

# Integrating Miao Traditional Elements into Chinese Figure Painting: Exploring Significance and Cross-Cultural Exchange

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## Abstract

This paper endeavors to investigate the utilization of Miao traditional elements in Chinese figure painting, assessing its significance and potential value in the realm of Chinese painting creation. The study examines the contemporary landscape of Chinese figure painting, identifying its prevailing issues, while also delving into the fundamental characteristics and application techniques of traditional Miao elements. By analyzing the works of prominent artists Pang Xunqin, Liu Quanyi, and Feng Yuanming, who have adeptly incorporated Miao traditional elements into their paintings, this research aims to bolster the preservation and perpetuation of Miao cultural heritage, augment the artistic expression within Chinese paintings, and foster cross-cultural exchanges and dialogues. Employing a qualitative research approach, this investigation adopts literature review and artwork analysis to discuss the integration of Miao traditional elements in Chinese figure painting. The research findings illustrate that the traditional elements inherent to the Miao ethnicity exude unparalleled artistic allure and cultural significance within Chinese figure paintings, thereby presenting novel creative resources and modes of expression for the wider domain of Chinese artistic creation. This research contributes to the enrichment of Chinese artistic heritage while facilitating a harmonious exchange of cultural values between the Miao minority and the broader Chinese cultural landscape.

**Keywords:** Miao traditional elements, Chinese figure painting, fusion application, cultural significance

## 1. Introduction

With the emphasis on cultural diversity and the deepening of artistic exchanges, research on the application of ethnic minority traditional culture in Chinese painting has attracted increasing attention. China is a multi-ethnic country with 56 ethnic groups, and each ethnic group has different regional and cultural backgrounds. The regional particularity and cultural environment of ethnic minorities provide a good creative platform for the development of ethnic minority-themed Chinese paintings. The Miao is an important ethnic group among the ethnic minorities. Various forms of artistic expression represented by traditional Miao elements also play an important role in promoting the process of human civilization.

As one of the important forms of traditional Chinese painting, Chinese painting uses ink, brush, and paper as basic materials, and expresses rich national cultural heritage in paintings through techniques such as drawing lines and dyeing. It takes the natural landscape, characters, and folk customs of minority areas as the themes, and conveys the values and aesthetic taste of traditional Chinese culture through painting expression. At the same time, it also pursues the expression of the artistic conception of the picture and the exquisite brushwork. In the creation of Chinese paintings, the use of ethnic minority elements can not only enrich the themes and style of

paintings but also show the diversity and inclusiveness of Chinese culture. Artists often explore different themes and elements to express their observations of the world and feelings. In order to better reflect the nationality and characteristics of painting, many artists actively integrate national traditional cultural elements into painting practice.

This research will first explain the basic characteristics and artistic expressions of the Miao minority's traditional culture, so as to deepen the understanding of the Miao minority's traditional elements; secondly, discuss the application forms and performance effects of the Miao minority's traditional elements in Chinese paintings, and conduct specific analysis based on the artworks of representative artists; and then, from the perspective of artistic creation, cultural inheritance discuss the significance and enlightenment of Miao traditional elements in Chinese paintings; finally, summarize the research results, and put forward prospects and suggestions for the application of Miao traditional elements in Chinese paintings in the future.

## **2. Research Background**

Chinese painting is an important carrier of Chinese traditional cultural spirit (Luo, 2015). Ethnic-themed Chinese paintings can better represent the characteristics of national development at different stages, and the application of ethnic cultural elements in painting can provide more basis and foundation for the creation of different painting scenes. Therefore, research on the traditional elements of the Miao minority in Chinese paintings can help protect and inheritance the traditional culture of the Miao people, demonstrate cultural diversity, expand the boundaries of artistic creation, promote cultural exchange and dialog, as well as promote the national spirit and cultural identity.

The artistic value of the artistic creation using ethnic minority elements in the paintings is as important as the historical and social value. However, the current research on the application of Miao traditional elements in Chinese painting is not deep and systematic enough, especially the relationship and development track between traditional elements and modern innovations have not received sufficient attention. Some creators are divorced from real life in order to cater to the market because they ignore the uniqueness of ethnic minority elements. Does not reflect the value and cultural responsibility of minority elements (Chao & Fanxing, 2018).

For a long time, the comparative study of Chinese painting and Western painting has never stopped, Xuan Junlin (2023) pointed out that comparisons between Chinese and Western paintings should be done on an equal footing, with an understanding of the differences in cultural backgrounds, and he also stated that the only unchanging rhythmic usage in Chinese paintings is the theme and the lines. In fact, with the development of society, the themes in Chinese paintings are becoming more and more abundant. With the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, painting expression techniques are also on the road of innovation, which includes the innovative development of ethnic minority themes, including ethnic costume culture, the application of elements such as silver ornaments culture in painting.

Miao costumes, silver ornaments, festivals, folk customs, etc. are all one of the expressive elements of Chinese figure paintings. Many creators actively use Miao cultural elements to integrate various creative themes and themes into them. For example, use fine brushwork and heavy-color figure paintings to depict the images of Miao women in special festivals, and discuss the artistic expression of contemporary Miao-themed fine-brush and heavy-color figure paintings (Xiaguo, 2020). Discuss the artistic expression of modeling in the creation of Miao people's figure paintings from the aspects of appearance characteristics and national spirit of Miao people, and in the creation practice, weaken the relationship between light and shadow on the basis of realistic modeling of sketches to express the shape of characters (Lang Pingping, 2020). Through the practical application and in-depth analysis of paintings, we can understand the characteristics of the Miao minority, the characteristics of the times and the characteristics of the region, so as to better reflect the core connotation and theme awareness of the paintings.

## **3. Method**

This study adopts qualitative research method and aims to deeply explore the process of integrating traditional Miao elements into Chinese figure paintings, as well as the meaning and cultural value contained in this process. Through literature review and analysis of artistic works, combined with field investigations and cross-cultural exchanges, we will comprehensively understand the application of traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings and the effect of cultural integration.

### *3.1 Data Collection*

The data collection has been done in 3 phase. Different data sources and methods are comprehensively used to comprehensively and in-depth explore the application of traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings, providing rich information and basis for the realization of the research purpose.

In the first phase, this study first conducted extensive literature research, collected relevant information and

materials about Miao traditional elements and Chinese figure paintings by consulting relevant books, journal articles, academic documents, etc. Understand the research status of ethnic minority elements in Chinese figure paintings through literature research, and master the theoretical and practical background in related fields.

Then, in the Second phase, this study conducted fieldwork in Miao areas. During the field investigation phase, the researcher used equipment such as camera and mobile phone to photograph traditional Miao elements. These photos are a valuable source of data for subsequent content analysis. During the data collection process, the researcher chose De'e, Longlin, Guangxi, as a field investigation site and participated in the local TiaoPo festival. During the activity, the researcher observed how Miao women dressed up, including wearing unique Miao costumes, silver head ornaments and necklaces, and their preference for wearing pleated skirts. At the same time, the researcher also noticed the vitality and expressiveness of Miao folk culture in terms of clothing, image, music and dynamics. The field survey provided intuitive and real data, which can provide an in-depth understanding of the actual application of traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings.

Lasting, the collection of pictures and artworks: This study collected pictures of artworks involving traditional Miao elements and Chinese figure paintings. Take the artworks of four famous artists as samples: Pang Xunqin, Liu Quanyi, Wang Fenying and Feng Yuanming. They are all artists who depict Miao subjects. Pang Xunqin was one of the first artists to go deep into the Miao area to investigate and sketch. His paintings record the early real life of the Miao people in the mountains. Liu Quanyi is known as "the first person to use meticulous fine brushwork to decorate Miao girls" and is the most representative among ethnic minority fine brushwork figure paintings. Wang Fenying first painted urban humanities and then Miao rural realism. She is a representative people who advocates that literary and artistic workers should go deep into life and take root among the people to explore painting expressions. Feng Yuanming is a young artist who has painted Miao themes and has been visiting minority areas for many years. His paintings show the traditional culture and ethnic customs of the Miao people. The selection of the four artists includes the depictions of Miao themes by artists from three generations, old, middle and young. Through the artworks of these four artists, the application of traditional Miao elements in Chinese paintings were analyzed, and it can be further discovered that the Miao elements have appeared in the paintings under the changes of the times. changes in culture and cultural integration. Art bears the responsibility and mission of cultural inheritance and civilization development. The collection of these artistic works can help us understand more specifically the expression methods and artistic effects of traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings.

### *3.2 Data Analysis*

In the data analysis part, the photos and content of the fieldwork were analyzed in detail. First, through photos, we showed the clothing, silver jewelry, totems and other elements of Miao women, and described their unique styles and designs. Regarding the application of traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings, compared and analyzed the paintings in the photos to explore their artistic expression techniques and fusion effects. For example, observed the details of Miao costumes and silver jewelry in paintings, and analyzed how the artist embodies elements of Miao culture through the use of lines and colors. In addition, obtained the traditional elements of the Miao people and the symbols and patterns that appear in Chinese figure paintings from the photos, and conduct an in-depth discussion of their meaning and symbolic significance in cultural expression.

Through photos and content analysis of field visits, researcher can more intuitively understand the application of traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings, further revealing their uniqueness in artistic creation and their role in promoting cross-cultural exchanges. The data from these field visit provided strong support and evidence for the paper, enrich the content of the research, and enhance the credibility and academic value of the paper.

This study used the following three methods to conduct an in-depth analysis of the collected data on traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings:

The first is thematic analysis: conduct a thematic analysis on the collected information about traditional Miao elements and Chinese figure paintings. By carefully studying documents and image materials, researcher will extract themes and images related to Miao culture, such as Miao costumes, silver jewelry, totems, etc. This kind of analysis helps to understand the current research status of ethnic minority elements in Chinese figure paintings, and to find out the prominent position and unique charm of Miao traditional elements in Chinese paintings.


The second is analysis of symbols and patterns: The researcher will conduct an in-depth analysis of the symbols and patterns that appear in traditional Miao elements and Chinese figure paintings. Explore the meaning and symbolism of these symbols and patterns in cultural expressions through careful observation of images and artworks. For example, the patterns in Miao costumes and silver jewelry often have specific meanings and symbols, which are vividly expressed through works of art.





The third is the analysis of painting style: mainly a detailed analysis of the painting content and style involving traditional Miao elements in Chinese figure paintings. This includes features such as line use, color use, and modeling expression. Through the stylistic analysis of paintings, we will reveal their characteristics and styles in artistic expression, and explore how traditional Miao elements are integrated into them to form unique artistic effects.



Traditional elements play a very important role in Miao-themed paintings and are an important part of the inheritance and development of Miao culture. Miao costumes are a manifestation of the traditional cultural elements of the Miao people. With the different branches of the Miao people, the costumes also have their own characteristics. Overall, Miao costumes maintain the traditional Chinese folk craft techniques of weaving, embroidery, picking, and dyeing, and often use one main craft technique while interspersed with other craft techniques. From the content point of view, most of the clothing patterns are based on various vivid objects in daily life, which play an important role in expressing meaning and identifying race, branch and language. In terms of color, it is good at using a variety of strong contrasting colors to pursue the richness and richness of colors. From a formal point of view, it is divided into splendid attire and casual costume. Splendid attires are the clothes worn during festivals and weddings. They are complicated and gorgeous, reflecting the high artistic level of Miao costumes. Casual clothes are clothes for daily wear. The style is relatively quiet and concise, with less materials and less decoration. In addition, there are age and regional differences in Miao costumes. The styles, colors, patterns, accessories, etc. of Miao costumes can not only meet the needs of expressing national characters, but also enrich the creative content of Chinese paintings with Miao characters and increase the vivid atmosphere and appeal of the pictures.

The Miao people like silver products, which are usually displayed during festivals. The Miao silver clothing not only has a rich variety of head wear, but also various body accessories, such as silver necklaces, silver chest ornaments, silver bracelets, etc. There are many styles of silver jewelry and exquisite craftsmanship. (As shown in Table 1) Painters use Miao costumes and silver ornaments as important elements to express Miao characters in their artistic creations.

Table 1. The Details of Miao Ethnic Elements in the Analysis (These images were taken by the author)

Types	Names	Pictures	Characteristics
Silver jewelry	Silver cap		A decorative hat worn by Hmong women, one of which is pictured.
	Silver angle		A kind of headdress worn by Miao women when they are in full dress, which is shaped like a cow's horn.

Silver flower		decorations on hats
Silver bracelet		A bracelet worn on the wrist, a collection of shapes with a variety of patterns.
Silver collar		Decorative collars worn around the neck come in various shapes and types.
Silver cloth-plate		Each piece of silver ornaments on the clothes presents a relief effect, with different patterns such as flowers and birds, dragon fish, butterflies, etc., expressing morals and stories.

costumes	Pleated skirt		Mostly sackcloth, hand-painted in batik with embroidery.
	Embroidery		The traditional craft of embroidering motifs by needlework, on both tops and skirts, with animal, botanical, geometric and other motifs.

The patterns embodied in Miao costumes and silver ornaments have extremely high artistic value. These patterns can be roughly classified into three types in terms of expressive techniques. The first is the figurative pattern, that is, a pattern close to realism, which can clearly show the specific image of things. The second is semi-abstract and semi-figurative patterns, which are composed of geometric lines while retaining certain physical and figurative features, making the patterns more artistic. The third category is pure geometric patterns, which are completely composed of geometric shapes, pursuing geometric beauty and simplicity. All these patterns have stylized features that make the Miao patterns unique and recognizable.

The motifs described in the patterns of the Miao minority mainly include animals, flowers, and plants. Animal patterns usually include dragons, phoenixes, birds, tigers, etc., which symbolize power, auspiciousness, and protection. Flower patterns are often found on clothing, fabrics, and silver ornaments, such as the common patterns on silver bracelets unique to the Miao minority. These patterns, with their fine lines and meticulous composition, show the love and reverence of the Miao culture for the natural world. Through data analysis, master the traditional elements of the Miao people and understand their cultural significance and artistic expression.

#### 4. Finding

##### 4.1 Application of Miao Traditional Elements in Chinese Painting

###### 4.1.1 The Development Status and Problems of Chinese Figure Painting

As one of the important themes of traditional Chinese painting, Chinese figure painting has a long history of development and rich artistic achievements. However, with the development of society and the increase in cultural exchanges, Miao theme paintings have gradually been influenced by modern paintings, showing new development trends and characteristics. At the same time, Miao theme paintings are also facing some challenges and problems, including the alienation of traditional elements and fade.

First, there is a certain tense relationship between traditional inheritance and innovation in Chinese figure painting. Chinese figure painting traditionally focuses on depicting historical figures, literati, and religious themes, which reflect ancient Chinese values and aesthetic concepts. However, with the development of modern society and the diversification of concepts, people's aesthetic needs for figure painting have also changed. Modern figure paintings pay more attention to individual expression and emotional transmission, break through the shackles of traditional themes, and pursue more free and diverse artistic expressions. Conceptual and aesthetic differences under different cultural backgrounds have also begun to affect the creation and acceptance of figure paintings. As an important form of expression in traditional painting, figure painting bears the weight of history and culture, requirements of traditional aesthetics, and needs to inherit the traditional techniques and styles. On the other hand, artists also need to innovate on the basis of tradition, so as to combine figure painting with modern society and concepts to meet contemporary aesthetic needs.

Secondly, there is a certain singularity and lack of innovation in the subject matter and expression of figure paintings. Although the theme is ethnic minorities, some painters have never been to any ethnic minority areas to sketch. In order to meet the market demand, they have created a large number of Chinese paintings of ethnic minorities. It is conceivable that such artworks are obviously not contagious and convincing. Facing the social environment of multiculturalism and globalization, figure painting is relatively conservative in absorbing other cultural elements and styles. Some figure paintings pay too much attention to realism and traditional delicate expressions and lack cross-border communication and integration between different cultures, which limits the innovation ability of figure paintings.

Therefore, exploring the application of Miao traditional elements in Chinese figure painting has important practical significance and research value. Through in-depth research on the traditional elements of the Miao and exploring their application methods and artistic effects in the creation of figure paintings, we can enrich the themes and the content of Chinese figure paintings, can enhance the diversity and innovation of their artistic expression. At the same time, combining the traditional elements of Miao nationality with Chinese figure painting, can promote the inheritance and development of Miao culture, strengthen the exchange and integration of national art, and inject new vitality and cultural connotation into the development of Chinese figure painting.

#### 4.1.2 Basic Characteristics of Miao Traditional Elements (Overview)

In the field of fine arts, traditional elements usually refer to artistic symbols, forms, techniques, themes, etc. originating from a certain culture or nation, which have the characteristics of a long history and long inheritance. These elements reflect the beliefs, values, aesthetic views, lifestyles, and other characteristics of a specific culture or nation, and have profound cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. The Miao minority is an important ethnic minority in China, and its unique cultural traditions include clothing, architecture, music, dance, folk crafts, and many other aspects. The Miao people have many styles of clothing and bright colors. The Miao people are good at singing and dancing. The Miao people have unique architectural styles with stone and wood structures.

In Miao-themed paintings, traditional elements include festival culture, wedding customs, funeral and sacrifice culture, clothing culture, etc. that are reflected in the Miao culture in the paintings. These elements reflect the life, beliefs, values and aesthetic tastes of the Miao people. This study focuses on the application of the Miao festival culture "Tiaopo Festival" in paintings.

#### 4.2 Application Form of Miao Traditional Elements (Artistic Expression)

##### 4.2.1 Concrete Realism

Realistic artistic expression is one of the commonly used expression methods in traditional Chinese figure painting, which embodies the painting techniques that faithfully reflect the original appearance of objective things and capture the true characteristics of the people. The contemporary Chinese figure paintings of the Miao theme present concrete and realistic modeling characteristics overall. Most of the artworks focus on faceting and grasping the figures and body proportions, pursue the objective and true reproduction of the most characteristic clothing and silver ornaments of the Miao minority and various aspects of life. Aesthetic elements reproduce the real life of the Miao people.

Among the Miao figure paintings, Liu Quanyi is relatively influential. His figure paintings highlight realistic depictions. The picture below shows Liu Quanyi's early meticulous paintings. The researcher chose a picture of a figure taken at a similar angle as a comparison object (Figure 1). In the photos taken, the silver ornaments highlight specific structural relationships under the influence of light, but the appearance of light will also present structures and shadows on the faces of the characters. The photos are true captures of external objects, but in paintings. There will be more subjective processing by the painter in the artwork.



Figure 1. Author Taken at De'e Town 2023.1



Figure 2. Liu Quanyi, Silver Flower.80x60cm.1995

Liu Quanyi deepened the realistic level of fine brushwork figure painting. From Figure 2, he painted a female figure with her head lowered. The angle is similar to the photo provided by the researcher. Although the real photo shows more details, there will be an extra layer of the artist's perception and expression in the painting. Liu Quanyi borrowed part of the expressive means of Western painting when shaping the key parts of the characters and expressed the sense of space and three-dimensionality by shaping the structure with some light and shadow effects. He cleverly integrated the sketch modeling technique into his painting. Although he used line drawing modeling, he weakened the lines in some parts and used more dyeing methods. The texture of jewelry and earrings depicts the three-dimensional sense of shiny metal, and subtly expresses the structure of horses, flowers, and birds in silver jewelry, forming a certain sense of concave and convex. Such techniques were rarely involved in earlier traditional Chinese painting figures. He also pays attention to mastering the language of national art and will not weaken the unique flatness of meticulous figure painting because of a certain degree of sketch modeling. He showed his meticulous observation and attention to the details of the characters by drawing Miao women wearing silver ornaments and costumes.

The characteristics of the Miao silver jewelry culture can be reflected in his paintings. The viewer can see blossoming silver flowers, human horseback riding patterns, fish patterns, dragon patterns, patterned silver pieces and falling trumpet tassels in the painting. But human horseback riding patterns is actually the "horse flying" pattern. It is not just a decorative pattern, it also implies a richer cultural connotation. "Horse flying" is a commonly used pattern on Miao costumes and crowns. It consists of a horse and a knight. The ribbon that stretches across the Yellow River at home is a testimony to the tragic migration of the Miao ancestors.

#### 4.2.2 Modeling with Lines

Chinese figure painting focuses on expressing objects through lines. Lines have a strong ability to summarize and effectively outline the contours and boundaries of a form. In Chinese figure painting, figurative representation focuses on shaping the form of the figure, not simply imitating the image, but taking the shape of the spirit, and shaping the characters through lines and colors. Miao costumes adopt the traditional Chinese line-drawing or near-line-drawing styling techniques, using a single line to outline the outline of the pattern. This simple and overall clothing shape properly highlights the complex and beautiful embroidery patterns and silver decorations, and the expression of lines has become the most suitable choice.



Figure 3. Feng Yuanming. Rongshui Miao Women. Line drawing sketch





Figure 4. Feng Yuanming. Rongshui Miao Women. Chinese painting 68cm×58cm 2020

Feng Yuanming's Miao Women also has a figurative and realistic painting style. He uses line drawing as the main method to outline the folds of clothes, and the overall line is relatively thick; the overall line is thinner when outlining hair, patterns, and accessories. Abandon some chaotic tiny details in the silver ornaments worn by the women, clothing patterns, and fish patterns, and refine more precise and detailed lines. Compared with the silver ornaments depicted by Liu Quanyi, Feng Yuanming did not place too much emphasis on structural shaping, light, and shadow texture, but more directly expressed the decorative effect and planarity with the organization and changes of the lines. Against the surrounding dark background, the shiny features of the silver jewelry are more prominent (Figure 4). His Miao them paintings give people an overall emotional response of peace and tranquility, and also reflect the local culture.

#### 4.2.3 Color and Space

In terms of color expression, minority figure paintings do not particularly emphasize the significance of warm and cold colors, but more to express contrast change by dark and light variations of colors. In terms of space expression, more attention is paid to the use of flat space art processing, which will highlight the decorative nature of the layout of meticulous figure painting. In terms of picture composition, it is not limited by the time and space of the object and is not limited by the actual proportion of the specific shape of the object and the visual relationship. It can organize things that are not at the same time and space in one picture and achieve a balanced effect. Painters can use it freely according to the needs of the picture. In this way, the distance between shapes is widened from the perspective, and the sense of space of the picture can also be enhanced.

In Chinese painting, blank space also reflects the continuation of the image and the derivation of space. It is not only closely related to specific objects, but also sets off the subject. To express the image in motion, leaving a blank space can give a little more dynamic imagination space, and it is easier to highlight the main body of the picture. For example, the painter Pang Xunqin's "Two People Playing the Sheng" did not express the background of the environment in the painting, but used blank space, and more importantly, depicted the exquisite clothing style of the Miao men, and the depiction of the embroidery pattern of the clothing.



Figure 5. Pang Xunqin. "Two People playing Sheng", 1941, watercolor 64cm×39.5cm, collected by Pang Xunqin Art Museum



Figure 6. Author Taken at De'e Town 2023.1

Pang Xunqin mostly painted Chinese figure paintings with ink and light colors on the subject of the Miao ethnic minority. The images of the Miao people in his paintings show a fusion of Chinese and Western features on the basis of having the basic physical characteristics of the Miao people. In the painting “two people Playing the Sheng” (Figure 5), the embroidery patterns on the Miao clothes are the highlight of the painting. The embroidery is cross-stitch and appliqué, which is popular in Miao areas of Guizhou. It is embroidered with high-purity bright red thread. The pattern is summarized and concise. The cuffs, collar and other parts are repeated with lines of different lengths and curves. The continuous combination symbolizes the history and national emotions of the Miao people. The painter patiently and delicately sketched this, adding a lot of color to the picture. The painter’s depictions of Miao characters tend to be realistic, with slight exaggeration and deformation. The characters’ positions are staggered, close and spaced, and the density is appropriate. And blowing the sheng is the embodiment of festival culture.

In the Miao festival culture, the TiaoPo Festival is also one of the most representative festival activities. At festivals, men and women dress up in costumes, play the Lusheng, sing and dance, and the scene is grand and grand. The core activity of this Festival is that the Miao people gather in the village square or on the slopes, wearing traditional costumes and dancing specific dances. Pace, accompanied by drumming and singing. Throughout the dance process, participants hold hands, form circles or line up, and jump, spin, kick and other movements in close coordination, presenting a cheerful and rhythmic dance form. The TiaoPo Festival is not only an important part of the traditional culture of the Miao people, but also an important occasion for them to socialize and communicate and show their national pride (Figure 6). Such scenes can easily inspire the painter’s national complex and creative passion, thereby creating Miao-themed artworks that are close to people’s lives.

Pang depicted the scene of the Tiaopo Festival in painting “Dancing Flowers” (Figure 7). In this painting, the Miao people are surrounding a tree in the middle, playing the bamboo instrument Sheng, and dancing hand in hand. This painting made in 1944 shows the environment and form in which the Miao people live and hold activities. The clothes are relatively simple, and there are not many people wearing silver jewelry. It reflects the living conditions of that era. The climbing pole is the central part of the TiaoPo festival (Figure 8). Young people gathered around a 10-meter-high pole erected in the slope field, dancing to the music and cheering for the competition. The contestants showed off their strong physiques and extraordinary pole climbing skills one by one. Those young men with graceful movements, drinking wine on the top of the pole, and picking up red belts and bacon were the heroes on the slopes.



Figure 7. Pang Xunqin. “Jumping Flowers”, 1944, 66cm×45cm, watercolor, collected by Pang Xunqin Art Museum



Figure 8. Author Taken at De'e Town 2023.1

But now, in some Miao areas, Miao people no longer wear Miao costumes every day. Except for major festivals such as the TiaoPo Festival, Miao costumes can only be seen in remote mountainous areas and folk tourist attractions. Although many of the younger generation of Miao people no longer live according to the traditional Miao way, many of the older generation of Miao people still retain the traditional way of life. With the rapid development of the times, the greatest charm of national-themed figure paintings is that they can convey something more meaningful than the painting object itself, expressing deep connotations and interpreting life.

### 5. Conclusion

The art of painting can show local culture. Various aspects of culture can be showcased, including festivals, traditions, etc. In a way, culture inspires art. Some artists have been encouraged to find new and innovative ways to incorporate cultural traditions into their images. Different painters can have different expressions and interpretations when faced with similar images in front. Elements with Miao characteristics and regional cultural characteristics can be completely in the hands of artists, by combining objective images and colors with subjective consciousness and self-needs, and using painting techniques to make necessary inductions, choices, and exaggerations, so as to obtain new images and artistic conceptions.

By combining traditional Miao elements with Chinese painting techniques, the artists succeeded in creating unique and charming artworks. This fusion has had many impacts on artistic and aesthetic effects. First of all, traditional Miao elements give Chinese paintings unique cultural connotations and national characteristics,

making the artworks more profound and rich. Secondly, the patterns and colors of traditional Miao elements enrich the visual effect of the work and add to the charm and appeal of the artwork. Lasting, the use of traditional Miao elements also brings new expression methods and creative ideas to Chinese painting, enriching the artistic language and expression methods.

During the research process, it was clear that the application of traditional Miao elements to Chinese paintings has important value and significance. First of all, this application provides a new platform and opportunity for the inheritance and development of Miao culture. It demonstrates the uniqueness and richness of Miao culture, and embodies the rituals, customs and life of Miao society through elements such as patterns and colors. In this way, the history, traditions and values of the Miao nation are conveyed, so that they can be displayed and inherited in the field of art, which can effectively protect and inherit the Miao cultural heritage and promote the tradition and continuity of Miao culture. Secondly, the application of traditional Miao elements has brought new creative ideas and artistic expression methods to Chinese paintings. The rich cultural styles and unique national customs of the Miao people have provided rich materials for the creation of traditional Chinese paintings. The artists have unique observation angles through the traditional Chinese paintings. Expression techniques vividly display Miao characters and create many outstanding artworks with Miao style, which can promote the innovation and development of Chinese painting.

To sum up, applying traditional Miao elements to Chinese painting is an artistic practice of great significance and value. This application not only enriches the artistic expression of Chinese painting, but also promotes the inheritance and development of Miao culture. With the deepening of research and the continuous exploration of practice, the combination of traditional Miao elements and Chinese painting will continue to bring new revelations and surprises to the art world.

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