

Research on a Haiqing Robe with Falcon Chasing Hare of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368)

Yang Rulin¹ & Shi Jing²

¹ China National Silk Museum, Hangzhou, China

² Haixi Prefectural Museum of Nationalities, Qinghai Province, China

Correspondence: Yang Rulin, China National Silk Museum, Hangzhou, China.

Received: January 7, 2024

Accepted: January 25, 2024

Online Published: January 31, 2024

doi:10.5539/ass.v20n1p53

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v20n1p53>

Abstract

The Yuan dynasty was the first unified dynasty established by ethnic minorities in Chinese history. This period has seen unprecedented improvements in either textile style or color design. Haiqing robe is a very common type of garment in this period. Its sleeves can adjust to facilitate production and living. The shape of the Haiqing robe collected in Dulan County Museum in China, is different from that of ordinary clothes. The front and back of it are decorated with golden-brocade. The patterns are lively, with a strong life flavor of Mongolian people. In order to protect the cultural relic effectively and reasonably, we did the conservation as a way to make it suitable for exhibition.

Keywords: Haiqing robe, Dulan, Yuan dynasty, golden-brocade, textile, conservation

1. Introduction

The Yuan dynasty was a unified dynasty established by ethnic minorities, which not only had a vast territory and mingled races, but also had various civilizations. During this period, the textile style or color design of the garments and adornments are qualified with obvious regional characteristics due to the gathering of various ethnics and local living habits and other factors. Both male and female wear are mainly long robes with belts around the waist, which usually made of silk, cotton and fur. This style of dressing was recorded in the historical materials of the Yuan dynasty, The Gugu crown, Zhisun robe and Haiqing robe, which are all very distinctive styles. A kind of the textiles named *nasji* which means “gold thread silk” were particular material of fabrics of the Yuan dynasty and in favor with the rulers.

2. The Haiqing Robe

The Haiqing robe was a very common type of robe of the Yuan dynasty, the robe has an overlapping collar with right over left, narrow sleeves and wide skirt. But the most interesting detail of the design is the opening in the end of the sleeves, the function of which is that due to the climate, the temperature difference between day and night is large. When it is cold, it can be worn with long sleeves. When it is hot, the arm can be stretched out from the opening of the front part, the part of the sleeves below the opening to be folded back and attached to a frog on the back of the robe, transforming a long-sleeved robe into one with short sleeves, which is very convenient and easy to operate. (Figure 1) This style is especially suitable for nomadic people to wear and convenient of their production and life.



Figure 1. The back wearing effect of the Haiqing robe (Collected in China National Silk Museum)

There was record in the History of Zheng Sixiao's Mind, written by Zheng Sixiao (1241-1318), a poet of the Song dynasty that *"The Haiqing Robe, which has the opening in the sleeves, the arm can be stretched out from the opening of the front part, the part of the sleeves below the opening to be folded back and attached to a frog on the back of the robe. Hai Dong Qing, originally the name of the falcon, which flies fast meaning is taken as what the 'Hai Qing envoys' mean. There is no difference in etiquette or costume among people of the Yuan dynasty."* The nobility of the Yuan dynasty did not completely abandon their nomadic lifestyle, which was similar to the situation in the Liao and Jin dynasties. In the autumn and winter, particularly the imperial nobility went out for hunting in a traditional way. (Shen, 2019) In the figure of Kublai Khan (Emperor Shizu of Yuan) Hunting, there are also many people wear Haiqing robe that all had slit at the sleeve root, which provides visual materials for us to understand the wearing of Haiqing robe (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Part of Kublai Khan (Emperor Shizu of Yuan) Hunting

This kind of "one dress has two ways to wear" with changeable sleeves first appeared in the Song dynasty, and the similar costume can be found in the *Lubuyulu image* of the Southern Song Dynasty (Figure 3). Most of the people in this image were extended their arms through the opening of the cuff, which is partially fixed at the back, and the opening reveals the red underwear, but some of them are wearing it normally. Although the inheritance and development of Haiqing robe of the Yuan Dynasty cannot be sure is related to this style, from the perspective of the wearer's status and work, this kind of clothing is making it fit for production, life and labor.



Figure 3. Part of *Lubuyulu* image

3. A Haiqing Robe with Falcon Chasing Hare of the Yuan Dynasty

Dulan is located in the main road of the Silk Road, and the early textile relics mainly belong to the medieval period. Although this Haiqing robe is not necessarily from Dulan and is a little later in time, it belongs to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). However, the number of textile relics unearthed in this period is not large, but also has unique characteristic and important value.

3.1 The Shape of the Haiqing Robe

The main body of the robe is blue and relatively intact preservation. The interior section is damaged silk floss and without lining. However, from the structure and principle of clothing making, it is speculated that there should have lining and the silk floss combined with the fabric is warm, beautiful and comfortable.

The robe has an overlapping collar with right over left, narrow sleeves. The length from the left sleeve to the right one is 228cm, the length of the robe is 137cm, cuff width of 17 cm, there are slits in the both sides of the lower hem, which height of 84 cm. The front chest and back are woven with decorative patterns qualified Mongol Yuan characteristics, the side length is about 27cm, there are three lanyards on the right side, the length is about 24cm for each. There is a vertical opening with a length of 18.5cm at each sleeve root of the front piece, from which the arms can be extended according to wearing requirements (Figure. 4). However, as the cuffs and back were badly damaged, the buttons or straps used to secure the sleeves were not found.



Figure 4. Part of the Haiqing robe

Both side of the skirt have high slit, but the way for the slit was different. On the left side, which can be seen on the outside of the front body. There were another two pieces of fabric so that the width of the fabric can be increased for folding. With one stitching line as the center, the fabrics were form five pleats, and then fix the pleats in the inner part of the front sheet. But on the right side, the pleats were made by the front and the back piece of the dress. (Figure 5-6).

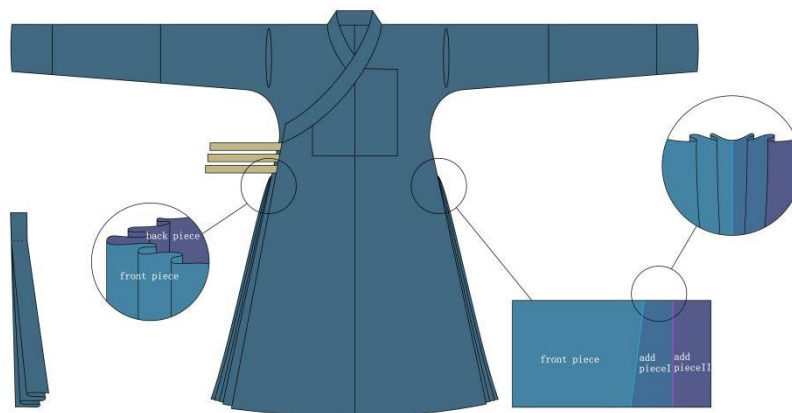


Figure 5. The design drawing of the Haiqing robe

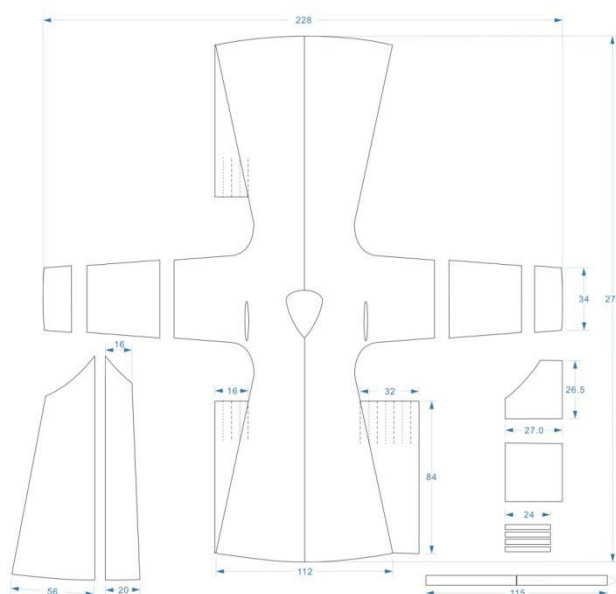


Figure 6. Cutting drawing of the Haiqing Robe

After sufficient information extraction, determine the size and cutting mode of the Haiqing robe and simulate the fabric and wearing effect. The virtual Haiqing robe is relatively loose, which fabric has texture and naturally sags to form pleats (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Simulation wearing effect of the Haiqing robe

3.2 The Pattern of the Haiqing Robe

The front and back of the Haiqing robe are decorated with woven patterns which made of golden thread. The pattern at that time were mainly made by golden-brocade, or sometimes decorated with stamped gold, but embroidery was seldom used. As the dragon, phoenix, kirin and deer were usually be used, all these patterns have nothing to do with officials' ranks. It's just a kind of popular pattern which was originated from the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) and evidently popular during the Yuan dynasty, and always can be seen in paintings and textile relics at that time (Figure 8-9). Later, with the expansion of the Mongol Empire, the lampas badges were introduced to West Asia, which had a significant impact on local clothing. Later in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the tradition patterns were added some special symbols of officials' ranks to produce rank badges, a symbol of officials' ranks. (Xu & Jin, 2017)



Figure 8. Yuan emperor wearing a robe with cloud collar



Figure 9. Jacket with short sleeves, gold printed gauze (collected in China National Silk Museum)

The pattern consists of a hare in the center, a flying falcon on top right corner, and clouds and flowers around. It is a hunting scene and reflects on the rich style of Mongolian life (Figure 10-11). (China National Silk Museum, 2022)



Figure 10. Part of Patterns on Haiqing robe



Figure 11. Restored Figure of patterns on the front part

Fortunately, the similar patterns have been found in the research. One is a private collection with front badge with falcon chasing harems brocaded lampas on silk twill damask. (Zhao & Jin) This one is complete on the front with its back piece cut off; another is a Mongolian lampas badge collected in the China National Silk Museum. The three garments are very similar in pattern shape with subtle differences in the details of the pattern (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Patterns of the three garments

3.3 The Fabric of the Haiqing Robe

The pattern in the front and back was golden brocade, but it has been seriously destroyed. The brocade refers to the weft was not from the left to the right when it is made of the fabric, but turn back when it need to show the pattern. (Zhao, 2005)

In order to determine the material of Haiqing robe, the material identification analysis was conducted by means of a handheld near-infrared spectrometer. After nondestructive analysis, the fabric of the garment is silk fiber.

HPLC-MS was applied to identifying the dyes that was extracted from a blue yarn sampled from the textile object. The result shows that indirubin, trace amounts of indigotin and its reduction product were detected, indicating that the yarn was dyed with indigo.

Indigo comes from indigo-containing plants such as Assam indigo(*Strobilanthes cusia*), woad(*Isatis tinctoria*), dyer's knotweed(*Persicaria tinctoria*), common indigo(*Indigofera tinctoria*), etc. Although these plants contain different natural product components when fresh, the main components after extraction are merely indigotin, indirubin and related derivatives. Therefore, it is impossible to accurately determine the plant source of the blue dye. Based on the growth environment and region of these four indigo-bearing plants enshrined in Flora of China, it is concluded that the dye on Haiqing robe may have been extracted from Assam indigo (*Strobilanthes cusia*) and woad(*Isatis tinctoria*). (China National Silk Museum, 2022) (Figure 13)

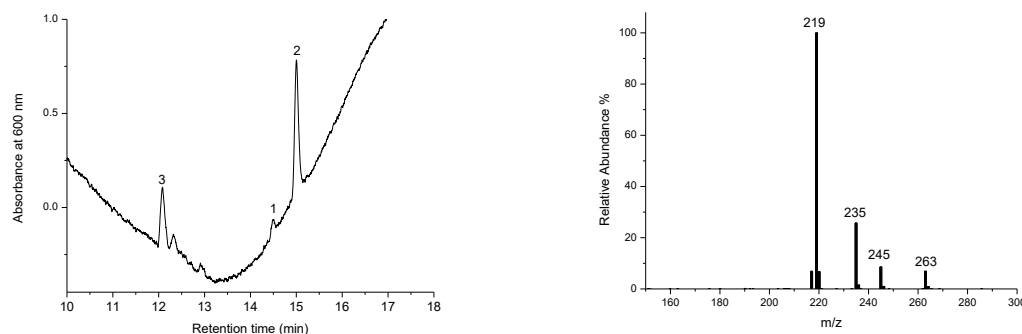


Figure 13. HPLC-MS of dyes of blue yarns of the Haiqing robe

3.4 The Conservation of the Haiqing Robe

The Haiqing robe were seriously damaged, with cracks in the armpits, elbows, hems, etc. The inner cotton was exposed, and most of them have been hardened, seriously decayed and polluted, and faded (Figure 14). Most of these damages came from the use at that time and the long-term storage in the later period, and some were also influenced by the tomb environment. All these combined have a great impact on cultural relics, therefore, protection and restoration are necessary.



Figure 14. Partial damages

According to the basic information, a restoration plan is formulated. Because the overall fastness of the robe fabric decreased, and the partial fabric decayed, the supporting part is stitched together in different parts when the fabric is processed. As its lining is basically missing and the silk wool is exposed, the lining is added as a whole according to the style to fix the silk wool, thus enhancing the fastness and safety of cultural relics. Particular details are clarified as follows:

As the silk wool is severely broken, a large amount of dust or other impurities of fine particle pollutants may be accumulated in the silk cotton and merely using a vacuum cleaner is difficult to remove all those things. What's more, the fabric fastness is acceptable. Through the partial cleaning test, it is found that no fiber is lost and no dyes are flowing. Therefore, washing the garment with water is a right choice.

Firstly cut the size of PVC mesh according to the size of the textile, and tile it on the low-pressure cleaning rack to provide sufficient support and protection for the textile. Secondly, with the silk wool facing up, immerse it whole in deionized water, use a soft wool brush to gently brush the textile surface in the direction of the warp and weft lines, and gently press the silky cotton part with hands to discharge the contaminants. After washing, most contaminants are removed. Unfold the folds, straighten the warp and weft, level the fabric, and partially clean the relatively serious contaminated parts (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Cleaning the Haiqing Robe

After fully getting the style information, we made the thread nail mark, disassembled the side stitches, opened the clothes and flattened them, straightened the warp and weft lines. The restoration was divided into two parts. First is the restoration of the damaged parts of the fabric. According to the material of the fabric, a modern silk 1/1 plain weave fabric that is close to it was selected as the supporting material and dyed. Considering the serious damage of the fabric, the padding supporting fabric was selected for needle and thread restoration. And after the modern fabric was flattened, the broken part was covered on it, and the two pieces of fabric were fixed together with needle and thread stitching, which played the role of repairing, protecting and supporting cultural relics. Second, it is speculated that it has a lining, so we chose a suitable modern cotton fabric to make a complete lining. After completion, it was sewn together with the fabric, and the silk was arranged and sandwiched between the two, and the method we chose is the running needle. After the artifacts were fully stitched according to the thread peg markings, they were reshaped to make the fabric flat and broad (Figure16-21).

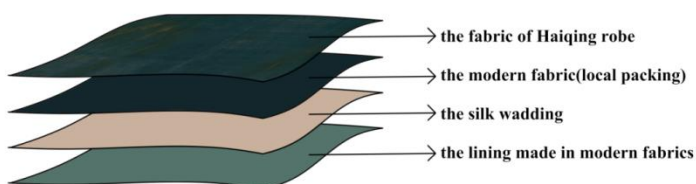


Figure 16. Diagram of partial restoration of the Haiqing Robe



Figure 17. Flattening parts of damp pieces



Figure 18. Conservation with needles and threads



Figure 19. Comparison before (left) and after conservation



Figure 20. Sewing the fabric with the lining



Figure 21. Conservation with needles and threads

After the conservation is completed, soft cushions are placed inside the cultural relics to make them play a certain supporting role, and stored in acid-free paper boxes to ensure the safety (Figure 22). The Haiqing Robe is re-presented in the exhibition hall of Dulan County Museum for study and display (Figure 23).



Figure 22. The acid-free paper boxes for Haiqing Robe

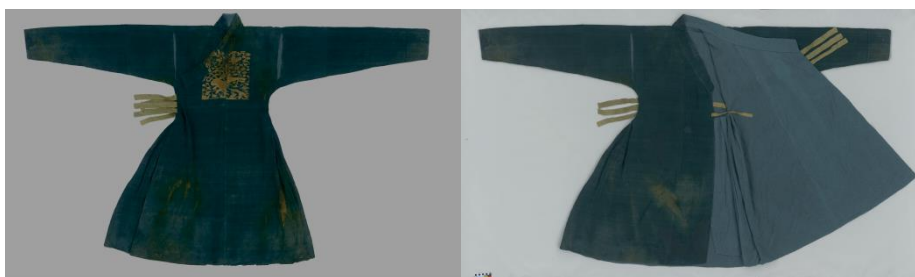


Figure 23. The Haiqing Robe after conservation

4. Summary

The Haiqing robe is a kind representative dress of the Yuan Dynasty. Information left in terms of historical materials, images or physical objects in the world complements each other. Its special style can present different

clothing styles due to different wearing styles. It can adjust to the climate and temperature, and also conform to the living habits of nomads migrating at any time. In the text, the Haiqing robe is seriously damaged, and its conservation and restoration can not only enhance the fastness of textile cultural relics, but also prevent them from causing more serious damage due to different degrees of disease, and the life of cultural relics can be prolonged. After conservation and restoration, the fragile cultural relics have been supported to achieve the effect of exhibition.

Acknowledgements

References

- China National Silk Museum. (2022). *Protection and Restoration Plan of Hai Qing Yi and Cornice Cap collected in Dulan County Museum*. China National Silk Museum.
- Shen, C. W. (2019). *Research on ancient Chinese costumes* (p. 624). The Commercial Press.
- Xu, Z., & Jin, L. (2017). *Jin Cheng-Chinese Silk and the Silk Road* (p. 138). Zhejiang University Press.
- Zhao, F. (2005). *The history of Chinese silk art* (pp. 65-66). Beijing: Cultural Relics Press.
- Zhao, F., & Jin, L. *Gold, silk, blue and white porcelain* (pp. 50-51). Hong Kong: Isat/Costume Squad Ltd.

Additional Information to Article

Article Title:

The below information will be added to the end of the above article.

Author(s) should replace the text in RED. If no information available, please write "Not applicable."

Acknowledgments

We thank Zhang Gaoguang 张杲光, Former Curator of Dulan County Museum in Qinghai Province, Wang Shujuan 王淑娟, The Head of Display Department in China National Silk Museum, Liu Jian 刘剑, The Head of Conservation Department in China National Silk Museum. We also thank Zheng Haiying 郑海英 and Wang Yuxia 王玉霞, who did the conservation for the robe. Ye Ye 叶晔, who drew some pictures for us and the dyer Yuan Wenxia 袁雯霞. We also thank all of our colleagues who have been involved in this project.

Authors contributions

Yang Rulin was responsible for research and writing. Shijing was responsible for providing the materials.

Funding

Project of the Humanities and Social Science Research Project of the Ministry of Education, Project Approval No. 22XJJA780001

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Social Science Fund Project, Project Approval No.20BYS144

Project of Zhejiang Province Cultural relics protection Science and technology project, Project Approval No.2020005

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.