spread and development of Buddhist culture but also gradually enriches its stylistic features. These characteristics are manifested in the diversity of materials, color matching, and pattern design. Through the interpretation of these characteristics, one can see the influence of Buddhist culture among the people and the close integration of folk art and religious beliefs.

Cultural Integration of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) and Folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork)

The practice of sewing together small pieces of fabric to create a whole is a natural response to material scarcity in earlier times, and this method is not unique to Buddhism. However, the term "BaiNa" has become an important craft style and clothing form largely due to the contributions of Buddhism. It was Buddhism that explicitly defined the "patchwork" method for the creation of monastic robes, allowing this craft to be continuously, stably, and extensively applied in Buddhist clothing production, thereby forming the "BaiNa" style. During the Tang Dynasty, with strong support from the royal aristocracy, Buddhist monasteries became grand and luxurious, and the number of monks increased significantly. The influence of this style extended from the upper aristocracy to literati and the lower classes. Numerous references to "paddy fields," "fields of

merit," and "kasaya" can be found in Tang poetry, indicating that the concept of "paddy fields" as a style of monastic clothing had deeply penetrated public consciousness (Wu, 2019, pp. 122-128). Furthermore, a significant number of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) artifacts from the Tang Dynasty were unearthed in Dunhuang, showcasing exquisite craftsmanship and high-quality materials, indicating that Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) experienced significant development during this period, thus gaining influence among the people.



Fig. 1 Paddy clothes

Image source: China National Editorial Board of the Complete Works of Chinese Embroidery and Costume (2004, p. 197).

In the context of the flourishing development of Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty, "BaiNa" not only became recognized as a craft technique but also evolved into a clothing style acknowledged by the public. By the Ming and Qing Dynasties, "paddy field clothing" (as shown in Fig. 1) transitioned from folk origins to upper-class women, becoming a popular fashion style. Its production was extremely luxurious, and the Ming Dynasty literati Li Yu commented in his work *闲情偶记* (Record of Leisurely Thoughts): "The mixed pieces are small fragments; what crime does whole silk commit to suffer such punishment? The torn pieces are for BaiNa monk robes; what fault do women have to suddenly appear as if they were monks?" (Ouyang, 2008, pp. 140-144). This statement indicates that the concept of paddy field clothing for monks had become deeply ingrained in public perception. Women in the folk community began to produce "paddy field clothing," still using the term "paddy field clothing," and the craftsmanship borrowed from the "BaiNa" style of Buddhist monastic robes, indirectly reflecting that folk paddy field clothing was largely influenced by Buddhist BaiNa clothing.

The development of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) has also been influenced by secular society. Since the Eastern Han Dynasty, many rulers have embraced and promoted Buddhism, providing substantial support and sponsorship to monasteries. As noted in the *Old Book of Tang*, "Eight out of ten parts of the world's wealth belong to Buddhism," and "the rich fields of the capital mostly belong to temples" (Cheng, 2012). Consequently, the precious fabrics owned by Buddhist temples increased, leading to a wider variety of materials used in the production of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), including silk, satin, brocade, and other luxurious fabrics. For example, the kasaya of the Tang Dynasty was made from various luxurious materials and employed the technique of kesi (silk tapestry). Meanwhile, rulers directly applied the colors of secular royal and official garments to Buddhist monastic robes, bestowing high-ranking monks with "purple robes," "scarlet robes," and "yellow robes," which became a customary practice and tradition, significantly influencing the color system of Buddhist robes. The Ming Dynasty's founder even legislated direct intervention in the colors of Buddhist monastic robes. The Chinese Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is a product of the gradual development and evolution within the geographical, political, and cultural context of China.

There exists an interactive influence between Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) and folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork). On one hand, Buddhism, through its strong influence and extensive dissemination

channels, has spread the craft techniques and styles of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) to the folk community; on the other hand, folk culture continually influences the development and evolution of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork). This process of cultural diffusion has made BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) a clothing style with unique charm and profound cultural connotations.

Semiotics Analysis of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)

The development of Charles Morris's semiotics can be traced back to the early 20th century when American philosopher and logician Charles W. Morris, building upon the semiotic ideas of C.S. Peirce, Bertrand Russell, and others, established his own semiotic theory. Research by Morris, C. W., et al. (2021) posits that a sign is a manifestation of meaning, consisting of three fundamental elements: the sign, the referent, and the interpreter. Morris's semiotics advocates studying signs from three dimensions: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, and it provides in-depth theoretical construction for each dimension (pp. 1-25). Syntax refers to the internal combination rules and structure of a sign system, that is, how signs are arranged and combined according to certain logic and order. Semantics involves the relationship between the sign and its referent, that is, how a sign represents or refers to a concept, object, or meaning. Pragmatics studies the use and effect of signs in specific contexts, that is, how signs influence and are influenced by the behavior and reactions of users. This theory has laid a solid foundation for the development of semiotics (Pignède, A., et al., 2017, p. 9).

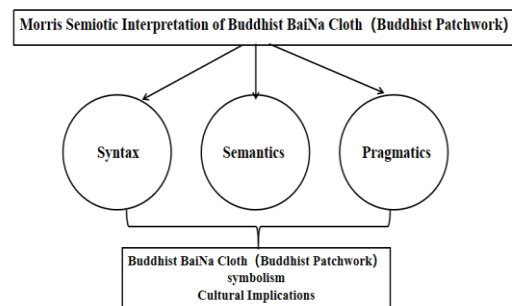


Fig. 2 Model of Semiotics Interpretation of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)
Image source: Author's own creation

From the perspective of Morris's semiotics, Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is a special form of material culture and religious symbol, carrying not only the spirit of monastic practice but also serving as a vehicle for the transmission of Buddhist culture, with rich semiotic significance (Changshui Institute of Technology et al., 2016, p. 7). The patchwork, patterns, and colors of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) all carry specific symbolic information. The patchwork technique of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) symbolizes the inclusiveness and harmony of Buddhism (Li et al., 2021, pp. 188-195). Different materials, colors, and patterns of cloth are skillfully combined to form a unique visual recognition effect, reflecting the Buddhist teachings of equality among all beings and the spirit of unity and mutual assistance.

Therefore, interpreting Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) from Morris's semiotic perspective, researchers propose that it can be analyzed from the following aspects:

Syntax: Analysis of the structural form of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) Syntax focuses on the combination rules and internal logic of signs, that is, how signs are organized according to specific rules. In Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), syntactic analysis focuses on the way the cloth is pieced together. The physical form of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is composed of many small pieces of cloth in various colors and materials, which are sewn together. This structure itself is a complex sign system, where each piece of cloth may represent different meanings or stories (Pignède et al., 2017, p. 9).

Semantics: Analysis of the meaning of Buddhist BaiNa design Semantics involves the meaning of signs, that is, the objects, concepts, or meanings that signs represent or refer to. For Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist

Patchwork), semantic analysis would explore the significance of specific colors, patterns, and shapes within Buddhist culture (Jing et al., 2023, pp. 16-20). The overall meaning of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) lies in its symbolic "BaiNa" concept, which is a collection of many small pieces, reflecting the Buddhist idea of "interdependent origination," where all things are formed by the combined action of multiple factors. Additionally, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) also symbolizes the simple life of Buddhists and their transcendence of the material world.

Pragmatics: Analysis of the functional form of Buddhist BaiNa Pragmatics focuses on the function and effect of signs in actual use, that is, how signs influence and are influenced in specific contexts. In practical use, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is not just clothing but also an important item in religious ceremonies. In the stylistic features of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), pragmatic analysis would consider the actual role of these fabrics in religious and social activities. For example, how BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) serves as monastic robes, conveying spirituality and social status in religious ceremonies, or how it functions as an art piece, conveying Buddhist aesthetics and cultural values.

In summary, Morris's semiotics provides a multifaceted analytical tool for dissecting the stylistic characteristics of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) and for gaining a deeper understanding of its significant role in culture and religion (Feynman et al., 1973, pp. 12-22).

Recent Research

Discussion on Historical Evolution

Wu (2019) summarized the historical development and aesthetic heritage of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), noting its emergence during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods and its popularization with the spread of Buddhism in China. The influence of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) in folk culture and its peak development during the Ming and Qing dynasties were emphasized (pp. 122-128). Mao (2010) defined and historically traced BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), exploring its research value and associating its origin and development with the Buddhist concept of "ascetic practice" (pp. 109-113). Shen and Zhang (2022) focused on the evolution of Han Chinese Buddhist monastic attire, summarizing the evolution of its styles and colors, and identified the "unchanging" core beneath its evolution, highlighting the integration of Buddhist monastic culture with China's climate, traditional etiquette, and folk customs (pp. 11-13). Liang and Xing (2011) combed through the historical changes and cultural implications of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) in dynastic attire, emphasizing its artistic beauty and cultural connotations. These documents provide guidance for researchers to clarify the evolution of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) (pp. 152-154).

Discussion on the Aesthetic Characteristics of Paddy Field Clothing

Sun and Lu (2024), through print image analysis and interpretation, pointed out that paddy field clothing, as a representative of Suzhou women's attire, demonstrates its innovative evolution from monastic robes, reflecting the fashion pursuit, personalized expression, and creative design of early Qing Dynasty Suzhou women. It is a concrete manifestation of the clothing culture under the prosperity of economy and the change of social concepts (p. 250). Xiao (2023) systematically explored the value of overseas Chinese folk cultural relics in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States. Among them, the historical context and aesthetic characteristics of paddy field clothing were analyzed as a case study, which is irreplaceable for understanding and inheriting Chinese folk culture (pp. 104-116). Zhang et al. (2022), by analyzing the aesthetic characteristics such as the shaping craftsmanship, pattern design, and color matching of paddy field clothing, proposed the integration of traditional elements of paddy field clothing into modern sweater design, and used specific cases to guide practice, achieving the application and innovative design of tradition and modernity (pp. 35-39). Zhao (2020) discussed the history and aesthetic characteristics of Ming Dynasty "fashion" paddy field clothing, pointing out that its core charm lies in the splicing process and bold color innovation. It shows the cultural heritage and innovative spirit of paddy field clothing as a Ming Dynasty fashion, which is of important reference value for understanding the aesthetic value of paddy field clothing and its application in modern clothing design (pp. 24-27). The above literature provides a basis and reference for the discussion of the cultural integration impact between Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist

Patchwork) and folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork).

Discussion on Buddhist Art and Culture

Kong and Liu (2023), in their discussion of the "BaiNa" structure of Tibetan Buddhist Chamdan robes, revealed its profound religious and cultural significance. They believe that this structure is not only a symbol of "ascetic practice" but also reflects the Chinese nation's tradition of frugality and virtue, and has the significance of religious universal salvation (pp. 54-62). Deng (2022) delved into the evolution of Buddhist statue attire, revealing the integration of Buddhist clothing with South Asian traditions, local religions, and ancient Greek and Roman cultures. It shows the adaptation of Buddhist clothing in different regions and ethnic cultural traditions, reflecting the situation of cross-cultural integration (pp. 24-34). Huang et al. (2020) focused on the weaving and embroidery techniques and aesthetic design of Dunhuang BaiNa sutra scarves. By categorizing and extracting the appearance, color, and craftsmanship of the fabric, embroidery, and patchwork, they deeply understood the unique genes of the mature weaving and embroidery techniques during the mid-to-late Tang Dynasty (pp. 45-48). Bai (2019) provided a unique perspective for understanding the history and characteristics of Tibetan Thangka schools, showing the unique style of Tibetan art and the profound connotation of Buddhist culture (pp. 29-31). Cao (2018) deeply explored the color concepts in the Han Chinese Buddhist scriptures of the Jin Dynasties, revealing the generation process and symbolic meaning of the color in the scriptures. Pu (2017) focused on the symbolic significance of the lotus element in Buddhist art, pointing out that the widespread use of the lotus reflects the commonality of Buddhist doctrine, Buddhist thought, and the lotus itself (p. 254).

The above literature provides analytical cases and texts for researchers to decipher the cultural connotations of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork).

Discussion on the Innovative Application of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork)

Dai (2023) pointed out in his research that the application of the BaiNa design technique in modern fiber art is not only an inheritance of traditional aesthetic characteristics but also an integration of modern artistic influences (p. 54). Zhang (2019) deeply analyzed the rich cultural connotations of BaiNa clothing, pointing out that its advocacy of frugality and cherishing materials coincides with modern environmental concepts. With personal works as an example, she innovatively applied modern design techniques such as deconstruction and patching, providing new ideas and inspiration for modern fashion design. Xue and Lu (2018) discussed the formal beauty expression of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) collage art, pointing out that "patching" constitutes the formal beauty principles, including the contrast and coordination of material textures, the symmetry and balance of pattern colors, and the association and connotation of geometric shapes (p. 127). Chen (2014), starting from the artistic form, analyzed the innovation and application of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) elements by designers, aiming to enhance people's understanding and recognition of traditional clothing elements. Such research prompts researchers to consider the contemporary application of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) (pp. 76-77).

Through these studies, we can see that BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is not only a symbol of traditional Chinese culture but also a source of modern design innovation. Its evolution in different historical periods and cultural contexts has shown the creativity and aesthetic taste of the Chinese nation, and it also provides valuable insights for the protection and inheritance of traditional handicrafts today.

Although current research on Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) has covered historical, religious, and artistic fields, it is not difficult to find that in-depth interpretation from a semiotic perspective is still relatively lacking. Morris's semiotic theory provides us with a new perspective to examine and understand the connotations and cultural implications of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) from a semiotic perspective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs Charles Morris's semiotics theory as the primary methodological approach to deeply interpret the stylistic characteristics and cultural implications of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork). The literature analysis method was utilized to collect and organize relevant materials, including theoretical works on Morris's semiotics, historical documents on Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), and related artistic creations. Combined with case study analysis, representative instances of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) were selected to analyze the cultural significance embedded in their stylistic features from a semiotic perspective. Building on this, an interdisciplinary research method was applied, integrating Morris's semiotics theory with the fields of Buddhist culture, art studies, and folklore to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the stylistic characteristics and cultural implications of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork).

Research Framework

The analytical framework adopted in this study integrates Morris's semiotics theory to elucidate the motifs.

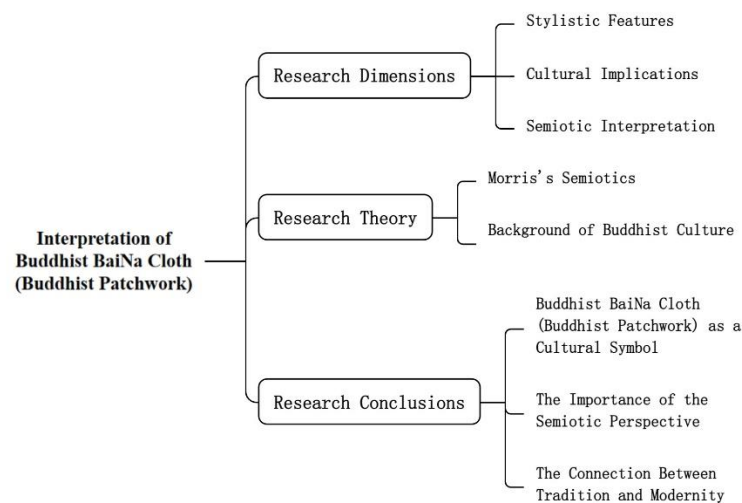


Fig. 2: Research Framework Diagram

Image source: Author's own creation

In this study, as depicted in Fig. 2, the research conducts an in-depth analysis of the stylistic characteristics, cultural implications, and the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) from a semiotic perspective. The theoretical foundation is based on Morris's semiotic framework, combined with the historical evolution of Buddhist culture and the integration of socio-cultural elements. The research findings emphasize the importance of the semiotic perspective in deepening our understanding of the cultural and religious significance of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), and it points out the connections between tradition and modernity, exploring how to inherit and innovate this traditional art form in contemporary society.

Research Results and Findings

Syntactic Features of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)

Compared to secular BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) exhibits significant differences in the form and structure of its symbols. In terms of symbolic form, the style of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is relatively fixed, reflecting a sense of normativity and tradition; in terms of symbolic structure, it primarily organizes its system around Buddhist cosmology, Buddha images, and the pursuit of life (Linguistic Society of Nepal, 2008, p. 405).

Form of Symbols

Folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) often favors auspicious and celebratory themes or patterns, whereas Buddhist BaiNa weaving differs significantly. In the production of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), functionality takes precedence, with themes being secondary. Buddhist BaiNa garments and items primarily focus on style, seldom engaging with thematic elements. Thangka, a form of crafted painting, features a rich array of subjects with strong religious overtones, typically including Buddhist figures, stories, scriptural symbols, religious architecture, and folk customs (Bai, 2015, pp. 29-31). In contrast, folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) exhibits a flexible and diverse range of styles, reflecting individual expressions and creativity. Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), however, has more rigid symbolic forms that rarely change based on personal preference. Buddhist canonical texts, such as the "Shisong Lu," "Sifen Lu," and "Buddhist Monastic Regulations for Bhikshus," detail the symbolic forms of Buddhist attire, stipulating that monasteries and monks cannot arbitrarily alter the symbolic structure of their robes to maintain their sanctity and uniformity (Zhang et al., 2022, pp. 35-39).

Table 1: Examples of Kasaya Symbolism

<p>Coffee-colored seven-piece Image source: kasaya/https://www.haik8.com/p/clvmzl.html</p>	
<p>Dark brown satin with piled embroidery of floral patterns Image source: "Beijing Cultural Relics Essence Series" & Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau. (2001.p.199)</p>	
<p>Purple satin with gold embroidery of the character "Shou" for longevity Image source: http://auction.artron.net/paimai-art31761939/</p>	
<p>Red brocade with multicolored embroidery of twining floral patterns and cloud motifs Image source: China Embroidery and Costume Collection Editorial Board & Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House. Volume 2: Embroidery (2004.p188).</p>	
<p><i>Table source: Author's own creation</i></p>	

Table source: Author's own creation

Throughout more than two thousand years of development in China, the symbolic forms of monks' "Three Robes," "Kasaya," and other vestments have seen variations in materials and colors, but their basic symbolic

structures (as shown in Table 1), such as rectangular or square cloth pieces with standard counts of five, seven, or nine strips, have continued to the present day. The symbolic form of Buddhist banners is also relatively fixed, with banner heads typically made of triangular fabrics and banner bodies composed of the same rectangular or triangular cloth pieces, reflecting symmetry and balance. Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) garments and items adhere to a regulated system, exuding solemnity and dignity.

Structure of Symbols

Although the symbolic forms of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) are fixed, like folk BaiNa, its symbolic structures can incorporate new production materials and techniques, demonstrating a variety of expressive methods. In terms of physical structure, there are flat forms created by selecting and cutting and sewing together small pieces of fabric according to fixed patterns, colors, and textures; there are semi-three-dimensional forms that trim fabric according to pattern shapes and add applique or embroider Buddhas, dragons, lotuses, text, and other designs onto existing symbolic structures; and there are three-dimensional structures that sew fabric into units and then redesign and stack them according to the shape of the object. Regarding stitch structures, there are common flat stitches, backstitches for reinforcing seam strength, quilting stitches for positioning, hidden stitch stitches for concealing thread tracks, and decorative arch stitches and straight stitches, among others. These stitch structures together form the rich symbolic system of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) (Deng, 2022, pp. 24-34).

Syntactic Color

While the symbolic forms of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) are fixed and adhere to traditional scriptures, the syntactic use of color evolves under the influence of secular culture. Indian Buddhism stipulates that monastic robes should not use "noble colors" or pure colors but should use "impure colors" and incorrect colors, such as impure blue, mud color, and magnolia color (Shen & Zhang, 2022, pp. 11-13). After Buddhism was introduced to China, the color system of monastic robes formed a uniquely Chinese system under the influence of local environment, politics, and culture. From the red, black, blue, and brown robes of the Han and Wei periods (Lai, 2001), to the purple and crimson kasaya of the Tang and Song dynasties, to the yellow robes of the Yuan dynasty, and the unified color regulations for Zen, lecture, and Vinaya monks' robes during the Ming dynasty, all reflect the evolution and richness of the color syntax of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork). Modern monks often wear gray and orange robes (Li, 2019, p. 103), and the use of these colors not only follows Buddhist color concepts but also contains specific cultural meanings of Buddhism. For example, the color syntax of Thangka reflects the color system of Tibetan Buddhism, often presented in red, yellow, white, blue, and green colors, which have specific symbolic meanings in the Buddhist cosmology (Mi, 2010, pp. 113-114).

Pragmatic Features of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)

Throughout history, with the profound influence of Buddhism in China, the use of "patchwork robes" has also expanded, making the application of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) in Buddhism and social life more widespread. In Buddhism, beyond monastic garments, the form of "BaiNa" is also utilized in liturgical objects, decorations, and worship items. The forms in which BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is presented in Buddhism are more diverse, including attire, sutra scarves, banners, canopies, Thangkas, and worship cushions, each with its own distinct form and function. BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is not just a material; it also carries specific pragmatic functions, such as conveying doctrines, identifying identities, and signifying ritual importance.

Clothing—Vestments

One of the earliest applications of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) in Buddhism is as monastic attire. The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, advocated that monks wear "patchwork robes" made from discarded fabric to emphasize the importance of simplicity and focus on spiritual practice. As Buddhism evolved, regulations regarding monastic clothing became more defined and standardized. For instance, the "Three Robes" of monks and nuns, composed of varying numbers of cloth patches sewn into a field-like pattern, reflect the specific pragmatic requirements of Buddhist attire (Hua, 2018, pp. 9-11). This particular sewing

technique makes the vestments not only suitable for daily wear but also significant in rituals and meditation, conveying the values of simplicity and inner cultivation in Buddhism.

Liturgical Objects—Banners and Textile Prayer Scarves

In Buddhism, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is also used to create liturgical objects such as banners and textile prayer scarves, which serve specific pragmatic functions in religious ceremonies and practices. Banners, a common Buddhist liturgical object, are used in ceremonies and as objects for devotees to make vows or offerings. The diverse materials and colors of banners, along with the patchwork of multiple cloth pieces on the banner body, reflect their multifunctionality and symbolic significance in Buddhist rituals (Zhao & Wang, 2013, pp. 169-174). BaiNa textile prayer scarves from the mid- to late Tang Dynasty have been discovered among Dunhuang artifacts; the Lu Shun Museum also preserves several pieces of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) similar to those recorded in Dunhuang scriptures. These scarves, made from silk, brocade, satin, and other fine fabrics, vary in size and exhibit exquisite craftsmanship. As offerings, their patchwork form and fine workmanship not only serve practical purposes in Buddhist activities but also carry pragmatic values of reverence and devotion.

Items—Curtain and Worshipping Cushions

Buddhism often uses textiles to arrange indoor and outdoor environments, with curtains and worship cushions being common items. Through comparative examination of literature, unearthed artifacts, and modern items, it is evident that some curtains and many worship cushions are made using the BaiNa method. The use of these items in Buddhist environments not only serves to divide and decorate spaces but also conveys Buddhist aesthetics and spiritual pursuits through their patchwork form and colors.



Fig. 3 Veil

Image source: Zhao (2007, pp. 46-51).

The production of Tang Dynasty curtains (as shown in Fig. 3) involved sewing together various fabrics such as silk, plain silk, dark silk, brocade, satin, and embroidered pieces into sections. In modern temples, curtains are also commonly used to partition and enhance spaces like umbrella covers and table skirts. BaiNa worship cushions in temples are made by cutting fabric into small pieces, folding them into uniform shapes, and then arranging them in a radiating pattern from the center, often in the form of a lotus, demonstrating the pragmatic role of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) in creating a religious atmosphere.

Artworks—Thangkas

Buddhist BaiNa artworks are exemplified by embroidered Thangkas. Thangkas, a type of Buddhist painting, are popular in Tibetan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Inner Mongolian monasteries and are made using various methods. Piled satin embroidered Thangkas, in particular, utilize the patchwork technique of BaiNa, cutting fabrics into small pieces according to a design and then sewing them together. They can be flat or three-dimensional with stuffing, and the Ming Dynasty piled satin embroidery "Great White Umbrella Covering Buddha Mother" in the Potala Palace, Tibet, is a classic representative of the Buddhist BaiNa style. Mi (2010) explored the Buddhist themes and color semantics of Thangkas, noting the emphasis on contrast and a resplendent golden effect in their coloring, and delved into the Buddhist wisdom and cosmology inherent in

their meanings and contents (pp. 113-114). As a form of Buddhist painting, Thangkas not only provide visual pleasure but also convey Buddhist doctrines and symbolic meanings through their materials and techniques. The three-dimensional effect and rich colors of piled satin embroidered Thangkas give them unique pragmatic value in Buddhist art, making them an essential medium for conveying Buddhist culture and spirit (Ervas, F., et al., 2011, p. 50).

Semantics and Aesthetic Characteristics of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)

Compared to folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) has different reasons for production. While folk BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is often made with the sentiment of cherishing resources and praying for blessings, reflecting people's hopes for a good life and allowing for the free expression of personality and creativity, Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is made for religious purposes, strictly adhering to religious canons and serving the usage rules of religion, thus possessing distinctive cultural meanings and aesthetic features.

Identity Signification

Buddhism has a worldview and lifestyle distinct from the secular. Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), serving monasteries and the monastic community, differs from the secular in its forms and colors, serving to identify identity and different sects. Clothing is an important auxiliary for identity recognition; the special form of Buddhist "patchwork robes" makes them instantly recognizable as monastics. Moreover, the styles and colors of monastic robes serve to identify monks of different statuses, making Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) a vital part of the Buddhist visual identification system.







Doctrine Embodiment

The styles of BaiNa clothing and items also carry profound meanings. Their colors and forms contain Buddhist teachings and precepts. The patterns or decorations chosen and the craftsmanship employed have special symbolic meanings and implications in Buddhism. They not only meet the needs of Buddhist monks in their religious lives but also highlight religious doctrines. For instance, the form of monastic robes is closely related to Buddhist concepts. The "patchwork robe," also known as the "field-clothing robe," resembles field ridges, aligning with the Buddhist concept of "broadly planting fields of blessings" and performing good deeds. Buddhism advocates for the renunciation of material desires and quiet practice, and wearing simple "patchwork robes" serves as a reminder for monks to overcome the temptations of material life and focus on practice. The lotus flower, a common symbolic element in Buddhist art representing purity and cleanliness, is often used in the shape of Buddhist BaiNa worship cushions, helping to create a clean and devout environment for worship, effectively meeting the needs of religious utensils.

Solemnity and Peace

Buddhist teachings are not only manifested in written texts but also in external adornments and environmental arrangements, including attire, utensils, and decorative items, which create a solemn and grand atmosphere, subtly influencing people without their conscious awareness.

Table 2 Examples of Banner Symbols

					
<p>Guiding Bodhisattva Late Tang - Five Dynasties Collection of the Guimet</p>		<p>Guiding Bodhisattva Late Tang Collection of the Guimet</p>		<p>Guiding Bodhisattva Tang Dynasty Collection of the Sackler</p>	

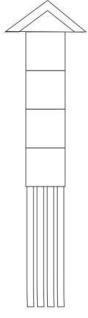

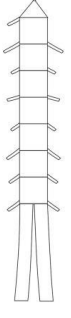

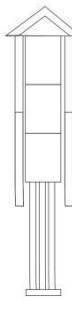

Museum France		Museum France		Museum Harvard University	
					
Banner Late Tang - Five Dynasties Collection of the British Museum		Banner Early Tang Excavated from Dunhuang		Banner Late Tang - Five Dynasties Excavated from the Mogao Caves Dunhuang	

Table source: Author's own creation

As shown in Table 2, in Buddhism, banners are used to purify and sanctify halls, and robes can also be used to dignify statues, all falling under the category of "solemnity and peace" (Pu, 2017, p. 254). Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), with its structured form and modest color palette, evokes a sense of solemn beauty and reverence. Its soft material characteristics add a tranquil and peaceful quality to the overall environment, making it an indispensable organic component in the shaping of Buddhist environments.

Transcendence and Sublimation

The patterns of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) include geometric shapes such as banners, worship mats, and curtains. The styles or patterns pieced together often depict religious figures beyond the mundane, such as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Dharma protectors, or plant motifs like lotuses, bamboo, and clouds, or geometric shapes like circles and squares, seldom involving concrete objects from secular life. The depictions of religious figures are often grand, balanced, and resplendent, causing one to forget the secular world, possessing an otherworldly and mysterious beauty. This greatly inspires feelings of awe, worship, and devotion, significantly igniting the passion of faith. This unique ability to evoke emotions is unmatched by ordinary secular BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork).

Semiotics Analysis of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) by Morris's Theory

Through the interpretation of Morris's semiotics, we can not only understand the physical and symbolic meanings of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) but also delve into its social and cultural functions in practical use. Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is not only a religious garment but also a cultural carrier. It integrates the teachings, beliefs, and aesthetics of Buddhism, conveying rich cultural implications and becoming an important part of Buddhist culture. This multidimensional method of interpretation helps to comprehensively understand the complexity and depth of Buddhist culture.

Table 3: Analysis of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)

Summary of Morris's Semiotics Analysis of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)		
Analysis Dimension	Semiotic Analysis	Research Findings
Symbol Types	Patchwork fabric, religious colors (such as off-color, brown, beige, etc.), patterns (such as lotus, paddy field motifs)	Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) exhibits its profound religious and cultural characteristics through its unique symbol types.
Symbolic Meaning	Patchwork fabric symbolizes resource reuse and simple living; religious colors and patterns convey Buddhist teachings and spirit, such as the lotus symbolizing purity.	The symbolic meanings of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) reflect Buddhism's emphasis on simplicity, regeneration, and spiritual pursuit.

Buddhist Symbols	The robe symbolizes renouncing worldly luxuries and seeking spiritual liberation; the lotus symbolizes purity and enlightenment.	The Buddhist symbols on Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) are deeply rooted in the core doctrines and practice goals of Buddhism.
Religious Beliefs	Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) embodies Buddhist religious beliefs, such as the pursuit of compassion, wisdom, and liberation.	As a material carrier of Buddhist faith, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) conveys Buddhist religious ideas and practice objectives.
Social Value	The production and use of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) reflect Buddhism's values of conserving resources, opposing waste, and the pursuit of social equality and harmony.	In terms of social value, Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) embodies Buddhism's sense of social responsibility and ethical pursuits.
Cultural Implications	Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) carries rich cultural connotations, such as reverence for nature and the universe, and a profound understanding of life and existence.	BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is not only a manifestation of Buddhist culture but also a reflection of human cultural and spiritual pursuits.

Table source: Author's own creation

As summarized in Table 3, the diversity of symbol types in Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) demonstrates its unique

visual language. The patchwork fabric is not only a craft technique but also reflects the spirit of frugality and regeneration in Buddhism. The use of religious colors and patterns, such as lotus flowers and paddy field motifs, further strengthens its identity as a symbol of Buddhist culture, conveying the pursuit of purity, peace, and enlightenment. These symbol types and symbolic meanings together constitute the syntactic characteristics of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), reflecting Buddhism's profound understanding of the material and spiritual worlds.

The symbolic and Buddhist symbolic levels of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) reveal its significant role in religious beliefs and social values. As monastic robes, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) is not only a sign of identity but also a medium for spreading Buddhist teachings, symbolizing the religious ideal of renouncing worldly luxuries and pursuing spiritual liberation. At the same time, it also embodies Buddhism's advocacy of social equality, harmony, and sustainable lifestyles. These values are reflected and disseminated in the design and use of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), making it an indispensable part of Buddhist culture.

In terms of cultural implications, Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), as an art form, carries rich cultural significance and historical information. It not only reflects Buddhism's reverence for nature and the universe but also expresses a profound understanding of life and existence. The artistic value of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) lies in its ability to span time and space, connecting the past with the present, and becoming an essential link in the inheritance of Buddhist culture. Through its unique symbol system, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) narrates Buddhist stories, conveys its philosophical thoughts, and inspires exploration of the spiritual world and aspirations for a better life, demonstrating the enduring influence and artistic charm of Buddhist culture in contemporary society.

DISCUSSIONS

In this study, two key points need further discussion to deepen the understanding of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork):

Symbolic Meaning and Modern Interpretation of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork)

Although the traditional symbolic meanings of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) have clear historical records and explanations, these symbolic meanings may have been reinterpreted or given new connotations over time and with socio-cultural changes. Further discussing how these changes occur and how modern designers and artists combine traditional symbolic meanings with modern aesthetics and values is crucial for understanding the contemporary cultural status of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork).

Diversity of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) in Different Cultural and Religious Practices

Buddhism, as a global religion, has diverse expressions in different regions and cultures. As an important

religious and cultural symbol, the stylistic features and cultural implications of BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) may vary significantly across different Buddhist traditions. Further exploring how these differences reflect the faith practices, social customs, and cultural values of Buddhists in various regions, and how they influence the design and production of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of its diversity and inclusiveness.

In-depth discussions of these points can enrich the multidimensional understanding of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) as a cultural symbol and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for its traditional protection and modern innovation.

CONCLUSION

Throughout history, Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork), as a product embodying the concept of 'ascetic practice,' has emerged and gradually evolved into a cultural symbol with rich implications. Along with the vigorous rise and widespread dissemination of Buddhism, BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork) has undergone continuous improvement and innovation, becoming a unique expression in Buddhist attire, imbued with profound aesthetic value and cultural significance. From the theoretical perspective of Morris's semiotics, the pattern design, manufacturing techniques, color selection, and material use of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) all reveal respect for nature and life, showcasing the unique aesthetic charm of Buddhist art and providing an important pathway for a deep understanding of its cultural and religious connotations. Furthermore, the inheritance and innovation of Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) in contemporary society reflect respect for traditional craftsmanship and the integration of modern design concepts. This combination not only maintains the continuity of its religious and cultural values but also adapts to the dual demands of modern society's aesthetics and functionality, proving that the core values and spirit of Buddhist culture continue to be passed down amidst ongoing development and evolution. At the same time, in-depth research on Buddhist BaiNa Cloth (Buddhist Patchwork) is of immeasurable significance for us to fully grasp and understand the historical origins, stylistic evolution, cultural connotations of traditional Chinese BaiNa Cloth (Patchwork), as well as its application and impact in cultural diffusion.

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