

Chinese Culture Impact on Nyonya Clothes

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KEYWORDS:

Chinese culture
China
Kebaya
Nyonya
Malaysia

CITATION:

Jiaqi, Y. (2025). Chinese Culture Impact on Nyonya Clothes. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 10(3), e003019.
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v10i3.3019>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Chinese culture on Nyonya costume, a uniquely Malaysian Chinese costume, through historical review and comparative analysis. It explores the fusion of Chinese and Malay elements in the costume and the resulting cultural heritage. Using qualitative research methods, this study reveals how Chinese aesthetics influenced the design and craftsmanship of Nyonya garments. The findings emphasise that the evolution of clothing is a reflection of cultural exchange and adaptation. It also emphasized the importance of mutual cultural understanding and respect in enriching and protecting this unique cultural expression, as well as promoting cultural diversity and symbiotic relationships between China and Malaysia.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the cultural integration reflected in Nyonya attire, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between Chinese and Malaysian cultures.

1. Introduction

Chinese culture on Kebaya. Mainly based on literature review and comparative analysis, supplemented by investigation, this article elaborates on the Chinese and Malay elements of Kebaya, as well as the influence of Chinese culture on Kebaya. It is found that Baba Nyonya is mainly concentrated in Malacca and Penang in Malaysia. From Tan Siew Imm's *English Dictionary of Baba* (Tan, 2016) and Khoo Joo Ee's book *The Straits Chinese: A Cultural History* (Ee, 1996), it can be seen that the term Nyonya (nǒ-niâ) has been mistakenly thought to be derived from the Portuguese term 'donha', a term of endearment for a woman, and the two words have completely different pronunciations. In Malay and Indonesian, 'donha' is a term of respect for a foreign woman. Nyonya is from the Hokkien language, and Baba Nyonya is the Hokkien word for mother and father, which was later used to refer to the native Chinese (Kartomihardjo, 1981).

In addition to this, the present study conducts a multifaceted analysis of the historical context and manufacturing techniques of Nyonya clothes. This encompasses an examination of the nature of cultural exchange, a tracing of the evolution of the Nyonya Kebaya from its traditional origins to its current form, and a comparative study of Chinese and Nyonya attire. Through these analyses, the study elucidates the influence of Chinese culture on Nyonya Clothes, as well as the heritage and unique characteristics that have emerged as a result of cultural integration.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the impact of Chinese culture on Nyonya attire, trace its evolution, and assess the synthesis of cultural elements, emphasizing the significance of heritage preservation.

2. Literature Review

This study delves into the historical and cultural ties between China and Malaysia, with a particular focus on the influence of Chinese culture on Malaysian clothing, especially the Nyonya attire. The review encompasses a broad spectrum of scholarly works and historical documents that provide a rich context for understanding the cultural exchanges and their manifestations in the clothing traditions of the Baba Nyonya community in Malaysia.

Early bilateral relations between China and Malaysia, dating back to the Han Dynasty, are explored through the works of Tan (2013) and Liang (2006). These studies highlight the significance of the Silk Road, not only as a conduit for economic trade but also as a catalyst for cultural and artistic exchanges between the East and the West. The Silk Road's impact on the cultural and trade dynamics of neighboring countries, including Malaysia, is underscored by Jiang (2019) and Gao (2016), who discuss the maritime and overland routes that facilitated these exchanges.

The unique cultural fusion embodied by the Baba Nyonya community is examined through the lenses of Kartomihardjo (1981) and Khoo (1996). These authors provide insights into the etymology of the term "Nyonya" and its cultural significance, reflecting the integration of Chinese and Malay identities. The literature also addresses the misconceptions surrounding the term's origin, clarifying its Hokkien roots and its evolution as a descriptor for the community.

The review further investigates the evolution of the Nyonya Kebaya, drawing on the works of Chen (2021), Ma (2018), Zhang and Cui (2014). These studies detail the transformation of the traditional "Baju Panjang" into the Kebaya, reflecting the influence of European textiles and the integration of Chinese, Malay, and Western elements in its design. The intricate embroidery and the use of traditional Chinese motifs, such as the dragon and phoenix, symbolize the auspiciousness and cultural richness of the attire.

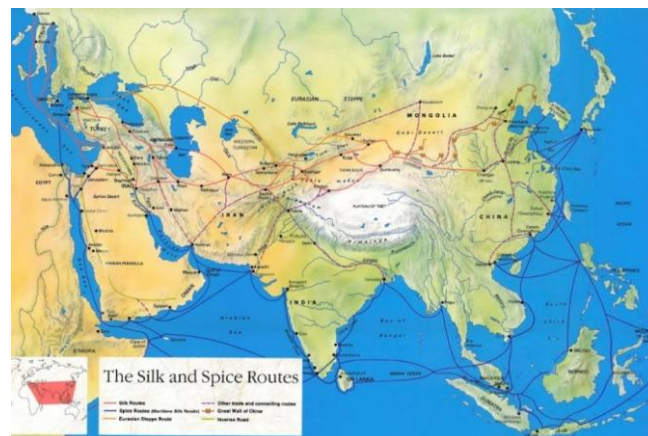
The influence of Chinese culture on the Nyonya costumes is further elaborated by Yuan (2019), Zhang and Cui (2014), who discuss the retention of traditional Chinese craftsmanship and the incorporation of Chinese decorative elements in the attire. The adaptation of these elements to local tastes and the creation of a distinct Peranakan style are highlighted, showcasing the syncretism of cultures in the Malaysian context.

2.1. Relation Between China and Malaysia

Malaysia and China have always had friendly bilateral relations in terms of politics, economy, culture, and other aspects (Tan, 2013). This friendly bilateral relationship can be traced back to the early Han Dynasty in China. This is because during the Western Han Dynasty, the country was strong, and various countries in the Western Regions hoped to reduce their chances of invasion by the Xiongnu, through the protection of the Western Han Dynasty. Zhang Qian was dispatched to the Western Regions to communicate the exchange between the Central Plains and the Western Regions (Liang, 2006). At the same time, silk from the Central Plains was very popular among the ethnic groups of the Western Regions. In order to promote China's economic development, trade began to circulate and silk was the most traded. Therefore, the Silk Road was established.

The Silk Road was a major road for economic, political and cultural exchanges between the East and the West (Jiang, 2019). The opening of the Silk Road (Map 1) contributed to the economic prosperity of Eastern and Western countries. For example, there was a "road guide" system in China during the Han Dynasty and the "Hublot Department" system during the Tang Dynasty. These systems were designed to facilitate trade on the Silk Road. With more and more trade, these countries also needed to improve their administrative and military capabilities to cope with the increasingly powerful Han armies.

Map 1: The Silk and Spice Routes



Source: UNESCO (n.d.)

The Silk Road is divided into the Maritime Silk Road and the Overland Silk Road. The original role of the Land Silk Road was to transport silk produced in ancient China (Gao, 2016). Specifically, the Maritime Silk Road was a sea route for transport, trade and cultural interaction between ancient China and foreign countries, passing through what are now China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen and Somalia (Maritime Silk Road, 2015).

During the Yuan Dynasty, the Silk Road began to decline due to the three western expeditions of the Mongol Iron Horse under the rule of Genghis Khan. It had a great impact on the economy and culture of Central and Western Asia, and at the same time, brought suffering to the people. The Silk Road is a historical witness to the interaction and exchange between the Western Han Dynasty and the Western regions, as well as a road connecting China with countries in West Asia and Europe, before and after the Western

Han Dynasty (Heeren, 1935). Along this Silk Road, Chinese silk fabrics, iron smelting, well drilling, paper making and other technologies were successively introduced to the West (Wang, 2015). Not only that, western furs, Fergana horses and fruits, as well as Buddhism, magic, music, dance, sculpture and so on, were also brought to the East. It can be said that the Silk Road promoted economic and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, and also brought the Han Chinese closer to other ethnic minorities along the route, while also promoting the development of Northwest China.

Trade and commerce with Southeast Asia became more frequent during the Ming Dynasty in ancient China. Many Chinese along the coast chose to do business in the neighborhood of Malacca, which was a transport hub at that time, and intermarried with the locals, thereby gradually forming a special social group with a blend of Malay and Chinese cultures, known as Nyonya for females and Batu Pahat for males. In the early days, most Batu were engaged in trading, and because of their diligence and good financial management, many became local tycoons and they used their unique ethnicity to build bridges between the Chinese and other ethnic groups (Qian, 2020; Yang, 2010). Moreover, due to their intermarriage with the locals, they still maintain some Chinese customs, such as clothing. Refer to Figure 1, in museums in Malaysia, one can also see Zheng He's cargo ships and countries he passed through during his voyages to the West.

Figure 1: The Zheng. H. Cultural Museum reproduces the scene of Zheng He's fleet



Source: Zheng He Cultural Museum in Malacca (2023)

From the right half of this picture, it can be seen that the trade route between China and the Malay Peninsula starts from southern China, heads south, passes through Vietnam, and then crosses the South China Sea to reach the Malay Peninsula.

Clothing has national, regional, and practical characteristics. Different ethnic regions have different clothing characteristics, and the clothing of different ethnic groups in the same region also have similarities (Yuan, 2008). Mutual acceptance is an important phenomenon in cultural exchange through clothing. It is the identification of one ethnic or regional group with another ethnic or regional culture, and it is also the result of cultural exchange (Cao, 2010). In the process of dissemination and acceptance, one clothing culture inevitably comes into contact, collision, and fusion with another culture, resulting in other new clothing styles, ways of wearing, and clothing concepts.

3. Research Methods

This study employs qualitative research and comparative analysis to explore the influence of Chinese culture on Malaysian Nonya attire. By extensively reviewing historical documents, academic articles, and relevant books, the research traces the cultural and economic exchange history between China and Malaysia, with particular emphasis on the significant role of the Maritime Silk Road in cultural and trade interactions. This approach establishes the theoretical framework for the study and provides historical context for subsequent comparative analysis. Concurrently, the study conducts an in-depth comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between Nonya attire and traditional Chinese cultural dress. This includes a detailed comparison of aspects such as color, craftsmanship, patterns, and accessories to reveal the specific impacts of Chinese culture on Nyonya clothing.

Through case studies of Nyonya attire, the research delves into the evolution of these garments within various social and cultural contexts. Content analysis is utilized to systematically examine the artistic elements within the attire, exploring their themes, forms, and meanings. This method aids in understanding the cultural symbolism and aesthetic values embedded within the design of the garments. Additionally, the study offers an intuitive understanding of the craftsmanship and cultural significance of the attire through the process of creating Nonya clothing.

In summary, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the influence of Chinese culture on Nyonya attire, highlighting the importance of cultural integration and innovation in the development of dress. These methodologies not only furnish the research with rich data and profound insights but also offer significant academic support for understanding and preserving this unique cultural heritage.

3.1. Chinese and Malaysian Nyonya Clothing

From around Before the Common Era to the 6th to 9th centuries, many kingdoms emerged in Southeast Asia, deeply influenced by China in terms of national relations and economics, and also culturally influenced to varying degrees (He, 2016). After the 11th century, especially after the Ming treasure voyages, the relationship between Southeast Asia and China became closer and closer. China's influence on Southeast Asia, especially in material culture, agriculture, handicraft production technology, navigation, and shipbuilding has continued to increase, and its influence on the social life of Southeast Asian residents has increased. However, influenced by geographical environment and historical development, the main characteristic of Southeast Asian culture is 'diversity'. Since modern times, a large number of Chinese people have entered Southeast Asia, and the Chinese culture brought to Southeast Asia by them has gradually become a component of Southeast Asian multiculturalism (He, 2016).

Geographically speaking, Southeast Asia is located in the southeast of Asia, including Mainland Southeast Asia and the Malay Archipelago. The Indochina Peninsula is named after its location towards south of China, and the slender part of the south is called the Malay Peninsula. The Malay Archipelago is scattered in the vast sea area between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. It is the largest archipelago in the world. There are more than 20,000 islands belonging to Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor-Lest, Brunei, and the Philippines (Walters, 1982).

The picture (Map 2) shows the Southeast Asian part of the Maritime Silk Road, with the blue font indicating the countries along the Maritime Silk Road and some cities in China.

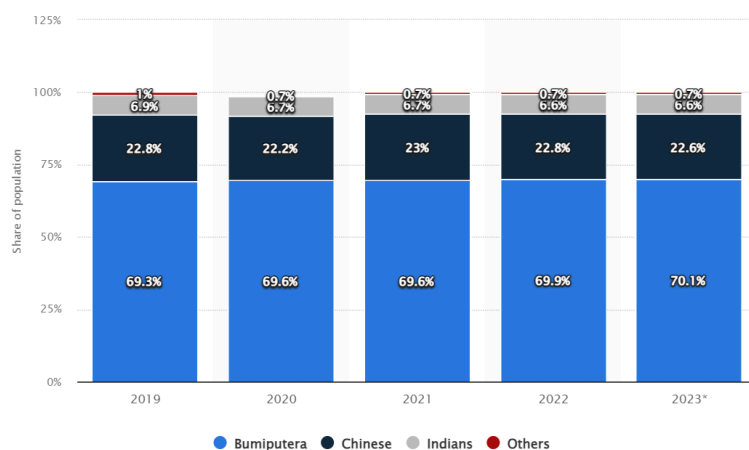
Map 2: The Maritime Silk Road in Southeast Asia



Source: Author's creation

There are many countries in Southeast Asia, but it is Malaysia that has been the most influenced by Chinese culture. Malaysia has a large Chinese population, second only to the Malays, and is one of the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia (Wong, 1982). As shown in the Figure 2, the population of Chinese people has reached over 20% from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 2: Share of population in Malaysia from 2019 to 2023



Source: Statista (2024)

3.2. Chinese People in Malaysia

The three main ethnic groups in Malaysia are the Malays, Chinese and Indians, rather than the native Malaysians (Cao, 2013). Despite the fact that Malaysia has a large Chinese population, which makes up more than 20% of the total Malaysian population and dominates the Malaysian economy, early Malaysians largely considered themselves

Chinese ([The People's Government of Pingyuan, n.d.](#)). Since the Chinese in Malaysia were the ones who came to trade in Malacca during the early Chinese period, the Malaysian Chinese have stubbornly retained some of their Chinese customs, as well as Chinese language education. Compared to the Chinese in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, who were assimilated by foreigners, and the Chinese in Singapore, who once voluntarily gave up their Chinese culture, the Malaysian Chinese are considered the best-preserved group of Chinese in Southeast Asia.

After Zheng He's sailing to West Ocean, the sea routes were open, and Chinese people from Fujian and Guangdong actively engaged in activities in the three regions of Southeast Asia, namely: Siam, Champa, and the northern coast of Borneo; the coasts of Malacca, Sumatra, and Java; the northern coast of the Philippines and most islands ([Yu, 1970](#)).

The true formation of the Southeast Asian Chinese ethnic group began during the Ming Dynasty and flourished during the Qing Dynasty. From 1522 to 1566, Zheng He made seven voyages to the West, with a fleet of up to tens of thousands of people accompanying him, lasting for about thirty years ([Liang & Lu, 2010](#)). Most Chinese merchant ships gathered at the ports, and in early spring, they followed the northwest monsoon southward and in summer, they returned along the southeast monsoon. At that time, most of the overseas Chinese in Malacca came from the Fujian Province, with men and women wearing buns and customs similar to those in China. The structure and decoration of the houses in the whole city were modeled after the Chinese style, making it seem like a city in overseas China ([Song, 1964](#)). Zheng He's voyages to the West brought prosperity to China's economy, and a large number of Chinese people from Guangdong and Fujian also settled in Southeast Asia to engage in commerce and cultivate wasteland. Fujian and Guangdong are located on the southeast coast, with numerous fishermen and a well-developed shipbuilding and navigation industry, making it convenient to go to sea. Many fishermen were recruited by Zheng He as helmsmen, boatmen and various attendants. Over the long term, a tradition of communicating overseas and seeking development overseas was formed ([Huang, 1996](#)).

During the Qing Dynasty, the number of immigrants increased significantly, especially during the late Qing Dynasty in the 19th century. A large number of Chinese immigrants had migrated to various countries in Southeast Asia, especially the British Straits Settlements ([Wang, 2009](#)). At this time, Malaysia was one of the countries where Fujianese immigrants migrated overseas in the late Qing Dynasty. With the increasing number of Chinese immigrants, the phenomenon of intermarriage and reproduction with the local indigenous people also continued to increase, ultimately forming a fusion in culture and language, and ultimately developing into the "Baba Nyonya" ethnic group. Therefore, Baba Nyonya is also known as Strait Chinese or Peranakan Cina ([Huang, 2011](#)).

3.3. Baba Nyonya Clothing

Due to historical reasons, the Baba Nyonya ethnic group has preserved a unique culture, which is the fusion of the Chinese, Malay, and Western cultures. This group is a cultural fusion and a living fossil of the Southeast Asian regional culture ([Chen, 2021](#)). They have preserved the cultural and religious traditions of the majority of Chinese people (such as ancestor worship), while absorbing the language and culture of the Malay people. Due to factors such as wealth and political status, they had gained the convenience of studying in Europe and America earlier, and had also integrated the Western culture into their own country after returning ([Zhang & Cui, 2014](#)).

In Malaysia, the Baba Nyonya ethnic group still retains the historical and cultural status of the Sultanate of Malacca. The culture of Peranakan Cina incorporates many elements of different races, such as their traditional clothing having unique characteristics. One of the traditional costumes of Peranakan Cina is called Nyonya Kebaya. This unique clothing culture has a history that is centuries old (Chen, 2021).

The Nyonya Kebaya clothing is divided into two parts: top and bottom. The top is Kebaya and the bottom is Sarung. However, Nyonya Kebaya originated from Nyonya's original costume "Baju Panjang", also known as "Kebaya Labor", which was the predecessor of Kebaya. It is a knee length dress, usually with a matching lining (Baju Kecil) inside. In the early 19th century, Baju Panjang used Chaly (Sumatran textile cotton fabric) as the raw material (Ma, 2018). Its texture is relatively rough, the pattern is simple, and the color is relatively single, with only two categories: gray and brown (Chen, 2021). When the Rubia fabric was introduced to Southeast Asia by European (mainly British) colonizers, it quickly replaced the original material. The locals realized that although Rubia looks like gauze, even with a lot of embroidery, it can still maintain its shape without any changes. Moreover, its texture is very light, which can reflect the beautiful figure of women. Therefore, the diverse embroidery style of "Nyonya Kebaya" (Figure 3) gradually replaced the long gown. Kebaya's lower body is fixed with SARUNG. It is a garment similar to a tube skirt, consisting of a rectangular piece of fabric tied around the waist (Zhang & Cui, 2014). In addition to matching the pattern, color, and kebaya, the Baba Nyonya ethnic group also has strict details when wearing the SARUNG: the length of the fabric should reach the ankle, the crease of the cloth must be in the middle of the foot, the bottom must be level, the degree of tightening should closely follow the curve of the feet, a silver belt should be worn around the waist, accessories should be paired with small a beaded handbag (Ma, 2018).

Figure 3: Nyonya wearing "Nyonya Kebaya" in 1950



Source: Seng (2019)

After the improvement of the materials for kebaya, significant changes were made. The colors are bright (usually using traditional Chinese festive colors, such as red, pink, green, etc.), the patterns are diverse, and even the production process is handmade embroidery. Nyonya Kebaya is famous for its hand embroidered patterns, which combine Chinese and Malay elements. It uses "Sarong" or "Batik" as a long skirt (usually a wrap-around skirt),

and sometimes uses imported hand drawn or printed patterns of Chinese silk (Chen, 2021) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Embroidered Kebaya and Sarong Collection, 1950s, Taipei Sayama Art Gallery Collection



Source: Hon (2020)

The most attractive part of the "Nyonya Kebaya" embroidery is its exquisite and detailed embroidery, mainly located at the bottom of the shirt, sleeves, collar, and back. The "Nyonya Kebaya" adopts traditional Chinese hand embroidery and hollowing techniques (Figure 6) to enhance the beauty of the clothing, making Nyonya tops increasingly different and more exquisite from traditional Malay clothing. Embroidery patterns also use some Chinese style patterns, such as lotus, dragon, phoenix, peony, twelve zodiac signs, eight immortals, and so on (Figure 6), which have auspicious meanings and also have a strong traditional Chinese cultural charm. Due to the influence of the Malay culture on Kebaya, every space on the Nyonya costume is filled with geometric patterns (Figure 5). This is different from the traditional Chinese culture and instead, better reflects the aesthetic views of "native Chinese". At the beginning of the 20th century, the preference of Nyonya to use soft, light-colored patterns was indirectly influenced by the aesthetics of the Qing Dynasty (Lee, 2016).

At the same time, due to the European elements brought by European colonizers, many women were attracted to them, and thus created new designs in their clothing, especially for young people at that time. The collar and hem of the Nyonya dress are designed with European lace, symbolizing the nobility and prosperity of society at that time. European patterns, especially floral patterns, are often seen in the "Nyonya Kebaya", and later, a very European style white lace bordered Kebaya appeared (Figure 4). People can see unique patterns on the "Nyonya Kebaya" with Eastern embroidery and Western lace.

In addition, the patterns on the lower skirt are also traditional Chinese patterns, such as flowers, birds, fish, insects, dragons and phoenixes, to show auspiciousness (Shuai, 2012). Malays often incorporate natural elements closely related to life into their artistic creations. Although traditional Malay clothing is also embroidered with floral patterns, it has significant differences from the Nyonya clothing patterns, including the selection of

pattern types, the size of pattern drawing, and the arrangement of patterns on the clothing. The patterns of Nyonya clothing are mainly flowers, birds, fish, and insects. In addition to being closely related to nature, there is another important reason why Chinese people highly respect the local religious culture when traveling abroad. The Peranakans ethnic group respects the local religious culture, so they do not print tattoos on their clothes, which is an important manifestation of the compatibility between Chinese culture and Malay culture. The tailors who make the "Nyonya Kebaya" with their hands usually use old-fashioned sewing machines (Figure 6) to make them, because these machines can sew very small patterns and are relatively easy to control. Embroidered patterns sewn using this traditional old-fashioned sewing machine look more vivid. As it is well known, better and more beautiful embroidery is often handmade.

Figure 5: Geometric patterns of Kebaya



Source: [Chen \(2021\)](#)

Figure 6: Cutwork embroidery (left) and Lotus pattern (right)



Source: [Chen \(2021\)](#)

Figure 7: The old-fashioned sewing machine used for making Kebaya



Source: Liu (2021)

The dressing habits and aesthetics of Chinese people are different from those of Southeast Asians. However, Chinese people have their aesthetics and customs, so they have made improvements to traditional Malay clothing, adopting a Chinese style split front design and a conservative loose cut compared to traditional Malay clothing. The Nyonya outfit is tailored to highlight the waist, and the top is long at the front and short at the back, outlining the graceful and versatile picture of women (Figure 8). The fabric chosen for the clothing is not only for coolness but also to showcase the delicate beauty of Chinese culture. In addition, the design of the collar and hem of the Nyonya dress adopts European lace (Figure 9), symbolizing nobility and prosperity of the society at that time.

Figure 8: The traditional attire of Baba Nyonya in Malacca



Source: Tian (2019)

Figure 9: The Kebaya of Lace



Source: [Nanyang \(2017\)](#)

4. Findings

4.1. The Influence of Chinese Culture on Nyonya Clothing

Nyonya costumes have deep roots in and similarities with Chinese costumes ([Yuan, 2019](#)). The Nyonya costumes have retained some of the traditional Chinese craftsmanship and decorations and are very elaborate, with many similarities between the Nyonya costumes and the traditional Chinese costumes, with the exception of the obvious differences in the cuffs and cuff-links, which are roughly the same in style and in the positioning of the lace decorations ([Zhang & Cui, 2014](#)). In some ceremonial occasions, the Nyonya people also wear Chinese costumes in accordance with the former Chinese tradition, such as weddings and ancestor worship.

The clothing of Baba Nyonya is a witness to the rooting of Chinese culture in Malaysia. It is a native Chinese clothing formed by the fusion of several cultures. On the basis of fusion, it preserves the cultural charm of the Chinese nation, which also indicates that their ancestors made up their minds to preserve the Chinese culture when they migrated and passed it on from generation to generation ([Zhang, 2010](#)). However, in addition to the common attire of the women, their wedding attire also reflects the influence of multiculturalism and is the most representative of the fusion of multicultural elements. The groom is dressed in Chinese clothing, some even in suits, while the bride wears a phoenix crown and a horse face skirt, which has a strong flavor of Chinese culture. American scholar John J. Heeren recorded in his book—*The Far East: A History of Recent and Contemporary International Relation in East Asia* that, "After Zheng He's voyages to the West, the clothing and decoration of Malaysians were also influenced by China. The short-sleeved shirts worn by women, as well as wide pants, glass beads, various hats, raincoats, and soles, were all imported from China." ([Heeren, 1935](#)). In addition, when Nyonya people ordered jewelry from Malay merchants, Chinese patterns such as phoenix ([Figure 10](#) and [Figure 11](#)), peony, and eight immortals were also the most commonly used by Nyonya people. Although jewelry has deviated from the original Chinese style, women still believe that these patterns represent auspiciousness, just like the Chinese people's understanding of these patterns.

Figure 10: Golden Flower Silk Phoenix Headpiece (Chinese Phoenix Pattern)



Source: [Qu \(2022\)](#)

Figure 11: Beautiful Nyonya jewelry becomes collector's favorite (Nyonya Phoenix Pattern)



Source: [Ye \(2017\)](#)

Despite being influenced by Chinese Culture and the clothing of Baba Nyonya is different from Chinese culture. It can be seen from the craftsmanship and color of Nyonya's clothing that their clothing is still based on Chinese culture, and has integrated local culture into a new form of clothing. On the one hand, influenced by the Chinese people who went to Southeast Asia for business in the 15th to 17th centuries, the Chinese brought their culture into the area, and even after leaving their homeland, they still had a strong emotional attachment to it. After settling overseas, a generation of Chinese people's longing for their motherland became even stronger, and they unconsciously reminded themselves of their background, which could affect family members. On the other hand, the Nyonya clothing has also been influenced by local culture. Due to the fact that the father of Baba Nyang Jaya is Chinese and the mother is Malay, in traditional Chinese beliefs, the family is mostly male dominated, and Chinese people also respect and tolerate other ethnic groups ([Lu, 2018](#)). Therefore, the Baba Nyang Jaya family that follows Chinese tradition will inevitably be influenced by the local culture.

In summary, in the process of sewing Nyonya clothing, Nyonyas use colors that Chinese people prefer to make clothes with, and also use traditional Chinese hand embroidery and transparent carving techniques when making Kebaya. Various traditional patterns that reflect the traces of Chinese civilization are also used. In addition, the Nianga people are also influenced by local culture. When making clothing, they follow the customs of local clothing and make the Nianga clothing into two parts: Kebaya and Sarung, using local fabrics. In fact, it can also be said that the women's clothing has been improved on the basis of Malay clothing, which conforms to the local living habits and integrates Chinese

culture into it. However, Nyonya shirts underwent changes between 1910 and 1920, using not only traditional Chinese embroidery but also Dutch lace from the West Indies. The combination of Chinese embroidery and Dutch lace has given Nyonya clothing a new charm.

5. Conclusion

In short, clothing is not only a carrier of culture, but is also constantly passed down in the long river of history. At the same time, culture has also left its own traces on clothing. In the process of cultural exchange with countries, friction and conflicts caused by different cultural backgrounds will continue to occur. China has initiated friendly exchanges, economic and trade exchanges, as well as personnel exchanges with many countries through the Silk Road. Chinese culture gradually spread to other countries in ancient times, and in the process of their cultural development, they blended with foreign cultures, forming their own unique culture in the local area. At the same time, some elements of Chinese culture have also had a profound impact on these countries and have been inherited and developed. Chinese cultural elements also deeply influence, inherit, and promote these countries.

We should feel the charm and unique characteristics of each other's cultures through continuous communication, respect, tolerance, and understanding. Through this approach, we can enrich and improve our culture, making it bloom among numerous Chinese cultures. Therefore, studying the clothing of other countries is not only beneficial for cultural exchange between China and other countries, but also for the promotion and development of both cultures towards diversity, mutual tolerance, and symbiosis.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This research did not require IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval and consent to participate because this study does not contain any human participation.

Acknowledgement

Not Applicable.

Funding

This study received no external funding.

Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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