

Chaoxianzu's Traditions of Dress: An exploration of identity within contemporary fashion contexts

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Abstract

This practice-based research uses a personal narrative, that of a member of the Chaoxianzu people from an independent province in China, to interrogate the complexities of the historic local clothing in which is embedded influences from both its Chinese and Korean histories. The study works from the starting point of a collection of Hanbok which, though being worn in China, is the predominant style of traditional clothing from Korea. The aim of this study is to use the individual garments which form the Hanbok style to create a collection of garments which incorporate a memory of myself through links with my ethnic identity, but which can be read as modern fashion design. To create the collection, it is necessary to analyse my cultural elements through garment design and also express my thoughts and feelings into the designs. In this research, I work as a designer. I will use my garment collection to narrate emotions and reconstructed personal stories. This thesis is a journey to find personal identity as Chaoxianzu of China and a process of explaining the complex culture of Chaoxianzu through garment design.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Research Questions

When I started this research, I started with the most fundamental question: “What makes the Chaoxianzu people and place unique and different from the other ethnic minorities in China?” This is a question that developed after my fashion graduation project at undergraduate level, which I completed in Changchun University of Technology (CCUT) in June 2017. It seems that the Chaoxianzu stand out as being unique because the Chaoxianzu culture is a mixture of cultural influences from two countries. Supporting that view, Lee (2011) claims the Chaoxianzu identity is a combination of history in northeast China and the ancient Korean culture. So, in order to understand and disseminate the unique culture of the Chaoxianzu through clothing, this research needed to start with understanding what kind of environment and viewpoints of Chaoxianzu could be carried forward. During my undergraduate study, I neglected to recognise my voice as being a Chaoxianzu. As a member of the Chaoxianzu, I now recognise my journey can tell a story of a typical Chaoxianzu history, past, present and a developing future, through my life. Although I cannot represent all Chaoxianzu people, some cultures and beliefs have been integrated into my life. Therefore, to tell my personal story which carries the impressions of the Chaoxianzu people through design, this research looks to see if it is possible to show the Chaoxianzu culture in a garment collection.

This research asks: “How can I creatively reimagine Hanbok clothes in a contemporary fashion context, as a representation of personal identity that tells stories of my history in Chaoxianzu community?” My research is placed in a personal and social context because it is a process of finding self-identity as Chaoxianzu and aims to find a sense of belonging. Using traditional Hanbok clothing, my memory of my hometown and my unique aesthetic as a member of the Chaoxianzu community, I believe that this research could be seen as a means to understand the complex histories and the resilience of the Chaoxianzu people and community.

Aims

Designers usually tell a story with the help of the visual language formed by clothing so as to convey certain emotions and thoughts. This research aims to integrate histories and Chaioxianzu culture through a garment designed output. My ethnic group is called “Chaioxianzu” in China and currently the number of our people is decreasing for numerous reasons and the beautiful traditions and culture are being forgotten by younger generations. This research focusses on the Hanbok, because it is traditionally the national clothing of the Chaioxianzu in China and therefore an appropriate representation to use to explain my identity and culture. This research tries to achieve the aim of incorporating my cultural identity by creating a Hanbok collection that concentrates on personal memories as a Chaioxianzu individual with a unique identity.

Although this research output plays with the traditional elements of the Hanbok, it still aims at being understood as being of the ‘present’ in the global fashion industry. When we turn to global fashion, designed clothing can be called fashion in a certain period of time. The ideas behind the difference between fashion and clothes are connected to time. According to Loschek (2009), designers are acknowledged as anticipators. The task of design is to recognise social processes and respond to them creatively (p. 173). As designers in the twenty-first century, we should understand the past and present to build the future. This means the main idea in this research is to find a way in which the clothes designed with traditional elements from the Hanbok can become understood and therefore represented as global fashion.

Introduction

Ever since my childhood, I have always been interested in clothing which can be or has become imbued with special meaning. Often, the embedded meaning itself can be closely related to a good story. According to Goldsmith (2018), clothing could be regarded as not only an object which concerns the exploration and presentation of contemporary life, but also as a witness to history. Moreover, it is a cultural signifier of our past, present and future. Such signs of culture can be seen through clothing design and can evoke an audience's empathy as they can act as a bridge and connect with their similar experiences and memories.

I am a Chinese student who has been studying in New Zealand for almost one year and whilst here I started to think about how to best help people to understand me better. I am a member of the Chinese ethnic group officially recognised by the Chinese government as Chaoxianzu (Chinese), also known as Koreans in China or Joseonjok (Korean). We have a population of more than two million people in China and our traditional clothes are called by the name 'Hanbok' which is the same name as used in Korea. I recognise the Hanbok as my national costume, and its inheritance and identity as our national dress is important to our people. I hope this research can inform and maybe change the impression of what the Chaoxianzu traditional costume is and that it might help to give people a better understanding of us.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 provides the context of this research. Discussing the effect of globalisation within the fashion world and describing the importance of reconstructing identity through dress, this chapter also includes an introduction to Chaoxianzu in China and my personal memories of being Chaoxianzu. This context helps to inform the understanding behind what kinds of aspects and elements have been used for designing the final garment collection. Chapter 2 sets out the methodology and methods of this research. This chapter investigates the framework of the methodology used in this research which is practice-based research. Chapter 3 explains the practice of this research. This chapter includes four steps: gathering and understanding information, reflecting on the information and planning the next step, making mini toiles, and the concluding garments.

Chapter 1: Context

1.1 Place of Chaoxianzu



Figure 1. An SVG map of China with Jilin Province highlighted in orange and Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture highlighted in red [Map]. Copyright from Wikipedia (2010).

Chaoxianzu in Chinese or Joseonjok in Korean is one of the 56 ethnic minority nationalities in China. The word Chaoxian (Joseon in Korea) means “morning calm” or “morning brightness”, the land where the sun comes up in the east, as Peace Bakwon Lee (2002) explores in his thesis. Lee (2002) also explains that the name Chaoxian (Joseon) was the Chinese term denoting the last dynasty of Korea from 1392 to 1920. The source of the uniqueness of Chaoxianzu mainly comes from the geographic location of the place: it is in China but sits on the Korean border. My great grandparents moved from South Korea to China in 1945. The majority of Chaoxianzu live in the place called “Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture” which is within Jilin province on China’s border, not far from the North Korean border (Figure 1). As Colin (2003) explains, Yanbian Korean was recognised as an autonomous region within China and established in 1952, which was seven years after the victory of ‘the war of resistance against Japan’. This sense of geographical isolation along with the autonomous

status created an opportunity to maintain and create Chaoxianzu's own history and culture, and to continue to develop their unique aesthetics and create new cultures. Lee (2002) states that many Western scholars have explored and studied other minority groups and their cultures; however, the culture and traditions of the Chaoxianzu have not been given much scholarly attention. I agree with Lee's point of view that the uniqueness of the Chaoxianzu ethnic group is historically or culturally obvious, particularly when it is noted that Hanbok is the traditional dress of the Koreans but it is also the traditional dress of the Chaoxianzu in China, but when I studied at the undergraduate level, there was not much information about the Chaoxianzu and especially none connected to its fashion. Song (2007) describes "in the study of nationalism, countries such as China, South Korea and Japan are a special case because they have a long pre-colonial history and a very high level of political and cultural homogeneity" (p. 227). The Chaoxianzu, who are sandwiched between Chinese culture and Korean culture, can be seen to have taken advantage of both cultural histories and through this created a new hybrid. The hybrid nature of this research centres on the unique aspects of the Chaoxianzu culture and is what gives this research its value.

1.2 Globalised indigenous shift from clothes to fashion

Culture is respected and revered by my generation. The clothes worn every day by my grandparents in the 1940s were only used for very special occasions during my mother's time of the 1970s, and now in my time, 2019, these traditional ethnic clothes have started to become fashionable again. Ethnic elements are known throughout the world for their special historical sense of weight and cultural connotation. In the fashion world, traditional elements have also been continuously absorbed and changed. Ethnic-style clothing has also been used by many fashion designers. For example, when the famous international fashion designer, Jean-Paul Gaultier, combined Chinese floral designs of ethnic minorities in embroidery, the clothes seemed splendid and sophisticated with Eastern and Western flavours.

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Figure 2. Nields, S. (2008). NUVO's Spring 2008 Issue. Grey's Anatomy star featured wearing traditional Korean dresses [Photograph]. Los Angeles, CA.

As seen in Figure 2, it is not difficult to find out from many big fashion shows and magazines that ethnic culture as the main theme of design has been increasingly sought after by the fashion industry, and Hong and Wang (2010) state that the style, colour and the crafts of ethnic elements have shifted into clothing. Today, the application of ethnic culture in fashion design is not only in recognition of and through the development of ethnic dress, but also acts as a means to showcase heritage and as a means to disseminate cultural understanding. It can also inject a fresh vitality into the design field of the modern fashion industry. In a combination of tradition and innovation, this research aims to study and embed elements which exude the charm of Chaoxianzu clothing and thus will continue to promote the transformation and development of China's culturally diverse fashion industry. Niessen, Leshkovich and Jone (2003) claim "Asian fashion plays a transformative role in the new cultural and commercial spaces in fashion markets" (p. 154), stating that the Western-centric fashion is already beginning to change. They also point out that Asian-influenced apparel has entered the Western fashion arena, including on the catwalks and on international stages. The popularity of Asian and ethnic-influenced clothing since the 1990s has changed the way Asian clothing is perceived and understood: no longer traditional, it is being viewed as fashion.

1.2.1 Hanbok Fashion

Despite hanbok being worn as a traditional costume on special occasions, it has started to attract attention at international runways. Lee (2015) claims that hanbok is gradually gaining attention from western fashion designers, including Venezuelan-American designer Carolina Herrera and Belgium designer Dries Van Noten. Lee (2015) also explains Caroline Herrera's 2011 S/S collection was inspired by a Korean Hanbok designer Lee Young Hee's collection at Concept Korea, part of New York fashion week. Lee (2015) pointed out that with the globalization of Korean culture through Korean dramas and Korean pop music, hanbok is now familiar to more international audiences. Hanbok now seems to be more evolved to fit a new purpose and a new generation of wearers. The hanbok will find its rightful place in contemporary society.

1.2.2 Fashion in China

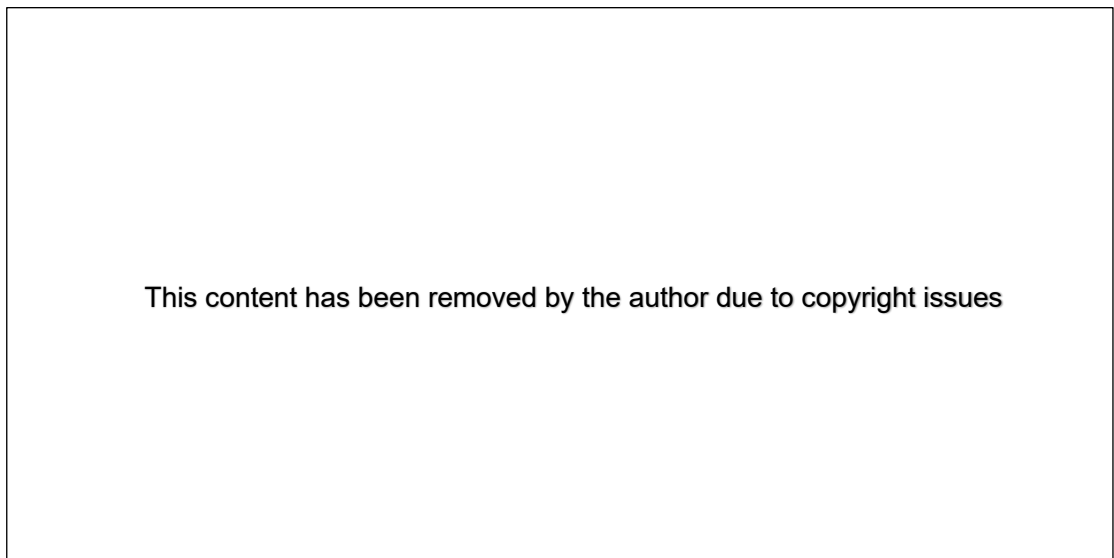


Figure 3. Fashion in Motion: Ma' Ke Wuyong. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2008.

Wu (2009) describes how, "in the 2000s, policy makers called for fashion innovation in the hope that China would produce its own designers capable of competing on the international stage" (p. 127). Tsui (2009) also claims that

in the twenty-first century in the Chinese fashion industry, one obvious change is the increasing use of the word 'international'. Aimed at offering an international platform for Chinese designers, it promotes local designers on the catwalk and sends outstanding talent to the international fashion week. (p. 213).

More and more Chinese fashion designers are getting attention. Tsui took Ma'ke as an example. As a member of the Chinese fashion industry, Ma launched the clothing line, Exception De Mixmind, in

1996, which is known for being China's first designer brand. As one of China's most influential designers of her generation, in 2006 Ma founded WuYong Studio as a social enterprise, dedicated to rejuvenating folk arts in modern society. She later became the first Chinese designer to present at Paris Haute Couture Week in 2008 (Figure 3). The celebrated designer claims that she does not follow fashion trends, instead focusing on creating simple, natural clothing, meaning that her work is made in harmony with nature. Ma believes that the ultimate luxury is not the price of the clothing, but its spirit.

1.3 Identity and ethnic dress

Reconstructing and having a focus on identity seems to have become crucial due to the homogenisation and globalisation of cultures and products. We also have the possibility of losing iconic traditional clothing and we may lose the uniqueness and identity of the ethnic. De Vos and Romanucci-Ross (1982) provide a useful definition of ethnic identity "as a past-oriented form of identity, embedded in the cultural heritage of the individual or group" (p. 363); in other words the ideas of ethnicity connect to individuals that link to a meaningful heritage. Therefore, as Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) state, "a successful life as a minority does not depend on giving up their culture and language to embrace the host society but depends on maintaining their social network across borders" (p. 229). The Chaoxianzu has an identity and uniqueness even situated within the nation of China and also as being distinct from its neighbouring country, Korea. We cannot simply abandon our own language, history and traditions but need to preserve but also develop them. Niessen et al. (2003) describe the sufferings of Asian designers in this era of globalisation and suggest that, in order to find their place, it is necessary to balance globalisation and localisation in the global cultural fashion industry. That is, they must not only focus on following fashion but also on unique national or localised elements. As Eicher (1995) states "world, ethnic, and national dress are inter-related in today's global community" (p. 304).

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Figure 4. A Day Full of Fun, Tour Seoul in Hanbok! Bukchon Hanok Village. [Photograph]. South Korea, 2016.

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Figure 5. A Day Full of Fun, Tour Seoul in Hanbok! Insa-dong's popular Ssamziegil [Photograph]. South Korea, 2016.

Sometimes, ethnic dress appears picturesque and quaint, as in the case of the kilt, along with the Hanbok, because they attract tourists to visit the regions from where these items are held to be

traditional wear. As Shils (1981) claims, ethnic dress is best known as items that capture the history of the group members, traditional items worn in the past that symbolise cultural heritage. Such items remain relevant due to their cultural heritage and become important to a place due to contributing to its cultural economy. This connectivity between heritage and clothing as a cultural economy can also make it difficult for the outside world to view traditional clothing as fashion. Joanne Bubolz Eicher (1995) uses a case of the *danshiki* – a West African shirt – to illustrate that “people in urban areas may be influenced by ethnic dress when designers use traditional examples as inspiration for their designs, which when travelers export such items they can become fashionable” (p. 304). This example shows that as people travel from one country to another, they gain a global perspective, and this can change their view of the world and also shift the traditional from one status of understanding and use to another. It also happens in Korea (Figures 4 and 5). Also, the ubiquitous nature and the uses of mass media and communication systems have their influence too. The usability of international media has an impact on many ethnic groups even though the people may never have crossed their national and even regional boundaries. Arjun Appadurai (1991) states that the appeal that may have benefits to an ethnic group is the continued use of their cultural heritage being used to protect them and to attract travellers’ attention. In such cases, the past becomes frozen in time with the aim of producing and contributing to a cultural economy based on their ethnic-ness. Although holding the past through costume is one contributing factor and direction of ethnic clothes, such cultural clothing can also represent various types of change as time and outside influences have an impact.

1.4 Historical connection to the way of dressing

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Figure 6. Old picture of Chaoxianzu with white Hanbok in ancient times [Photograph]. Yanbian Folk Custom Village, China.

Chaoxianzu is one member of many recognised Chinese ethnic groups. Their traditions reflect their unique experiences, and these experiences have had a great impact on their lives. In the early days, Chaoxianzu lived in the remote mountain villages bordering North Korea but within the confines of the Chinese land mass. According to the researcher Han 韩 (2016) from the Yanbian Folk Costume Museum, the raw material used traditionally for the Chaoxianzu clothing was mainly ramie which was made into both self-woven burlap and ramie cloth. Historically, the Chaoxianzu costumes had been characterised by simplicity, elegance and lightness, which not only brought beautiful enjoyment, but also enriched the traditional costume (Figures 6 and 7). Chaoxianzu prefer plain white clothing to represent cleanliness, simplicity, and pureness. Therefore, the Chaoxianzu have been known as “white peoples” since ancient times, claiming to be “white compatriots.”

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Figure 7. Chaoxianzu's traditional Hanbok and Zhongshan suit in 1952 [Illustration]. Yanbian Folk Custom Museum, China.

However, at the beginning of the 20th century, with the increase in the capitalist economy and the infiltration of modern culture, woven fabrics such as polyester and nylon satineens began to be introduced, and the colours of the clothing also diversified, becoming brighter and much more vivid. Especially since China's "reform and opening up", economic and cultural exchanges with North Korea and South Korea have been continuously strengthened, which has further promoted development and changes to Chaoxianzu clothing. On June 7, 2008, Korean costumes were approved by the State Council of China to be included in the second layer of national intangible cultural heritage.

1.4.1 Personal connections to the Chaoxianzu people

To describe the aspects of Chaoxianzu culture according to my experience, the word "hybrid" seems most appropriate. This "hybrid" includes the national historical affiliation to the Korean peninsula, my personal connections to South Korea, and the complexity of Chaoxianzu identity formed by the cultural and social bonds of Korea and China. Song (2007) also describes this hybrid identity mainly because of the complexity of the Chaoxianzu identity formed by the cultural and social ties of Korea and China. "Two ideologies, China's Zhonghua nationalism and Korea's de-territorialized nationalism

have been clashing over Chaoxianzu, as the Chaoxianzu people naturally moved back and forth between China and South Korea” (Song, 2007, p. 227).

Because we have mixed identities, different environments can have impacts on our decisions. Chaoxianzu can choose one of two identities which depict two differing ideologies, either as “Zeazeongdongpo” in Korea or as “Chaoxianzu” in China. We regard Korea as a biological mother and China as a parenting mother. Lee and Ren (2018) also uses the metaphor of ‘biological mother’ and ‘parenting mother’, suggesting that South Korea is only a place where Chaoxianzu can be guests and Chaoxianzu should eventually depend on China. It is common for Chaoxianzu to describe China as the ‘parenting mother’. As described in Song's article, a Chaoxianzu newspaper, *HūNgnyonggang Daily*, made a statement in its editorial (12 September 1995) that “Chaoxianzu should not betray the ‘love of parenting’ they received from China” (p. 235). I can understand and relate to this point of view, as previously mentioned, different environments lead us to choose different options of leaning toward or aligning with one side, China, or the other, South Korea. I was born in China and have been living in China and therefore recognise myself as being Chinese. However, nothing is more important to me than my family and my home, therefore I cannot deny that there is the relationship between Chinese Chaoxianzu and Korea because the culture is largely the same, like the Korean traditional clothing, the Hanbok, being worn there. People in the Yanbian area generally have access to two cultures, and for a new generation of people these are naturally concentrated in their lives. They do not think it would be strange to eat kimchi (Korean) and buns (Chinese) together in the morning, and even have buns with kimchi flavour. Just like these diets, melting sometimes creates the new and unique, having both the traditions guarded since ancient times and the new thoughts and ideas from the modern world. It is this hybridity of cultures, traditional and modern, that I wish to incorporate into and through my designed clothing collection.

1.4.2 Family connections and childhood memory



Figure 8. Beautiful memory in the mountain with mother and grandmother [Photograph]. Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, China, 2000.



Figure 9. Childhood memory in the mountain with mother and grandparents [Photograph]. Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, China, 1998.



Figure 10. Childhood memory with reformed Hanbok [Photograph]. Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, China, 1997.

My grandparents came to China during the Second Sino-Japanese War for a better life in 1945. They are from both South Korea and North Korea, and they chose to stay in China when some people chose to go back. My grandparents had to farm and work hard for survival every day, but they could not earn much. As seen in Figure 8 and Figure 9, my childhood memories are around that mountain. One of my early memories though was that, even in the very hard times, we could still find joy for the family. As I grew up in this area, it was considered as general knowledge that the Chaoxianzu have always been known as a people who can sing and dance very well. They can start singing and dancing whenever and wherever they want. When they dance, the steps are particularly light, and the movements of the arms are as if they are mimicking butterflies. I can still remember when our family was very poor, my grandmother gave me new fabrics and then would sew remnants of other fabrics to make me a big skirt (Figure 10), because she knew that I admired the local dancers who danced in beautiful big skirts. As a child I remember being very moved and happy when these large-scale fabrics drifted around me with my movements. When I was a child, I liked to watch the people around me laugh happily, especially when I started dancing. I have childhood memories where everyone would sing and dance together along with my movements as if we were the happiest people in the world. Dancing and big skirts in my mind can always bring happiness and joy. I hope my garment collection also has that

element of happiness and joy embedded within it and through this can also impart to people a feeling of connecting to a happy energy.

1.5 Elements of Chaoxianzu ethnic minority



Figure 11. Chaoxianzu's traditional weaving machine [Photograph]. Yanbian Folk Custom Museum, China, n.d.

In the course of this study, the notion of Chaoxianzu people having a deep connection with nature, dressing in garments fashioned from natural, white fabrics and known for their cultural singing and dancing, became central to the spirit of my collection, and informed the design parameters. 谭 (2011) and 杜 (2018) both described the great characteristics of a Chaoxianzu ethnic minority. As previously mentioned, the reason they are called “the people in white” is because they love wearing white clothes every day. Part of the reason is that white represents a clean, pure spirit and is the colour of sunshine for Chaoxianzu. The colour of sunshine also corresponds to the origin of the Chaoxianzu’s name which is “morning brightness,” as Lee (2002) explores. However, there is a more realistic reason for being called “the people in white” which can be seen from history. Han 韩 (2016) claims, due to regulations on clothes and high costs, the high-grade fabrics of silk in the Joseon era belonged to the aristocratic class. So, historically, most of the Hanbok worn by the civilians were made of ramie fabrics that were relatively easy to obtain as well as not being so costly and were hard wearing in use. The natural state

and a key characteristic of ramie fabric is that it is a brownish-yellow colour when first made with a weaving machine (Figure 11), but the more times it is washed, the lighter it gets until it eventually will turn white. This white ramie fabric is the origin of the title “white people”. Dyes and pigments were expensive, so civilians historically only wore the natural white-coloured clothing styled into the Hanbok. The original immigrant civilians from Korea entered China to have a better life, but they continued to maintain many Korean-based customs, one of them being the Hanbok as well as continuing to wear it made from ramie fabric. Therefore, after the victory of the Anti-Japanese War (1954), when the Korean immigrants officially became recognised as a Chinese ethnic minority in the region of Yanbian, they were allowed to maintain their customs and traditional culture such as houses and clothing (Figures 12 and 13) and continued to be known as the people in white.

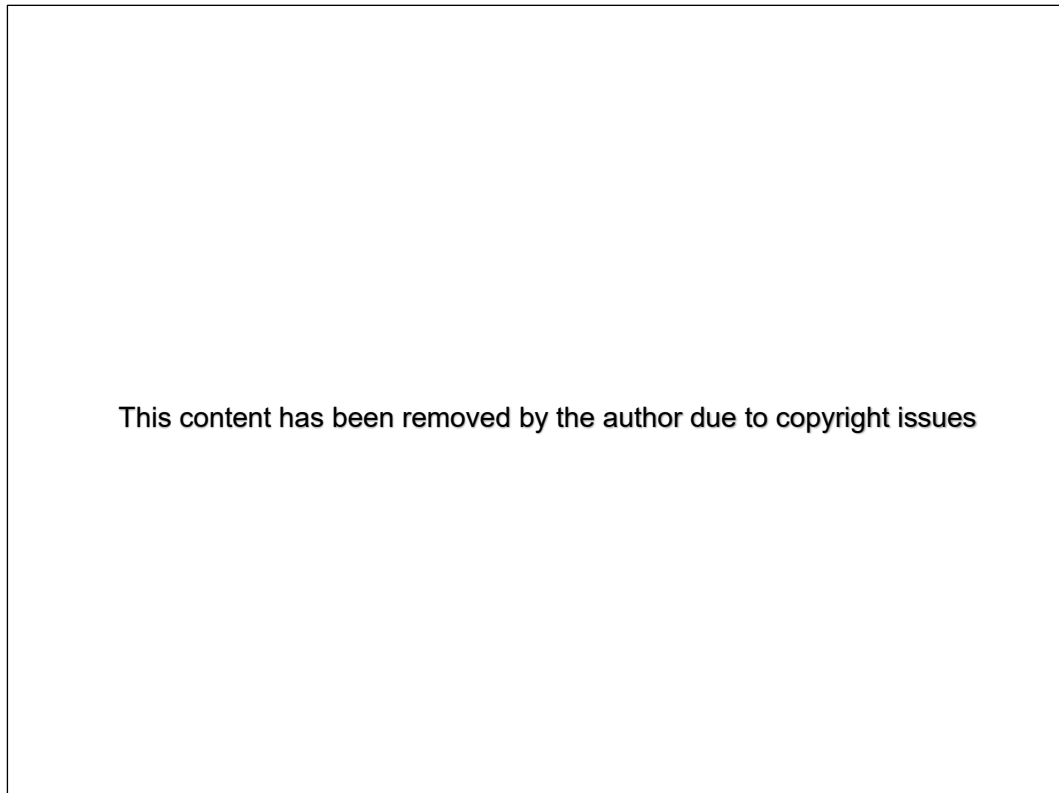


Figure 12. Traditional house of Chaoxianzu [Photograph]. Yanbian Folk Custom Village, China, 2019.

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Figure 13. Traditional Hanbok for Chaoxianzu [Photograph]. Yanbian Folk Custom Village, China, 2019.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 *Practice-based research*

This research mainly uses a practice-based research methodology. In order to generate new knowledge through making, practice constitutes 80% of this thesis, including gathering information, drawing, toileing, pattern making, trialing, testing and the making of garments.

To be specific, drawing the garment collection, investigating the design and reflecting on the practice through notes and writing in order to gain new ideas and understandings were all part of the process of development for this research. In terms of creating garments, the practices used in this research include sketching and incorporating the natural textiles into the clothing designs. The complexity of the fabric when being used (one was very light and slippery and the other was very stiff) meant, therefore, that both were difficult fabrics to handle, along with the large A-shape of the Hanbok style which also required much practice and patience to deal with. Thus, practice helped me to better discover the emotional input inside the garment. As Mäkelä (2007) claims, “the making and the products of making are seen as an essential part of research, it can be conceived both as answers to particular research questions and as artistic or designerly argumentation” (p. 157). This research also focused on the practice, and any product made during the exercise was considered an important part of the research development. These products included photographs, paintings, mind mapping and mood boards, samples, patterns and, finally, the garments. These processes helped to respond to the research questions of this study and provided me with directional shifts and movements with an aim to keep improving the final garments or offer new ideas to lead this research to a stronger conclusion. Cross (1999) states that “knowledge of design resides in designers, in the processes and in the products themselves” (pp. 5-6). According to Cross’s idea, the process of making a finished product is as important as the final garment, and this is certainly what was found within this research as each element built on another towards the final garment collection.

In order to better explain the final garment and the process of practising and development through to the final garments, this research applied mixed methods including contextual research, narrative inquiry, and reflective and iterative design practice. If I want to convey my memories and emotions to others, I cannot ignore the richness and effectiveness of the description that words can bring. Biggs

(2002) points out that the combination of words and products can be effective for communication. It means final garments alone or textual explanations alone are not enough to explain ideas. Taking this research as an example, the best is the combination of garments and an exegesis that includes how the practice improves the knowledge embedded within both the making and reflecting process, as well as visually what can be seen in the final garments. Goldsmith (2018) claims that clothing has become a conduit for exploring and demonstrating the concept of contemporary life. This collection of garments shows that, and the clothing becomes a visual communication medium which carries a variety of personal stories and histories, as well as being clothing composed of style, fabric and colour. Clothing itself is unable to tell stories; however, the elements of fabric and colour in clothing are approaches that can convey emotions directly.

2.2 Methods of practice

Cross (2001) has suggested that “designers should concentrate on the underlying forms of knowledge particular to themselves.” Cross pins this knowledge down to the practice of design, which he labels “‘designerly’ ways of knowing, thinking and acting” (p. 55). I keep this idea in my mind and continue to refine these three big steps into detail (Figure 14).

Mäkelä (2007) suggests that “we should formulate a plan for practice-based research with specific research question(s) and a context for carrying out this research. Instead of committing ourselves to using certain specific methods, we should be able to present a research frame” (p. 161). This research followed this idea and developed a framework, and this framework started from a research question.

In order to have good practice and gain new knowledge from the practice to improve the design, this practice did not follow a one-way direction. Since some ideas might change through the practice of this research, it has a partial loop. Swann (2002) claims that the design process can only be effective when the designer revisits and re-analyses the problem and modifies the solutions. In this research, reflecting on the last step or the ideas is crucial for changing the design ideas and for improving the final garments. Sometimes, this research had to adjust the research direction and methods in order to better understand and show the beauty of Chaoxianzu Hanbok. For example, when gathering information, it was found that ancient and modern Chinese and foreign impressions of Hanbok are those made using bright colours, but we Chaoxianzu have the name of “the people in white” officially in China. When discovering more about the origin of this name, I determined that a garment collection dominated by the colour white should be made rather than the original idea of a bright and colourful

collection of garments like the ones I and my mother had worn in our traditional clothing. Thus, the colour white was determined due to the name but also to recognise my grandparents' past. The framework that I have summarised in Figure 15 is not absolute, but after accommodating the actual situation in my practice, this research was ongoing in this order.

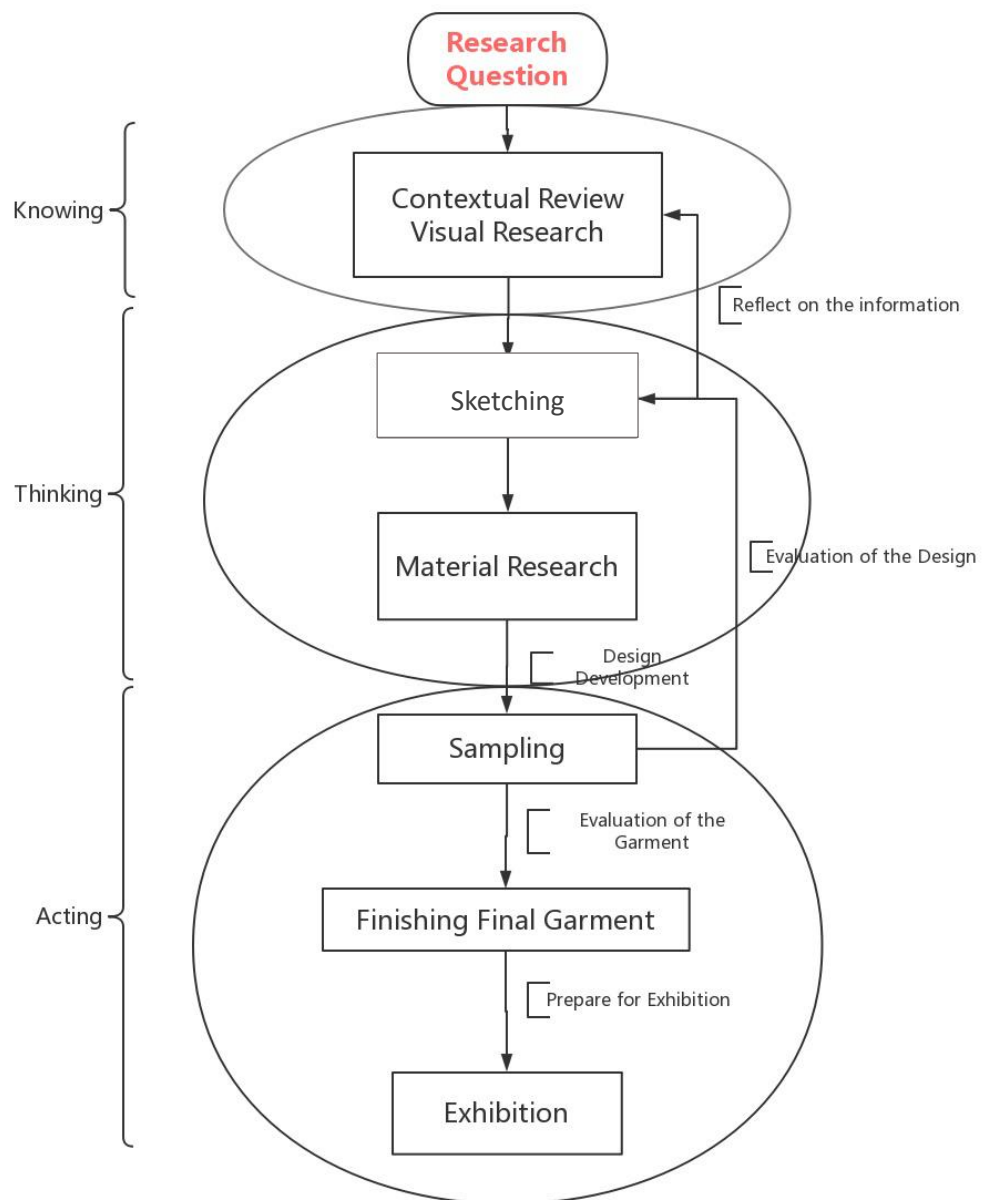


Figure 14. Jin, W. (2019). This diagram illustrates the working method [Diagram].

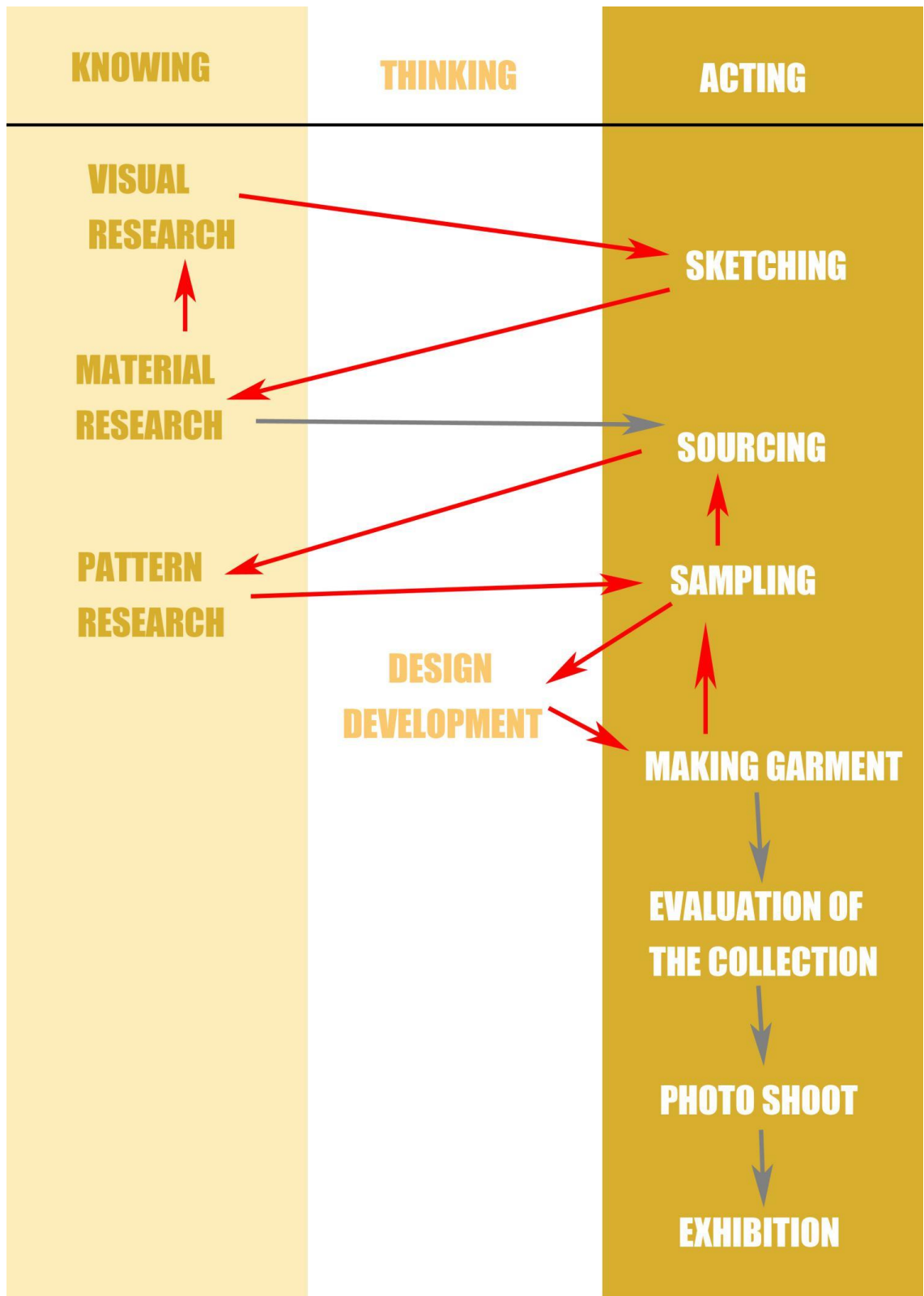


Figure 15. Jin, W. (2019). The process of design practice [Diagram].



Figure 16. Jin, W. (2019). From visual diary: includes early sketching draft and discussion of samples.

During this research, the documentation of each stage of the research was important. This was done by printing all of the pictures of the small samples and posting them in the sketching book to make a visual diary and create a means of analysing the garment collection at each stage (Figure 16), from beginning to end. The three-dimensional draping on a mannequin stand was used to great effect, giving the designer a three-dimensional impression that is much more straightforward to review than the sketches drawn on paper or the pattern in two dimensions. This three-dimensional part came to be used as a method of this practice to reconsider my ideas, and also helped let me imagine what the final garment would look like. Usually a visual diary includes two parts. If I did not make sketches, then I would forget the idea that came to mind after a while. Only when drawing these ideas and doing sketches in the notebook can a designer continue to innovate according to those notes or drawings. Fish and Scrivener (1990) describes this process as “your mind on paper” and she claims that these sudden and intense ideas about the product would be forgotten as time goes by, so designers need to do sketches and then they can be reviewed and developed. So, I recorded all of these ideas in a small book, and then kept innovating and moving the research forward by asking the questions: “Does this fit my design theme and my aesthetic?”, “How can I make my collection better?” and “How do the choices I have made achieve my goal?”

Chapter 3: Practice

3.1 Gathering and understanding

3.1.1 Mapping the information

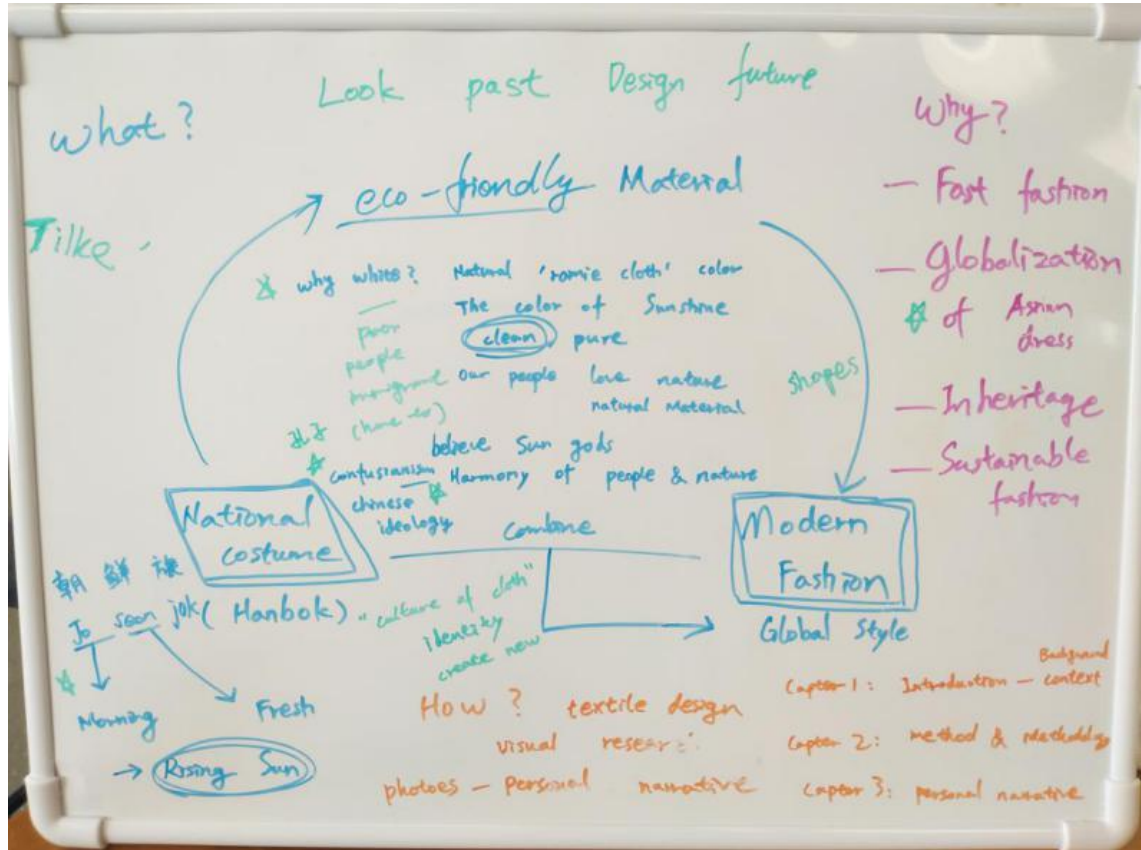


Figure 17. Jin, W. (2019). Information board containing research aims and contexts.

In order to answer the research question, the researcher first needs a process of understanding. At the beginning of this research, I needed the origin and details of Hanbok in order to better explore my memories of being a Chaoxianzu, so this research started with consulting the information in Figure 17 and posting it on a wall. Mitchell (2011) describes visual research as one of the most direct ways to gain knowledge, and this method includes photos, videos, drawings, objects, and multimedia products. Supporting this idea, Kathryn McKelvey and Janine Munslow (2011) state that recording the information by visually mapping ideas, connections and thoughts will create a rich visual archive which can be used to inspire your designs from theme to final detail. In this research, the photos of my family, the pictures of the mountains belonging to the Yanbian area and the photos about Hanbok were added to the wall as the inspiration board for designing this garment collection (Figure 18). The inspiration board is a more direct understanding of Hanbok and me, and provides inspiration for sourcing and sketching. As time passes there are many different styles of Hanbok. Although I

investigated all the Hanbok after the Joseon era, this research ended up focusing on the Hanbok in the 20th and 21st centuries, because the development of our family in China was after the 20th century.

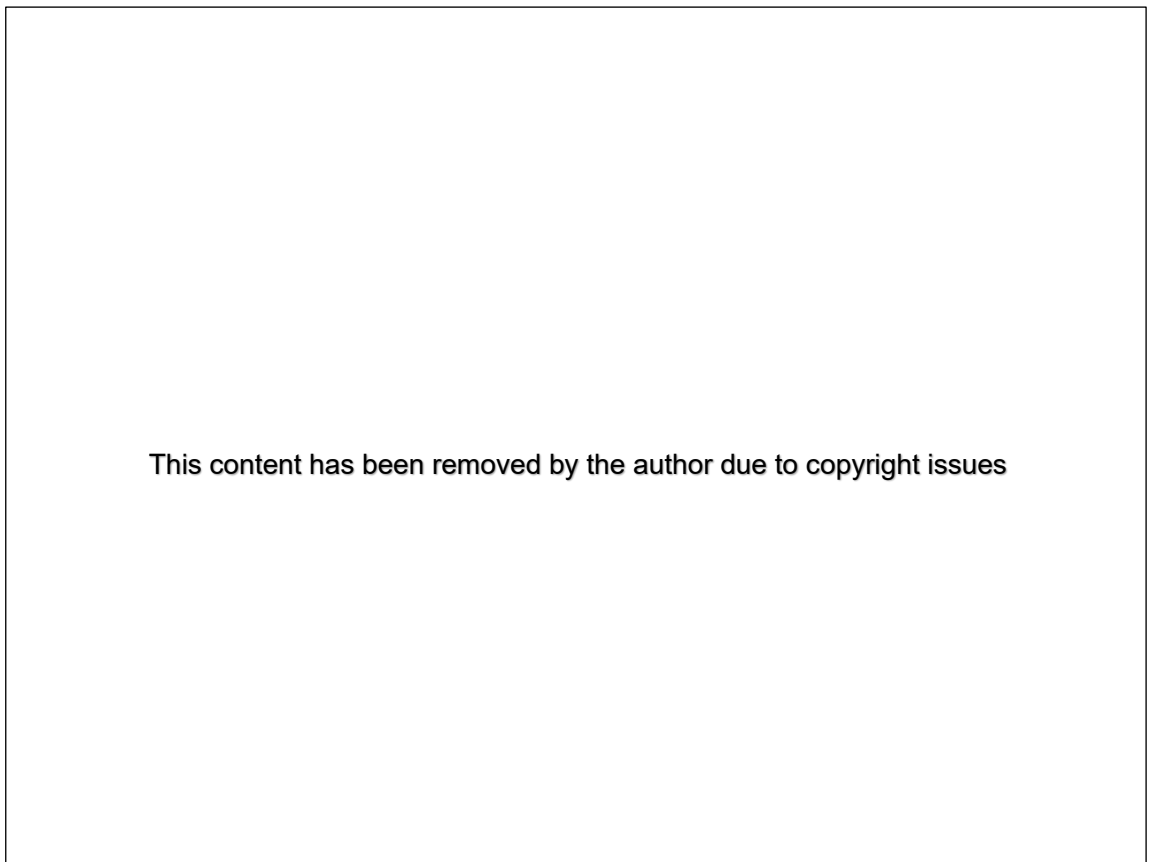


Figure 18. Jin, W. (2019). Images of traditional Hanbok patterns and living environment in my memory as inspiration board.

3.1.2 Harmony between Hanbok and nature

As Kim (2017) describes, the harmony between Hanbok and nature is natural beauty. This is reflected in the traditional Hanbok style, which has always worshipped implicit beauty. In other words, the human body is fully integrated into the clothing and the curve of the human body is covered by the curve of the clothing to achieve a concept of integration. In particular, women's clothing consists of a type of A-shaped skirt with a chest circumference and a short to chest position, and the entire garment covers the body so that the body is not visible. In Chaoxianzu tradition, women are the host of the family. They believe if the family is stable, the members of the family can make everything a success. Therefore, the women who hold the house need to be stable, so the shape of the garment looks like a mountain. The whole line is smooth and naturally integrated into nature and its surroundings.

3.1.3 Childhood memory of the mountain

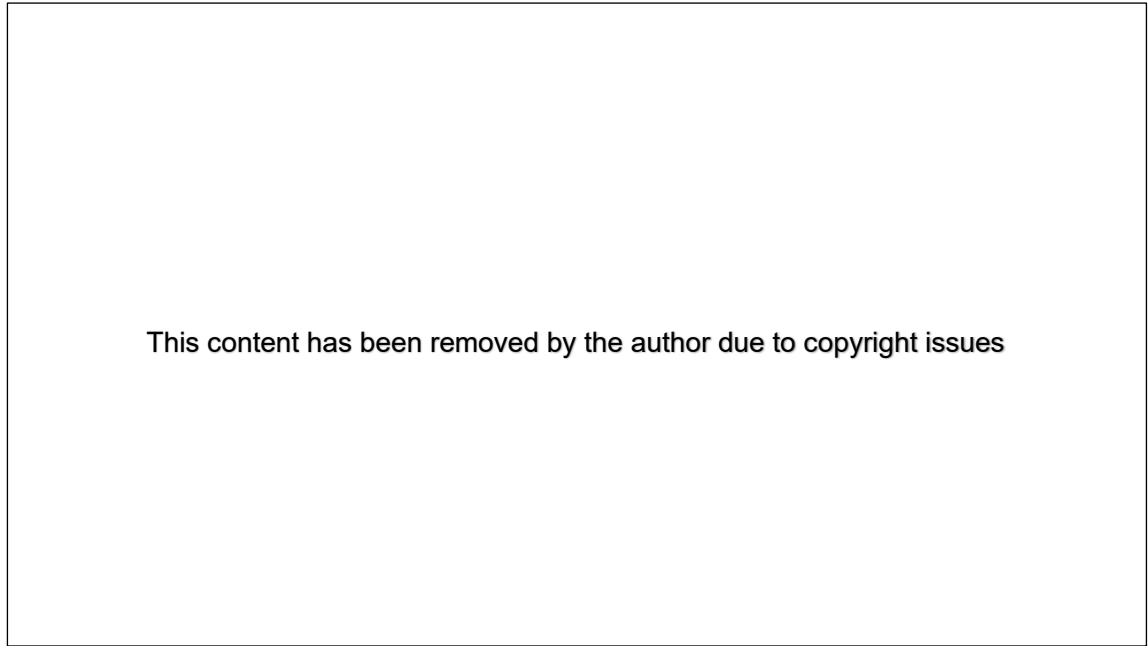


Figure 19. Zijlstra, A. (2016). Changbai mountain, after the millennium eruption [Photograph]. Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, Jilin Province, China.

When I was a child, I lived with my grandparents in the village under the mountain. At the time the village also had a lot of children like me. In my memory, children from the village often went to the mountain to have adventures before going to elementary school. Fresh air, the sound of the birds, the sound of the flowing water and the big pine trees from the mountain are all part of these childhood memories. So, when this research reached the answer to why the shape of the Hanbok skirt was the same as the shape of the mountain, I decided to use the mountain as the main source of inspiration (Figure 19) for the fabric and colour as well as the style which reflects the shape of the mountains in the Yanbian area. At this stage, this research was settled on the use of white colour fabrics and the possibility of inspiration from the mountains with the A-shape dresses. I also wanted to use light fabrics to express how the fabrics are flowing with the wind. That is an element in my design to show that our nation lives in nature and feels nature.

3.2 Reflecting and planning

3.2.1 Sketching

After gathering enough information, I needed to conduct sketching to initially design the garment collection. It is also a crucial step for me to sort out the design ideas and determine the direction and theme of the designed garment collection. The development of design ideas generally begins with drawing sketches of ideas based on the inspiration gathered.

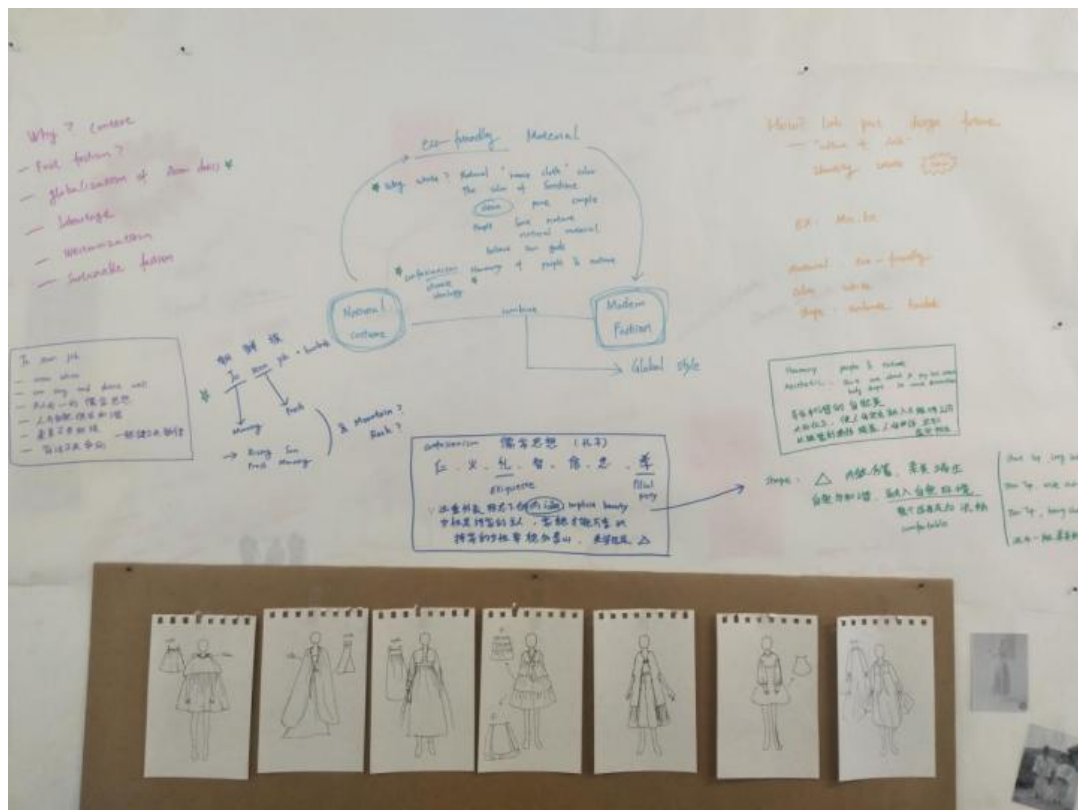


Figure 20. Jin, W. (2019). Idea mapping and sketching.



Figure 21. Jin, W. (2019). Idea testing with natural woven linen fabric in A-shape dress.

The first thoughts based on the information collected so far were drawn in the sketchbook and the garment lineups started. At this stage, my pen was relatively free and the design was not necessarily in the final manuscript form. In order to sketch anywhere, anytime, I carried a small notebook with a pen. Sometimes the idea is about a very specific style of clothing, but sometimes it is an impression of colour or just a little detail of a garment (Figure 20). After that, with my peers, I discussed their understanding of Chaoxianzu and Hanbok and their first impressions of my designs. Because the design of the clothing is ultimately for people to see, I attached great importance to the advice of peers and supervisors, and then testing the ideas by trying to make one garment to improve the sketching (Figure 21). By making the A-shape skirt shown in Figure 21, I knew the start position of skirt should be higher to keep the Hanbok elements and be closer to a mountain shape. Also the skirt is not as wide as I wanted it to be. In the process of repeated revisions, these sketches would eventually get closer and closer to the answer to the research question.

3.2.2 Hanbok with movement

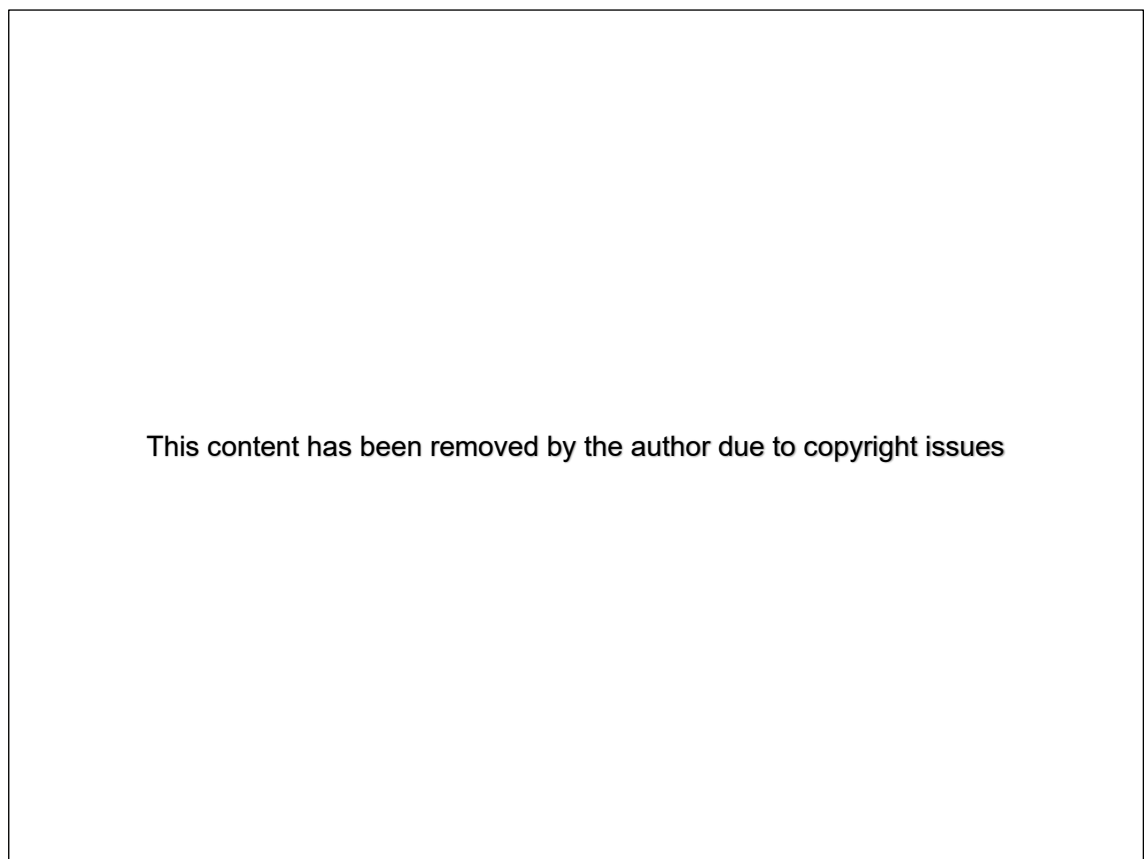


Figure 22. Jin, W. (2019). Second inspiration board with more various Hanbok especially for showing the movement of the Hanbok skirt.

In this step, some sketches are not in line with the design theme. The sketches need to be organised by the questions “Does this design match the theme?” then also “Is there feasibility in this design?” In

the first few sketches, I applied A-shape clothing which is an important element from the mountain and also Hanbok; it is not enough to show the spirits of nature and the connection with Hanbok. After finishing the selection, there was no design draft left which was not the kind of glamorous and colourful design that could directly attract people. Clothing is a subtle way of telling a personal story. My impression is that Chaoxianzu women have always maintained a relatively quiet, composed demeanor, and they will silently pray for the family. Though their dance is not the same as their lifestyle, they will directly attract others' attention when dancing (Figure 22). That is why, in the next stage of this research, more attention was paid to the fluidity of the fabric and movement needed to be added to the model.

3.2.3 First draft



Figure 23. Jin, W. (2019). First draft.

After I had drawn a series of first drafts which were relatively neat and more complete than just the sketching, this research needed further revision. Continuing to maintain the wide A-style but adding dance movement to the drawings to indicate the flow and movement of the skirt (Figure 23), two different bows (one wide and the other thin) have been used to make ties and have a decorative effect. In this step, the clothing that did not contribute or fit into the parameters of this research theme was removed, and the clothing that felt slightly defective was further removed. After discussions with my supervisor, it was decided this garment collection would be the following five garments. The selection was made according to the A-shape dresses and the interchangeable clothes as the main subject, and also related to my aesthetic. I was trying to keep the collection from being too traditional and still clean and simple.

3.2.4 Five selected dresses



Figure 24. Jin, W. (2019). *Second draft with five dresses as a collection, main piece (right)*.

In this selection, the main message that I kept in mind was “We are here, I can show you who we are.” This collection needed to include traditional elements and also some elements from people’s daily life which can represent differences from traditional dress. For example, Chaoxianzu people mainly worked as farmers and they wear wide pants with a band in the bottom which makes them wrinkle. By applying the elements from the bottom of those farmers’ pants, it made a difference from traditional Hanbok. For trying new aspects, this collection used different sleeves from normal Hanbok. With previous Hanbok, the shape of the sleeves changed across different eras but all of them were long sleeves over the wrist and against the skin. One of the jackets differed from the traditional jacket because the traditional large sleeves had been eliminated. This collection applied two different lengths of sleeve to make the collection more diversified.

Although this is the final draft at this stage (Figure 24), there is no absolute endpoint in the design process. In the process, when I consulted new materials or discovered a new idea through practice, the design still needed to be changed and adapted. Sketching can be seen as the beginning of the practice.

After sketching the draft, this research moved to sourcing what is the crucial part of the design process. The reason why this step came early is that I needed to make sure of the existence of all the resources I would be able to use. This mainly included the material sourcing and technical support. Otherwise, this research would have had to change direction many times without knowing the colour and texture of the fabrics. In this step, I started with material research, as shown in Figure 25, selecting and again trying to make a dress for testing (Figures 26 and 27). Here I found that linen is not only hard to use to make the A-shape but is also too heavy to flutter.

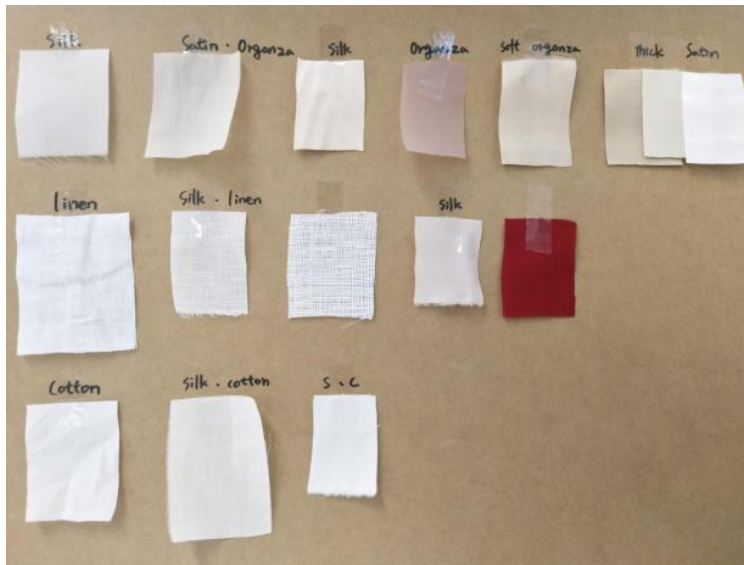


Figure 25. Jin, W. (2019) Material board for reproducing the memories and feelings of my childhood.



Figure 26. Jin, W. (2019). Trying to use linen fabric to make the main piece from the final draft.

Figure 27. Jin, W. (2019). One-way bow on the waist follows the traditional costume etiquette.

3.2.5 Colour selection

Naz and Epps (2004) claim that colour is an integral part of our daily lives, and it is widely believed that colour also has a strong influence on our emotions and feelings. In other words, the colour of the garment is an element through which I can express my emotions, memories, thoughts and many other things. At this stage, I started to draw a concept map in my brain, which may not have had a particularly clear outline but the impression of the mountain in my memory was naturally be converted into colour and texture to paint the feeling I wanted. In my impression, playing in the mountains has always felt

very secure, just like being in my mother's arms. Based on this memory, this practice continued to maintain the idea of being white-based, but also retained the possibility of adding some elements of beige to express the colour of nature.

The colour of loess wraps most of the mountains. Kommonen (2011) claims the Chinese yin and yang five elements theory includes the fact that loess is the place where everything grows, that is, it is the central land of the universe, so adding some beige colours on the white makes the whole design richer and more meaningful. Ramie fabric is a natural fibre and is one of the oldest fibres known. It is a vegetable plant which is related to the nettle family. Sometimes referred to as China Grass, it is a natural beige colour before washing and then slowly whitens as time goes by and during the washing process. In this research, ramie fabric was seen as the central material with the possibility of using different colours of ramie fabrics, as they come in a variety of natural colours from green, white and beige.

3.2.6 Fabric choice



Figure 28. Jin, W. (2019). White colour fabrics with beige colour ramie fabric.

I found these different coloured ramie fabrics seen in Figure 28 in a Chinese website. According to Li-jun Liu, Hui Wang, and Ding-xiang Peng (2010), ramie fibre has the reputation of being the “King of Natural Fibres”. Pandey (2007) explains that the reason ramie fabric is preferred by people is that it has the characteristics of heat dissipation, moisture-wicking, and cooling, and is naturally antibacterial. It has a natural and unique textured visual and tactile effect and represents regional ethnic characteristics better than any other fibre viewed. Because ramie fibre cannot be processed by modern

textile machinery, for example, as compared to cotton fibre, one can only rely on traditional manual craft skills with low productivity. The manual processing of the original ramie into the summer cloth takes more than a dozen processes, and this has been included among the traditional handicraft skills on the intangible cultural heritage protection list in China. In order to test the texture of the ramie fabric, I bought a sample from China and had it sent to Auckland, New Zealand.

3.2.7 Pattern evaluation

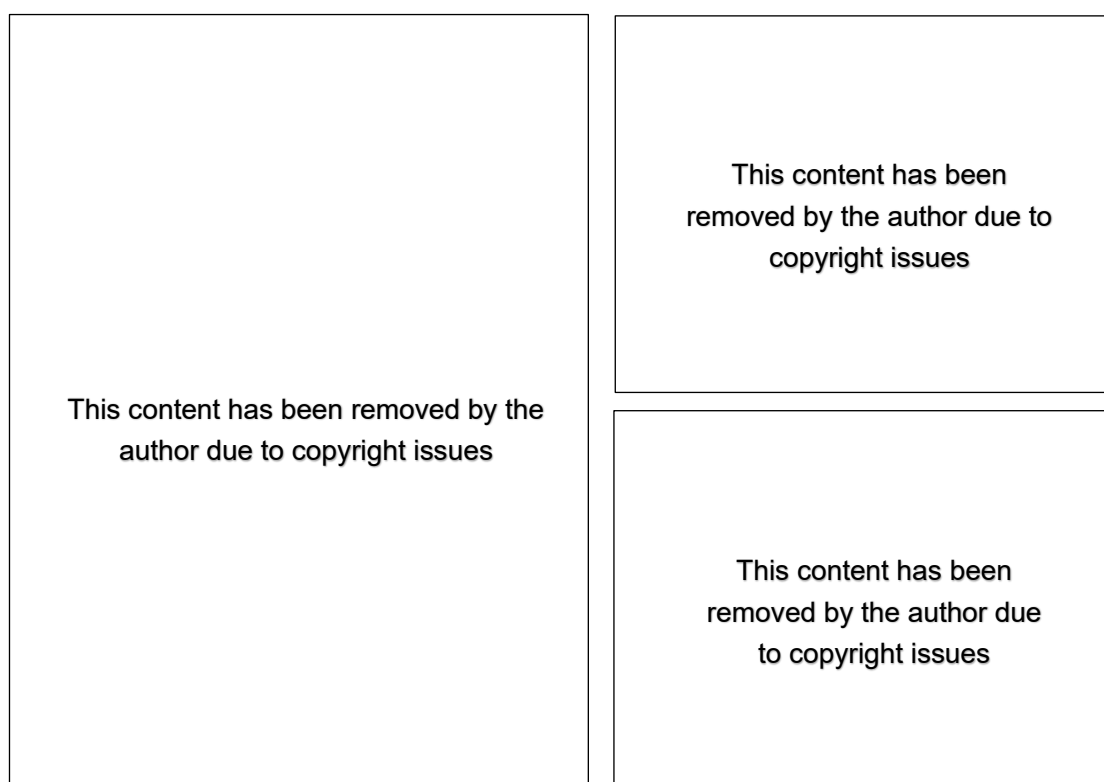


Figure 29. Tilke, M. (1990). *Costume patterns and designs* (p. 97).

Figure 30. Traditional white ramie Hanbok in the Yanbian Folk Custom Museum.

Figure 31. Traditional colourful Hanbok in the Yanbian Folk Custom Museum.

After selecting materials, this research process needed to have flat patterns based on the garment design. In order to understand the source of the Hanbok pattern, I found the traditional Hanbok as depicted by Max Tilke (1990) very useful while I was in the studio (Figure 29). But for further authentic research I went to visit the Yanbian Folk Custom Museum and this was crucial for this research. This is a large museum in Yanji city in China, which has the clothes actually worn by Koreans that immigrated in the Joseon period and the Hanbok (Figures 30 and 31). Both of these aspects of this research had a huge influence on the next stage of the development of this project. It was crucial that comparisons were conducted between the Korean Hanbok depicted by Max Tilke and the Hanbok as seen in our museum in Chaoxianzu to determine accuracy and differences. It was found, however, that

from colour to style and the type of clothing there was very little difference. This gave me a lot of help when making the patterns because I was able to have the Tilke book on hand to consult the very accurate drawings. This also confirmed how little the clothing had changed from the original Korean styling of the Hanbok. In this research, the garment basically depends on a modified pattern which is based on the front and back versions depicted by Tilke. On the Hanbok drawing by Tilke, it is obvious that it has no big curves in the style except for the sleeves in the tailoring of the Korean Hanbok. I initially designed my pattern according to most of the straight lines as seen in Figures 32, 33, 34 and 35. Ja (2010) states that the differences between Hanbok in different periods are mostly in the change in proportion of the top to the skirt. With this idea, I paid more attention to the shape of the trousers and the length of the top, as well as the large swing of the skirt in the whole practice. After drawing these patterns, samples of clothes needed to be made to see if they were the same as the draft and in the right proportion.

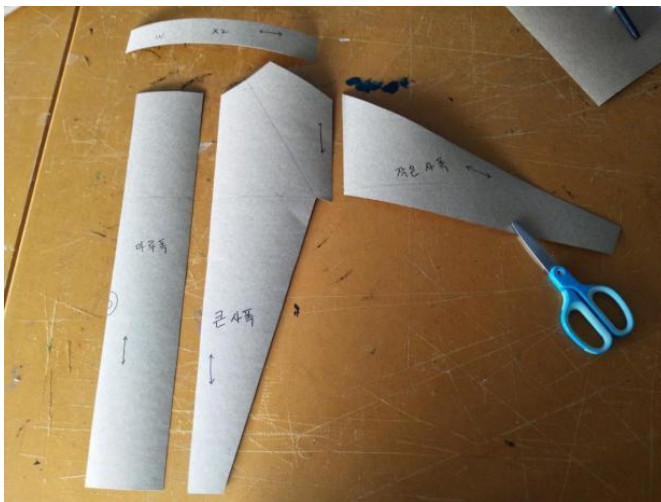


Figure 32. Jin, W. (2019). Making a pants pattern according to the museum and Tilke's costume patterns.

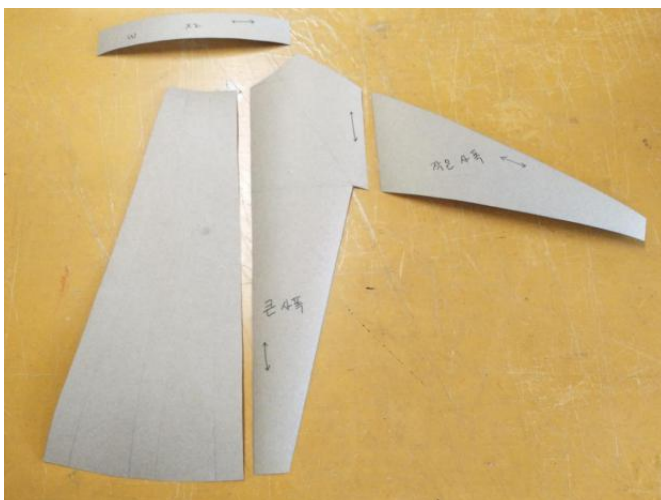


Figure 33. Jin, W. (2019). Pattern development for making the A-style.

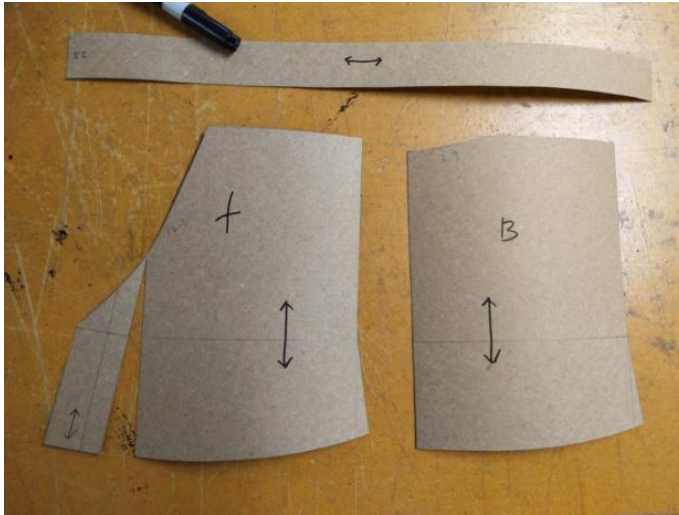


Figure 34. Jin, W. (2019). Pattern development for the jacket.

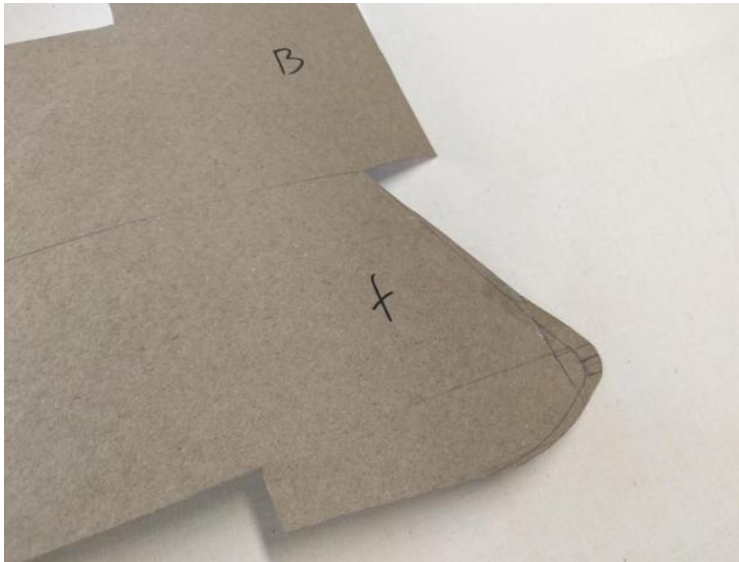


Figure 35. Jin, W. (2019). Pattern development for a second jacket.

3.3 Making minis

3.3.1 Miniature clothing

This research carried the idea of mini-scale clothes as part of the design process, which is slightly different from most fashion practices, the main difference being the size and scale of the garments. Usually a designer needs to use a ratio of one to one to make a garment sample. In this mini-scale practice the clothes are made according to half the proportion of the human body. Dieffenbacher (2013) demonstrates that there is no right or wrong method of working, instead we can seek to understand our own design process. As this research is mainly related to traditional cutting styles and due to most

of the patterns having straight lines and also with the big A-shape skirt, fitting to a body was not the main focus. In this research, the half-size mannequin was enough to show me the effect in developing the design. More importantly, this practice needed to include testing the proportion with different lengths of the top and skirt and calculating the fabric usage due to the big skirt with the A-shape and multiple layering. So first I did a half-size of the sample to save wasting lots of fabric. Figure 36 depicts Madeleine Vionnet, a French designer, who was famous for using the miniature scale mannequin to design on. Scale mannequins have often been used when fabric was at a premium, for example, just after the Second World War in Paris they did not have enough fabric to do couture shows so designers did a miniature scale fashion exhibition of their ideas (Figure 37). Also, very recently, on 31 May 2019, Dior unveiled the exhibition, *Le Petit Théâtre Dior*, in Chengdu, China. It was a full exhibit of the Dior fashion collection with 1/3 size of human scale (Figure 38).

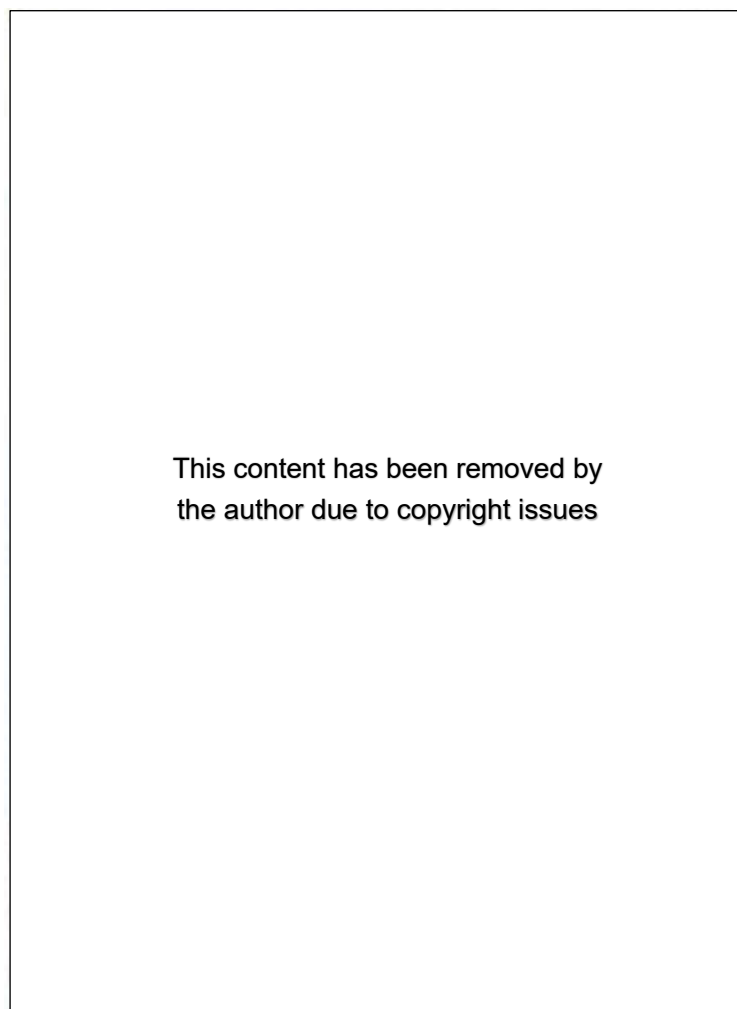


Figure 36. Kirke, B. (1991). Madeleine Vionnet, *Chronicle Books*.

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Figure 37. *Théâtre de la Mode Dolls on display in the Maryhill Museum, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.thecuttingclass.com/theatre-de-la-mode/>*

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Figure 38. *Bacalis, S. (2014). Le Petit Théâtre Dior – Haute couture in miniature. Retrieved from <http://fashiondollchronicles.blogspot.com/2014/06/le-petit-theatre-dior-haute-couture-in.html>*

3.3.2 Making half-size garments

In order to verify and improve the pattern, I used three different colour fabrics when making mini samples. Similar colour and toning to the final garments can reflect the layering and impressions. Although the three fabrics for the final garments had not been completely decided at this stage, practising with two differently textured fabrics helped lead this research to the answer to what material should be used where and at what weight and colour. I experimented with both a fine, easily draped fabric and also a stiffer fabric, which was easy to shape into forms inspired by the mountains of my

homeland. After selecting these fabrics, I started to make a sample by following the steps below, including the steps of Figures 39 and 40 – ironing fabric-cutting fabric according to pattern-sewing fabric.

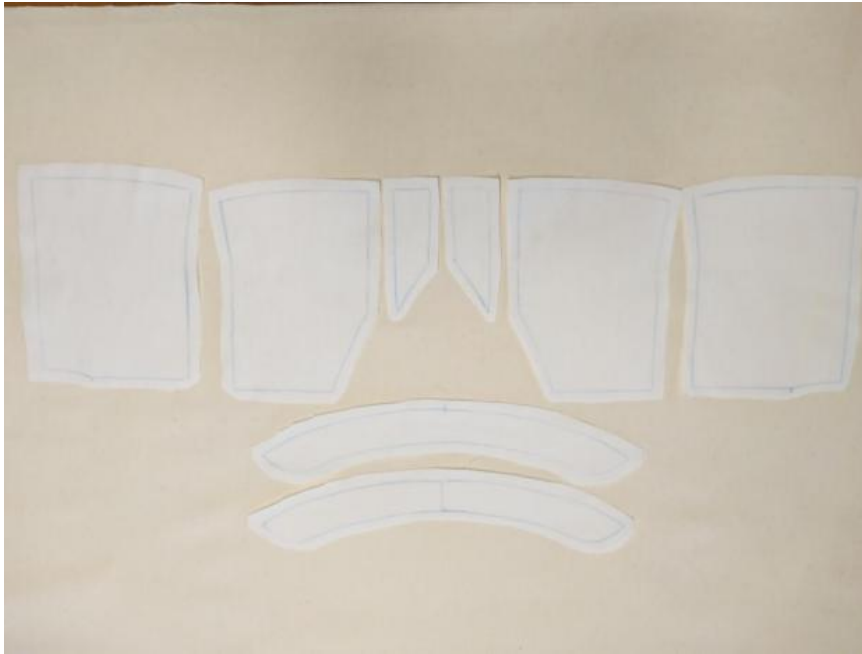


Figure 39. Jin, W. (2019). Fabric cutting in the half size.



Figure 40. Jin, W. (2019). Fabric sewing for a skirt.

3.3.3 Five pieces

All of the skirt starts from a position on or above the chest and all of the part below is skirt. Also, the length of the jacket just covers the position of the chest and there also the jacket length above the chest,

depending on the time.



Figure 41. Jin, W. (2019). Mini garments on a mannequin.

For the piece in Figure 41, I imagined that the women wore a dress tied with a bow at the waist, playing with friends by the river. Here the playing is much about singing and dancing.



Figure 42. Jin, W. (2019). Mini garments on a mannequin.

The focus is on the long sleeves that can be used when dancing, and the decoration that starts from the chest will give the garment a sense of fluidity and make the wearer look like a butterfly when the wearer moves. Also, the proportion of the garment makes the wearer look taller (Figure 42).



Figure 43. Jin, W. (2019). Mini garments on a mannequin.

After making five mini outfits, I decided on the one in Figure 43 with pants, skirt and jacket as the main piece. Chaoxianzu's traditional Hanbok also had these three kinds of clothes called baji (pants), skirt (chima) and jacket (jegori). Choosing this piece for the central position gives the collection more cultural impact. The sleeve is different from the final draft simply to show the proportion between skirt and jacket.



Figure 44. Jin, W. (2019). Mini garments on a mannequin.

The only difference between the piece in Figure 44 and the main piece is whether it has the jacket. It seems very different without the jacket and it is better than an apron-style decoration. This practice

moved from the idea of the second draft to this piece of clothing with a rich sense of movement.



Figure 45. Jin, W. (2019.) *Mini garments on a mannequin.*

As seen in Figure 45, this dress tries to change the impression that the Hanbok dress starts from the chest and goes to the ankle. According to my memory of childhood, I had a short version of Hanbok for dancing in the traditional dancing community.

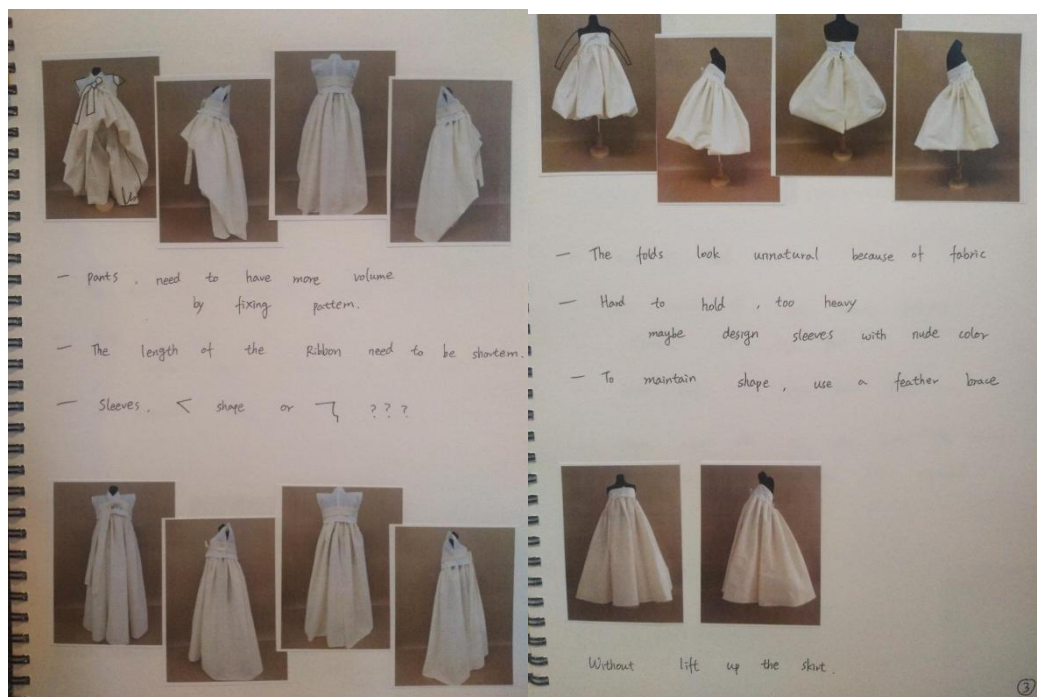


Figure 46. Jin, W. (2019). *Visual diary documentation.*

After finishing the sample, the process of fitting was still going on because I needed to ensure that all important parts of the garment were in the right position on the body and, in the process of fitting, I could also find out how to improve some modelling problems or some details by recording in a visual diary (Figure 46). For example, on this model, I noticed that the trousers were not as sloppy as the

second draft, and the pattern needed to be redrawn.

Making samples of the collection showed the styles of some pieces were actually being repeated. This aspect reminded me that this was to be a collection of garments but that it could almost behave like a capsule collection or wardrobe. To do this I did not need to make five complete outfits, but instead could make a collection of single pieces and put them together. Different styling would give people a totally different feeling and impression, therefore multiple options of wearing Hanbok could also make and reveal a new style or way of wearing it as 'Clothes' and therefore it would become 'Fashion'. After deep thought, I finally decided that this garment collection was to be produced as a single-piece garment collection. Then the next process was the testing of the idea before moving on to the final garments.

3.3.4 Calculating material usage



Figure 47. Jin, W. (2019). Mini garments made with ramie fabric on a mannequin.



Figure 48. Jin, W. (2019). Four different ways of sewing the thick ramie fabric.



Figure 49. Jin, W. (2019). Beige colour thick ramie fabric after washing.



Figure 50. Jin, W. (2019). White colour light ramie fabric after washing.



Figure 51. Jin, W. (2019). Testing the material by washing it after sewing.

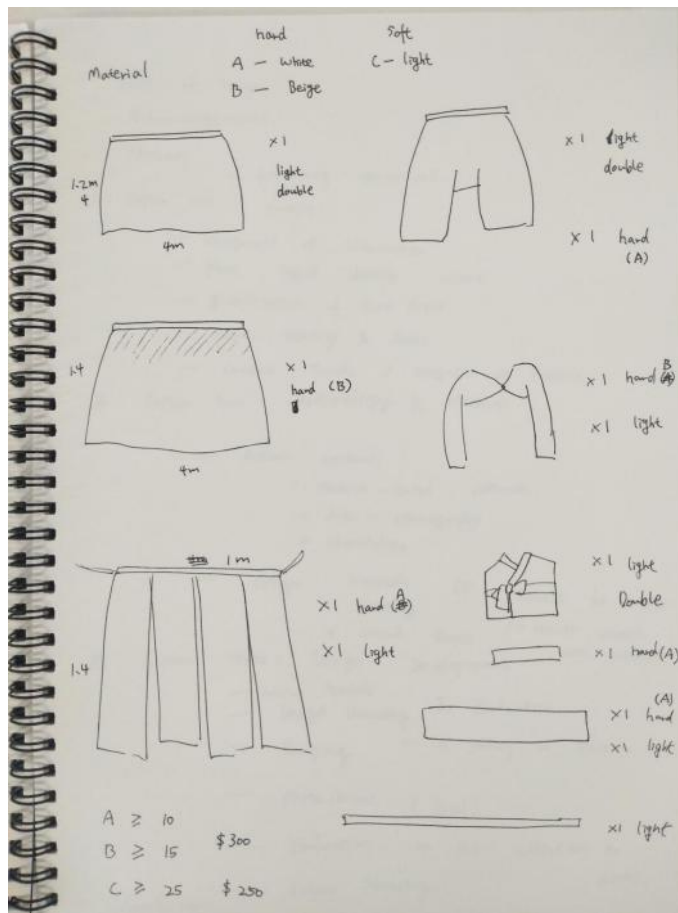


Figure 52 Jin, W. (2019). Visual diary for calculating material usage and cost.

One more mini-scale garment was made by using ramie material (Figure 47). This garment shows that the skirt reached the expectations; however, the jacket in Figure 47 is too thick and tight so that it is uncomfortable on the human body. This jacket needs to be done with fine material. Also, that reminded me about the jacket having long sleeves: the sleeves of that jacket should be shorter as it is difficult to move. The point of this step was to test the fabric in order to maintain the natural feeling of the naturally woven material; there are four ways that this practice was carried out (Figure 48). According to the environment in my nostalgic memory, I chose each construction method to work for the position it was placed in the garment and where it would be most comfortable when sitting on or against the body position. Also, for this research, the ramie fabric needed to be washed to check whether the texture changed (Figures 49, 50 and 51). After the operation of making the mini-garment from the fabric, it looked better when the skirt had two layers of the white ramie fabric. This allowed me to calculate the costing and each material's usage (Figure 52).

3.4 Final garments

3.4.1 Final eight garments



Figure 53. Jin, W. (2019). Jacket (jegori) with sleeves made with rough ramie fabric.



Figure 54. Jin, W. (2019). Jacket (jegori) with sleeves made with fine ramie fabric. This can be worn under the jacket in Figure 53 to protect the skin from friction with the rough ramie fabric.



Figure 55. Jin, W. (2019). Jacket (jegori) without sleeves. It can make a tie with the long band which comes from the centre back of the jacket.



Figure 56. Jin, W. (2019). Pants (baji) with wrinkle on the bottom.



Figure 57. Jin, W. (2019). Pants (baji) with rough ramie fabric without wrinkle on the bottom.



Figure 58. Jin, W. (2019). Skirt (chima) with two layers of fine ramie fabric and bows that can be tied around all parts of the skirt so I can represent different styling with this skirt by fastening different parts of the bows.



Figure 59. Jin, W. (2019). Skirt (chima) with rough ramie fabric that is reminiscent of the mountain. The hooks on the top and bottom of this skirt can make the skirt into different styling which can be seen in Figure 65.



Figure 60. Jin, W. (2019). On the left: decoration band made from fine ramie fabric inspired from traditional Hanbok wedding dress jacket. On the right: bands used as a tie to secure the garments on the body and protect the skin from the rough ramie fabric.

3.4.2 Model fitting



Figure 61. Jin, W. (2019). *The process of fitting.*



Figure 62. Jin, W. (2019). *Trying to find different styling by wearing the skirt inside out.*

During the entire design process, the design changed significantly in the early stages and the final step would often change smaller details. However, at this stage of practice, the idea was mainly about different styling with the pieces in a contemporary environment which means that significant changes can also happen in this step (Figures 61 and 62).

3.4.3 Final fashion photography

Fashion photography is intended to show clothing and styling, usually for selling the fashion. In this research, final fashion photographs represent the messages that I want to express, in simply combining the colours of the outfits and in the contrast between clothes and environment (Figures 63-66).



Figure 63. Photographic study of the garments on a live model in the city environment as a metaphor depicting the ancestors of the Chaoxianzu who moved to China with white ramie clothing [Photograph].



Figure 64. Photographic study of the garments made from rough ramie fabric from China on a live model, showing the Chaoxianzu people trying to fit into the new culture [Photograph].



Figure 65. Photographic study of the garments with the combination of rough and fine fabric on a live model, featuring the Chaoxianzu people who kept their original ancient Korean culture and also having Chinese culture, and the combination of the two made a new style [Photograph].



Figure 66. Photographic study of the garments on a live model which shows the combination of different fabric textures, the fluidity of fine ramie skirt with two layers and also the big smile of the model which tells of the joy which comes from the skirt and dancing [Photograph].

3.4.4 Exhibition

The presentation of the final work was at an exhibition held at St Paul St Gallery in Auckland on 1 November, 2019 (Figures 67-72). The exhibition consisted of five different stylings on mannequins with mini-scale outfits, three stylings on human-size mannequins and three photographic studies of the garments on live models. Mini-scale outfits were arranged within the space on white plinths to balance the height of each garment and the photos. I exhibited those mini-scale garments in the exhibition because it could show the different stylings with eight outfits, and also because it was one of crucial methods I applied in this research. Moreover, sometimes the mini-scale clothes can be more touching for the audience due to its dramatic visual expression. To highlight the white and beige colour of the clothes, I applied black and gray colour mannequins.



Figure 67. Exhibition layout: Five different stylings with the mini-scale clothes [Photograph].



Figure 68. Exhibition layout. The combination of skirt in rough ramie fabric with jacket in fine ramie fabric [Photograph].



Figure 69. Exhibition layout. The whole space [Photograph].



Figure 70. Exhibition layout. From the entrance [Photograph].

Conclusion

This study explores certain changes that globalization has brought to the fashion industry, specifically the use, application and understanding of national clothing elements in fashion design. This research has described how a traditional costume is now being understood as contemporary fashion. This kind of fashion contains not only the personal aesthetic of the fashion designer, but also the outbreak of a culture and the expression of ethnic identity. The designed garments are inspired by Hanbok and represent my memory and feeling of being a Chaoxianzu. As I accepted that my culture is the combination of ancient Korean and Chinese culture, it has made me more aware of the roots of Chaoxianzu. Also, this acceptance guided my fashion collection into a new and authentic design direction for me.

A significant and unique aspect of this research is the fabric selection. The exploration of a specific fabric, ramie, is discussed in respect of the cultural importance and the logical reasons for this selection. It was through this research that I understood that Chaoxianzu history is connected to Chinese elements to make ramie fabrics more valuable for Chaoxianzu people. I experimented with both a fine, easily draped ramie fabric and also a stiffer ramie fabric, which was easy to shape into forms inspired by the mountains of my homeland. The combination of two different fabric textures is absolutely beautiful and every single aspect of the material is telling the story. Growing up in the countryside close to the mountains means that my stories are not just about beautiful moments. Although in this study I convey a very positive attitude through Chaoxianzu clothing, I still want to reflect those hard times in the fabric. That is also one of the reasons why I used thick ramie fabric for the clothes, a fabric which is normally used for home decoration, and it took a lot of practice to use this fabric.

In this practice-based research, I applied a method that is slightly different from the normal fashion practice by making miniature clothing. Making the mini-scale clothes not only tested different proportions of Hanbok, but also saved on the unnecessary expense in making the big dresses. My finding from this process is that I can make a collection of single pieces instead of a collection of garments, therefore different styling with the pieces means this collection can be considered to be interchangeable garments. This will mean that people can wear different effects with the same outfits and can find a new styling that is more suitable for themselves. It was in and through this practice that I obtained the idea to show five different stylings with miniature clothing in the exhibition.

The journey started from the research question and went through to the final garment, and the methods of the framework and the ideas of design have been changed dramatically through the whole practice. Through these changes, I found that there is a reason for every change, but also showed that when I chose to follow a direction it was a choice made based on reasons, although this did not mean that the other direction was wrong. I related to this idea of design-led practice in a very personal manner, reflecting the sensitivities and complexities associated with the research topic, and leading me in a good future direction after this research. This research is based on my childhood memories of living in the countryside with my grandparents and I ended up choosing the white- and beige-coloured fabrics and simple styles reflective of deeper cultural movements and traditions. I did not focus on embroidery or garments with gorgeous decoration reflective of the versions of traditional clothing from the region that are ‘usually’ envisioned. The embroidery in the traditional Chaoxianzu clothes is, however, also an important element that the Chaoxianzu are very proud of and therefore may form the next stage of my long-term study. Also, in this research, I expressed my own stories and emotions as Chaoxianzu; next time, I hope to apply the stories of other Chaoxianzu. I am looking forward to continuing this research in the future.

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Appendix: Exhibition images



Figure 71. Exhibition layout. Three photos from photographic study and abstract [Photograph].



Figure 72. Exhibition layout. Three styles in human size [Photograph].



Figure 73. Exhibition layout. Three styles in human size from different directions [Photograph].



Figure 74. Exhibition layout. The five stylings in mini size [Photograph].



Figure 75. Exhibition layout. The five stylings in mini size from different directions [Photograph].



Figure 76. Exhibition layout. The detail of how to use the band to hold the dress [Photograph].