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ABSTRACT

- The University of Manchester
- Hsin-Ying Cho
- Doctor of Philosophy
- A study of ‘Tree of Life’ patterns for the fashion textile industry in Taiwan
- October 2010

Patterns from the past have frequently been a source of creative ideas for fashion textiles. Culturally-inspired fashion products reflect traditional beauty, cultural identity, and national image, and preserve national cultural heritage (Perivoliotis, 2005; Hyun and Bae, 2007; Cho, 2009).

The ‘Tree of Life’ or, as it is sometimes known, the ‘Flower of Life’, is a motif used to express ideas about immortality and the origins of life. As such, this motif has been an important element of traditional art and craft, frequently being incorporated into traditional textiles.

The findings of Chinese interviews show that tree worship is still important, as are ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in China. Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns are associated with fertility worship, longevity (long life) and immortality (eternal life). The review of literature and the findings from Taiwanese interviews indicate that elements of traditional Chinese patterns are suitable use in modern fashion, because Chinese imagery is a rich source of inspiration for contemporary textile designs, and China chic is pervasive in today’s fashion. Exploring the relevance of the ‘Tree of Life’ pattern for the Taiwanese market, it was found that Taiwanese customers would be happy to see traditionally patterned designs of textile or clothing. This was felt to be important for the Taiwanese textile and fashion industry, which is currently in a state of change as it becomes design-focused rather than purely manufacturing-led.

With fieldwork carried out in both China and Taiwan, and an investigation into the design process, the research concludes that the ‘Tree of Life’ can be re-created and adapted in different ways for fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market. In addition, a model of a new design process for reinterpreting traditional patterns into contemporary ones is proposed. University students and designers can apply this design process model to any textile design project based on traditional patterns.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Traditional patterns are frequently a source of creative ideas for fashion textiles. Fashion theory, in particular the historical resurrection model where styles and designs are frequently seen to come back into fashion at a time after they were first ‘in fashion’, demonstrates that designers frequently use the definitive features of subcultures or traditional cultures to create designs that would be in demand from the fashion market (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

The ‘Tree of Life’ or, as it is also sometimes known, the ‘Flower of Life’, is one of the most popular and enduring motifs of traditional folk art. Appearing in cultures as diverse as Indian, Chinese and Celtic, this motif is found from ancient times, throughout the world, in a variety of forms. Reference to the ‘Tree of Life’ can be found in a variety of publications; from religious texts to academic papers written by historians, anthropologists and artists. This thesis brings together anthropological research and an investigation into design adoption and process to demonstrate the importance of retaining elements of Chinese culture for future textile designs in Taiwan which take inspiration from the ‘Tree of Life’.

A review of secondary sources demonstrates that the concept of a ‘Tree of Life’ comes from the worship of plants and fertility. Often linked with a belief in eternity, ‘Tree of Life’ patterns frequently represent a hope for survival and immortality (Meehan, 1995). As such, these motifs have been an important element of traditional art and craft, frequently being incorporated into traditional textiles.

With fieldwork carried out in both China and Taiwan and an investigation into design process the research concludes that the ‘Tree of Life’ can be re-created and adapted in different ways for fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market.

1.2 Research background

This section presents the context for the research and explains why this research has both academic and practical significance.

1.2.1 Research context

The origin of the worship of plants is frequently associated with the practical meaning they had for early humans. Trees not only provided primitive man with food, shelter and clothing, but they were also used for tool-making and fuel (Li, 1963; Ennos, 2001). Particular trees were believed to have magical powers that could ward off evil spirits (Altman, 2000; Babinski, 2005). In addition, trees were regarded as holding divine powers with regard to ensuring fertility, regeneration and immortality (James, 1966). Trees were, and still are, in many cultures and countries, frequently associated with fertility rites, funeral ceremonies, creation stories and sacred animals.

A review of existing literature shows that trees have symbolic significance in the folklore of many countries and cultures round the world. Often considered to be sacred and termed ‘Trees of Life’ this thesis draws together some of the literature regarding such trees to define what characterises a ‘Tree of Life’.

In the course of research undertaken for an MA by the author it was found that much of the folk art and patterning found in many parts of China was, and in some areas

still is, tree imagery. There was however little information that could be found about current ideas and thinking around the worship and symbolism of 'Trees of Life' in China. This thesis also therefore investigates, through fieldwork, why trees became such an important part of decorative patterning in China, whether tree imagery is still important and, if so, how traditional images can be reinterpreted for today's current fashion markets.

The fieldwork took place in the South Western region of China. This was a largely uncivilised area and the culture of the people of the South Western region is still mainly supported by customs, rituals and traditions passed by word of mouth rather than being based on the written principles of modern civilised societies. As well as a series of semi-structured interviews there, a collection of 'Tree of Life' patterns from this region and from the Yellow River Basin were photographed. The Yellow River Basin is located in the North of China and is the earliest place where there is evidence of stable agricultural communities in China. It is where most Chinese dynasties established their capitals and, as such, is associated with learning and sophisticated civilisations. The research compares 'Tree of Life' patterns in the two regions in order to better understand how cultures affect design style. Analysis of the patterns from the two regions is in Chapter 5 and in Appendices 3-7.

Researchers have shown that effective design processes used for apparel and textile products can enhance the success of products (Regan et al., 1997; LaBat and Sokolowski, 1999; Watkins, 1988; Lamb and Kallal, 1992). The culture-orientated design model and cultural product-design model have been developed to help designers to use traditional elements in cross-cultural products (Moalosi et al., 2007; Lin, 2007). These story-telling approaches are applied in the design models in order to

meet users' needs. One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether the cultural product-design process can be applied to apparel and textile design.

In order to determine the major influential factors in the process of transforming traditional patterns into contemporary ones, there must first be an understanding as to how the use of elements of traditional images help designers in designing modern textiles and garments. This is investigated and the findings are in Chapter 6.

1.2.2 Motivation of the research and significance

A feasibility study explored the relevance of the 'Tree of Life' symbolism for the Taiwanese market. It was found that Taiwanese customers wanted to see elements of traditional patterns in contemporary fashion. This was felt to be important for the Taiwanese textile and fashion industry which is currently in a state of change as it becomes design-focused rather than purely manufacturing-led.

The Taiwanese Government is currently encouraging the creative industries as these are seen as growth areas for the economy. It is working hard to promote a design-led textile industry which can compete more effectively in an international market. Initiatives to promote economic growth at the same time as protecting the environment have been put in place. These aim to cultivate talent and encourage research, development, and innovation to create a high-quality living environment. Alongside these initiatives is a drive to preserve Taiwanese aboriginal culture and Chinese culture. This is considered important as the Taiwan aborigines are the indigenous people of Taiwan and the Han Chinese were very early immigrants, emigrating from the south-coast provinces of China, such as Fujian and Guangdong, in the 6th century. One Government project aims to apply traditional Chinese culture

to the fashion industry in order to help its transition from a manufacturing-led industry to a design-led one to improve its international competitiveness (Council for Cultural Affairs, Taiwan, 2008) and to help develop the creative industries which are very new and still developing in Taiwan.

1.3 Aims and research objectives

The main aim of this research is:

- To study the concept, image and symbolism of the ‘Tree of Life’ in the patterns of traditional folk art in China and to consider how these patterns can be recreated in order to apply them to contemporary textile designs for the Taiwanese market.

Specific research objectives are:

- **Research objective 1:** To establish what is meant by a ‘Tree of Life’ throughout different cultures and societies around the world;
- **Research objective 2:** To establish any commonalities in ‘Trees of Life’ around the world;
- **Research objective 3:** To investigate in detail the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China;
- **Research objective 4:** To investigate the potential use of traditional Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market.

1.4 Research methodology

Several different research methods were used in this work. The methods chosen and the reasons for their being chosen are explained fully in Chapter 4. The different aims and objectives of the research required different methods and these are outlined below.

- To establish what is meant by a ‘Tree of Life’ throughout different cultures and societies around the world a review of a wide range of literature was carried out.
- To establish any commonalities in ‘Trees of Life’ around the world comparative tables were developed to identify the most important characteristics; the information used in the tables came from the literature review.
- To investigate in detail the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China fieldwork in the South Western region of China was undertaken. The investigation involved a series of semi-structured interviews.
- To investigate the potential use of traditional Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market an investigation into how past designs have influenced contemporary designs was undertaken through a review of literature. A series of semi-structured interviews were also carried out in Taiwan. Different design processes were also researched by reviewing the literature.

1.5 Definitions of key terminology

For clarification a number of key terms used throughout this thesis are defined.

Superstition: The term ‘superstition’ is used to describe irrational beliefs, not based on evidence, reason or knowledge (Collins English Dictionary, 2007). Such belief is considered the cause of religious behaviour or practice (Collins English Dictionary, 2007). Superstitious notions result from fear of the unknown, trust in chance, or disregard for the relation between cause and effect (Merriam-Webster, 2008). Superstitious beliefs can be found in every culture (Carroll, 2007).

Myth: The term ‘myth’ refers to “an usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon” and can also be described as being a “a person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence” (Merriam-Webster, 2008). Campbell and Moyers (1988) commented that myths are based on experiencing life, and usually concern the origins of the world or human existence.

Magic: Magic means “any mysterious or extraordinary quality or power” (Collins English Dictionary, 2007).

Mystery: Similar to magic, the term ‘mystery’ refers to any thing or event that is unexplained or not fully understood (Collins English Dictionary, 2007).

Ritual: The term ‘ritual’ is used to describe a prescribed or established set of actions. It is often used in relation to religious ceremonies (Webster’s Revised Unabridged

Dictionary, 1913; Collins English Dictionary, 2007). Many rituals are related to the greatest events in human life such as birth, marriage and death (Robinson, 2007).

Worship: In the area of religion, various definitions of worship are found. However, the most significant definition for this research gives, the term ‘worship’ as “the ritualistic response to the appearance of that which is accepted as the holy, that is, to a sacred transcendent power or being” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009).

Cult: The dictionary provides at least eight different definitions of ‘cult’. Cult, defined in the most general and basic meaning, is a religious ceremony or ritual used by unconventional religious groups to worship a particular person figure or object (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 2005; Collins English Dictionary, 2007). In this thesis, the terms cult and worship are used interchangeably to mean “worship or give reverence to a deity” (Robinson, 2007).

Spirituality: ‘Spirituality’ may be broadly defined as “the state or quality of being dedicated to a god, religion, or things or values, of a higher order than material or temporal ones” (Collins English Dictionary, 2007). In the literature relevant to this research, the term ‘spirituality’ tends to be used to refer to religious beliefs or sacred things (The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 2007).

Metaphysics: In the field of philosophy, the term ‘metaphysics’ is the branch of philosophy that deals with the fundamental nature of reality, it is concerned with such questions as the origin and structure of the universe (Collins English Dictionary, 2007).

The natural and supernatural: There are various definitions of ‘natural’ found in the literature. The term natural is generally understood to mean “occurring in conformity with the ordinary course of nature” or relating to the physical world (Merriam-Webster, 2008). By contrast, ‘supernatural’ is used to describe phenomena that are miraculous, or “things that cannot be explained according to natural laws” (Collins English Dictionary, 2007). The term supernatural is often associated with a god, demigod, spirit, or devil (Merriam-Webster, 2008).

Good and evil spirits: Dictionary definitions of ‘evil’ usually refer to acts or thoughts contrasted with good and, as such, is that which is “morally wrong or bad” (Collins English Dictionary, 2007). In this thesis, the term evil is used to describe beings with no material body or form that are marked or accompanied by misfortune, are inherently bad or unlucky (Merriam-Webster, 2008).

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis contains seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction: this gives the background to the research and defines the aims and objectives. Some key terms are defined and the framework of the thesis is also briefly explained.

Chapter 2: The history and concept of the ‘Tree of Life’: this chapter investigates tree-worship and the cultural symbolism of the ‘Tree of Life’ globally through a literature review. The reasons for some trees being considered sacred and the crucial determining factors for identifying a tree as a ‘Tree of Life’ are presented.

Chapter 3: The use of traditional patterns in contemporary design: this chapter discusses fashion adoption theories and investigates the use of traditional patterns/motifs in contemporary textile design for fashion and different design processes.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology: this chapter explains what methods have been used and why. It reviews some of the theory behind research methods and compares quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Chapter 5: An investigation into the ‘Tree of Life’ motif in China today; its symbolism and use: this chapter covers the design of the semi-structured interviews used in the fieldwork, why this method was chosen, the characteristics of the research participants, the size of samples, the findings and how the data was analysed. It presents an in-depth analysis of the factors that are considered to make a tree sacred in China and also discusses these factors in relation to ‘Tree of Life’ motifs in Chinese textiles.

Chapter 6: A study of how the use of elements of traditional images could be applied to contemporary fashion textile design for the Taiwanese market: this chapter presents the results and analysis of the in-depth interviews in Taiwan. It covers views on the current Taiwanese fashion industry and market, and future trends. It also describes participants’ views about re-interpreting traditional Chinese images.

Chapter 7: Conclusion, discussion, recommendations and further research opportunities: this chapter brings together the results of the research it considers the initial research questions and how successfully these have been answered. It

summarises the characteristics that were identified as defining a tree as a ‘Tree of Life’ from the literature review and discusses the tables that have been created to summarise the findings from the literature review in Chapter 2. It outlines how the findings from Chapter 2 were used to inform the semi-structured interview guides and considers how the concept, image and symbolism of the ‘Tree of Life’ motif is perceived in China. The findings from the interviews in Taiwan are summarised with regard to what is considered appropriate in terms of using traditional imagery to inform contemporary fashion textile designs the Taiwanese market. From this and the study of fashion adoption and design process models a design model for the development of cultural imagery for today’s fashion textiles is presented. The chapter also explores further research opportunities.

The thesis also provides references and a bibliography and has seven appendices.

Appendix 1: List of interviewees: the appendix provides some background and information about those interviewed.

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview guides: the appendix presents the details of the interview guides used for the semi-structured interviews.

Appendix 3: Analysis of the style of ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in textiles and cut paper from the Yellow River Basin.

Appendix 4: Analysis of ‘Tree of Life’ patterned textiles relating to the worship of trees, from the South Western Region of China.

Appendix 5: Analysis of the style of ‘Tree of Life’ patterned textiles from the South Western Region of China.

Appendix 6: Analysis of ‘Tree of Life’ patterned textiles relating to fertility, from the South Western Region of China.

Appendix 7: Analysis of ‘Tree of Life’ patterned textiles and cut paper relating to fertility, from the Yellow River Basin Region of China.

CHAPTER 2

The history and concept of the ‘Tree of Life’

2.1 Introduction

‘Tree of Life’ imagery is found around the world. Often used to express ideas about immortality and the origins of life, ‘Tree of Life’ motifs are an important element of traditional art and craft, and as such frequently incorporated into traditional textiles. This research aims to study the concept, image and symbolism of the ‘Tree of Life’ in the patterns of traditional folk art in China and to consider how these patterns can be recreated in order to apply them to contemporary textile designs for the Taiwanese market. This chapter specifically aims to investigate the research question as to what is meant by a ‘Tree of Life’ throughout different cultures and societies around the world, and to establish if there are any commonalities in ‘Trees of Life’ around the world.

References to a ‘Tree of Life’ can be found in a variety of publications from historical reviews to religious studies written by historians, anthropologists and artists and so a review of this literature was undertaken. This aimed to give an understanding of the concept and symbolism of the ‘Tree of Life’; to establish why certain trees began to be considered as sacred and just what the determining factors are that identify a tree as being considered a ‘Tree of Life’. The findings from this literature review were analysed and are presented in a series of tables which compare the different trees that are considered as sacred and the reasons for this.

2.2 Tree worship

Trees are held to have particular religious significance in many cultures. This section reviews studies of tree-worship from the anthropological perspective to explain why tree-worship may have started and how it has prevailed in some countries.

2.2.1 The origin and development of tree-worship

A significant contribution to the understanding of tree-worship is the work by the British anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor *Primitive Culture* which was published in 1871. Tylor argued that tree-worship is very significant and deeply rooted in early forms of religion. According to Tylor the worship of trees is based on ‘animism’ which Tylor defined as “a general belief in spiritual beings”. He claimed that primitive man (defined as those without a tradition of writing) believed in the existence of spirits that inhabited natural objects such as plants, trees and rivers.

Tylor noted:

“...there is a wide range of animistic conceptions connected with tree and forest worship. The tree may be the spirit’s perch, or shelter, or favourite haunt; or may serve as a scaffold or altar, where offerings can be set out for some spiritual being; or its shelter may be a place of worship set apart by nature, of some tribes the only temple, of many tribes, perhaps, the earliest; or lastly, it may be merely a sacred object patronised by, or associated with, or symbolising some divinity.” (Tylor, 1871; 202)

J.H. Philpot (1897) concluded that the origin of tree-worship was related to ancestor worship. Philpot stated that Semitic tribes, (including Sumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, Babylonians, Aramaic, Canaanites, Assyrians, Hebrews, Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, Chaldeans and Arabs), believed that spirits of ancestors lived in material objects, such as a tree, or an area of forest or a village.

Spencer (1873) and Allen (1892) also both claimed that the first religions were likely to have been about the worship of ancestors. They thought that primitive people worshipped trees because of an association with ancestral graves.

Both Evans (1931) and Professor Robertson Smith (1889) concluded in their studies that one reason trees were thought to be sacred was because they were considered to be homes to spirit gods. Smith argued that “the god inhabited the tree or sacred stone not in the sense in which a man inhabits a house, but in the sense in which his soul inhabits his body” (Smith, 1889; 84). Evans further explained that the sacred tree shedding its leaves in the winter was considered by some primitive people to be due to the temporary disappearance of the deity.

Smith claimed that there were actually two different concepts of a tree-spirit. One was the idea of a tree-god (a good spirit) and the other that of a tree-demon (an evil spirit). He stated that the friendly powers of nature embodied in holy trees surrounding a district where people lived were thought to ensure the success of crops and help a district prosper. On the other hand it was believed that tree-demons with less friendly powers could destroy a district.

Due to their lack of scientific knowledge and understanding primitive men felt that mysterious power was everywhere. Marett (1909) considered that primitive man’s feelings of fear, awe and wonder at their world were the catalyst for the start of early religions. He thought that there was “a powerful impulse to objectify and even personify” that which is held in awe and wonder. He pointed out sacred objects as being ‘supernatural’ and labeled this universal feeling ‘supernaturalism’ (Marett, 1909). He considered this to be a stage before ‘animism’ and called this ‘pre-animism’.

Marett theorised that trees were regarded as supernatural because they behaved in a way which primitive man could not explain. Marett believed early man treated trees or plants as having a life, energy or spirit. This view is supported by Chin (1994) in his book *The Tree of Life*. He stated that in early humans' minds the whole world was alive and that trees, like human beings, also had souls and that this primitive belief that "all things on the earth have souls" was where early tree worship originated (Chin, 1994; 13). James (1966) also felt that the concept of tree-worship was linked with nature; he felt wonder was aroused by mysterious and awe-inspiring phenomena such as primeval forests and their peculiar sounds, unearthly silence and overall sense of enchantment.

The 'Tree of Life' has a strong correlation with places of worship in nearly every culture. Miller (1993) suggested that the 'Tree of Life' featured in temples as the temple was a sacred place; "the tree was in the middle of this paradise and was a very important part of the cultic ritual" (Miller, 1993; 96). He further said that the 'Tree of Life' often replaced a temple when there was no physical building, because the tree was regarded as the home of the god or it represented the god.

2.2.2 Tree worship in Asia

According to Philpot (1897) the earliest record of tree-worship is recorded on stone cylinders from Chaldea engraved around 4000BC. Chaldea was part of Mesopotamia and was situated in what is now Southern Iraq and Kuwait. Philpot described the forms of the sacred tree as they appear on the Chaldaean cylinders:

"...as a stem divided at the base, surmounted by a fork or a crescent, and cut, midway, by one or more cross bars which sometime bear a fruit at each extremity. This rudimentary image frequently changes into the palm, the pomegranate, the cypress, vine, etc.." (Philpot, 1897; 5) (see Fig. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3).



Figure 2.1

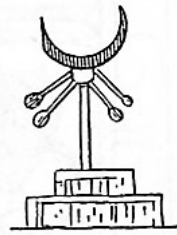


Figure 2.2



Figure 2.3

Chaldaeans cylinders: Rudimentary and conventionalised forms of the sacred tree.

(Illustrations reproduced from D'Alviella, 1894).

Philpot said the depiction of sacred trees on Assyrian monuments (1000 BCE) was influenced by the trees that were depicted on the Chaldaeans stone cylinders. Sacred trees on Assyrian stone reliefs frequently show a tree between two people facing each other, or between monstrous creatures, such as lions, sphinxes, griffins, unicorns, winged bulls, or eagle-headed deities (see Fig. 2.4, 2.5).



Figure 2.4 An Assyrian cylinders.

(Illustration reproduced from D'Alviella, 1894).

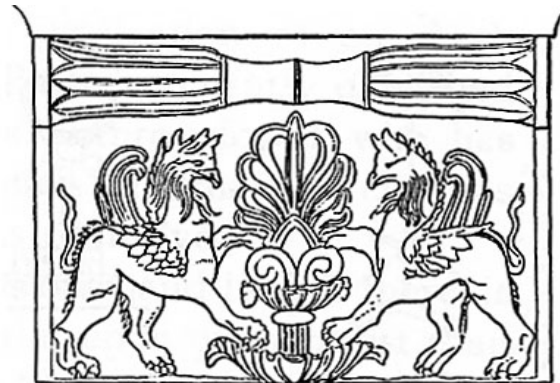


Figure 2.5 A capital of the Temple of Athena at Pryene.

(Illustration reproduced from D'Alviella, 1894).

Philpot concluded that the concept of tree-worship in Assyria was based on the idea of a supreme deity, and the images of sacred trees could therefore be regarded as the most sacred emblems of Assyrian religion.

Parpola (1993) suggests that the religious symbolism of mystical trees was passed from people to people by word of mouth rather than by being written down. He noted that between the creatures or the winged eagle-headed deities the tree was sometimes replaced by the king (see Fig. 2.6). Parpola (1993) considered this to mean that the king was absolute ruler of the empire as the tree stood for divine world order and that the king as a human personification of the tree represented a god.



Figure 2.6 The king impersonates the tree.

(Illustration reproduced from The British Museum).

While some scholars would appear to prefer to use the more neutral term ‘sacred tree’ rather than ‘Tree of Life’ when referring to these Mesopotamian trees, Parpola argued that the Assyrian tree represented a ‘Tree of Life’. Parpola also claimed that this particular tree motif influenced later Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist imagery.

Cherie (2004) also considered the sacred trees on Assyrian monuments to be regarded as a representation of the ‘Tree of Life’. He described the types of the Assyrian sacred ‘Tree of Life’ as follows:

“... from the ancient Assyrian monuments, the Assyrians appear to have a variety of these trees, some thing like four or five: the date-tree, the vine, the pomegranate-tree, the fir-tree and the oak” (Cherie, 2004) (see Fig. 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10).



Figure 2.7
The Date-tree.
 (Illustration
 reproduced from
 Cherie, 2004)



Figure 2.8
The Vine.
 (Illustration
 reproduced from
 Cherie, 2004)

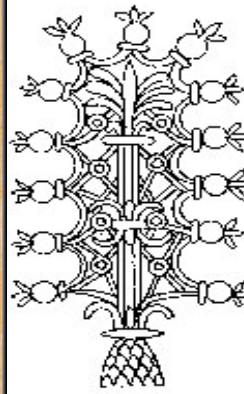


Figure 2.9
The Pomegranate-tree.
 (Illustration
 reproduced from
 Parpola, 1993)

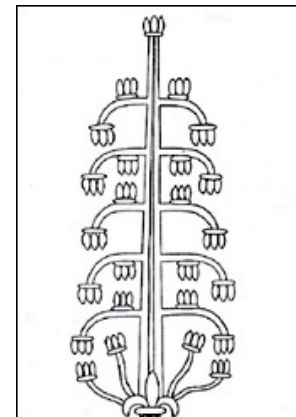


Figure 2.10
The Fir-tree.
 (Illustration
 reproduced from
 Cherie, 2004)

According to Philpot (1897) tree-worship was also very firmly rooted in India. Historical evidence of tree-worship can be found in early Hindu religious writings and on seals. These depicted “the God who exists in the universe, in water, in fire, [and] also exists in large tree and herbs” (Altman, 2000; 49). By 500 BCE various stories can be found associating trees and plants with divinities. An important legend referred to peepul (pipul or bodhi-tree) and banyan trees (both types of fig tree) as the homes of the holy trinity of Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva. According to religious texts Brahma (‘The Creator’ and the male fertilising and creative force in Nature) lives in the roots, Vishnu (‘The Preserver’ and the manifestation of solar energy) lives in the trunk, and Shiva (‘The Destroyer’ and also the regenerator) lives in the branches and leaves (Altman, 2000).

Philpot (1897) also referred to legends about the peepul tree. He said that these tell of Buddha achieving enlightenment under a peepul tree. The peepul, is therefore, regarded as a centre of consciousness and source of enlightenment by Buddhists (see Fig. 2.11).



Figure 2.11 Peepul tree-worship.
(Illustration reproduced from Cunningham, 1879).

The tulasi tree (or holy basil) is referred to throughout the Vedas, the most sacred of Hindu texts which are believed by some to be the oldest written works in existence. The flowers, leaves and wood of the tulasi are an integral part of Indian life and worship. Tulasi leaves or flowers are frequently used in religious ceremonies and the wood is carefully carved into meditation beads. The tulasi, like the peepul tree, is also believed to be a dwelling place of the god Vishnu and of his wife Lakshmi (Philpot, 1897).

Scenes on seals found in the Indus valley (now in Pakistan) frequently show peepal and acacia trees with a horned god, scorpions, centipedes and fabulous creatures, such as unicorns. James (1966) says the role of the horned god and the other creatures was

to protect the sacred tree from attack by demons intent on stealing its life-giving fruit. Scorpions in particular were considered guardians of the 'Tree of Life' (James, 1966).

Worship of the soma tree was also popular in ancient India. According to Rig-veda (James, 1966) the soma was regarded as a sacred plant because the intoxicating effects of its juice were considered a divine source of fertility, regeneration and immortality.

Some references to Chinese tree-worship can be found in De Groot's *The Religious System of China* (1894) and Johnston's *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (1910). De Groot recorded Chinese folklore relating trees with various deities. Johnston (1910) considered that dragon tree (the jiulong pine tree) worship was important in China with sacrifices being made to the tree every year.

Babinski (2005) pointed out that the peach tree is a magical tree in Chinese culture as Taoists regard it as having protective powers to ward off evil spirits. Most Taoist spiritual tools are made from peach wood because of this. The peach is also a symbol of immortality in China because the goddess of the West (Hsih Hwang Mu) attained immortality through eating peaches.

2.2.3 Tree worship in Europe

The 'Tree of Life' is a common mythological symbol of religious ritual in Ancient Greece and Greek literature is full of references to sacred trees, or 'Trees of Life'. The oak was believed to be the oracle of Zeus, the father of Greek gods and the god of thunder (Philpot, 1897; James, 1966; Caldecott, 1993; Altman, 2000).

In Crete there is evidence of sacred trees in engravings on stones, pillars and signet rings (seal rings), and in frescoes and on pottery. James (1966) wrote that sacred trees in Crete were considered to be the embodiment of the Mother goddess. James briefly described the role of the Mother goddess in scenes on signet rings in the Middle Minoan period (c. 2100-1700 B.C.). He noted that the Mother goddess “emerged as an individualised anthropomorphic figure in her threefold capacity of Earth-mother, the Mountain-mother and mistress of the Tree” (James, 1966; 29-30).

James also found that trees played “a prominent role in burial places as the embodiment of life-giving forces” (James, 1966; 31). He concluded that the Mother goddess embodied in the sacred tree was the ultimate source of rebirth. Pedersen (1909) and Harrison (1912) provided a more detailed overview of the Mother goddess in funeral rites. They suggested that the Mother goddess appeared to facilitate the journey of the soul to its final abode rather than, as others had thought, to summon it back to the land of the living.

The Dutch archaeologist Geerto A.S. Snijder (1936) argued that as in India (see Section 2.2.2) Minoan tree-worship was based on the intoxicating effects of plants. He analysed the species of plants in the representations of sacred trees on seal-rings and concluded that these were poisonous plants such as henbane and thornapple; both of which contain mescaline, a hallucinogen. He felt that those taking part in religious ceremonies were not in a normal state of mind. Given plant concoctions by their priests that caused religious frenzies the Minoans believed that the plants they ate possessed magical powers and as such trees were worshipped.

Philpot (1897) referred in his writings to an Accadian hymn which is one of the oldest written works in existence. (Accadia is in the south of Italy.) He took the hymn to explain the reason for the establishment of tree-worship as being that sacred trees were homes to gods: “a mystical tree is described as the abode of the gods” (Philpot, 1897; 4-5).

2.2.4 Tree-worship in Africa

Altman (2000) suggests that it is not surprising that in the dense forest and jungle covering ancient Africa that large or unusual trees were believed to be the residence of powerful spirits. The baobab, for example, is an extraordinary tree. It can thrive in very dry climates, grow up to 25 metres in height and live for several thousand years. The baobab is sometimes known as the ‘upside-down tree’ because its twisted and wizened branches look like roots (Caldecott, 1993) (see Fig. 2.12).



Figure 2.12 The African baobab.

(Illustration reproduced from Wikipedia).

The bark, leaves, fruit and trunk of the baobab are all used for food, tools and medicines. Due to its special shape and practical value it is considered to be a sacred and mystical tree, and is considered to be Africa’s ‘Tree of Life’ (Roback, 1990; Earle, 2001). Baobab trees are still worshipped in Africa today, and Senegal has chosen the baobab as its national symbol (Hansen, 2005).

Tree-worship was very common among the ancient Egyptians. Some species of trees, such as the date palm, sycamore, tamarisk, acacia and lotus, were regarded as sacred because they were associated with particular religious stories. Some scenes on pillars in Egypt show trees venerated as the homes of various divinities (Philpot, 1897) and, in palaces and houses wooden pillars were sometimes carved in the form of trunks of palm-trees. The Djed-column (see Fig. 2.13 and 2.14) has been an object of worship since the pre-dynastic period in Egypt (James, 1966; Dunn, 2005). The column takes its shape from the tamarisk tree which has been interpreted as being the backbone of Osiris, the Egyptian god of life, death and fertility.



Figure 2.13 Djed column showing the rings of a papyrus column.
(Illustration reproduced from Dunn, 2005).



Figure 2.14 Djed column with arms of Osiris holding crook and flail.
(Illustration reproduced from Dunn, 2005).

Legend has it that Set, the brother of Osiris, killed Osiris and then threw the coffin holding Osiris' body into the Nile. The coffin was eventually found by Osiris' sister embedded in a tamarisk trunk. The tamarisk grew very quickly encircling the coffin and was later cut down by the King of Byblos who used the trunk as a pillar to support his palace. The pillar became known as the Djed Pillar, and Osiris

metaphorically became the 'Tree of Life' (Philpot, 1897; James, 1966; Fletcher, 1999; Altman, 2000). Osiris became a tree-god who represented immortality.

According to Smith (1978):

“Tree-worship may be traced from the interior of Africa not only into Egypt and Arabia, but also onward uninterruptedly into Palestine and Syria, Assyria, Persia, India, Tibet, Siam, the Philippine Islands, China, Japan and Siberia, also westward into Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and other countries.” (Smith, 1978; 139)

2.2.5 Cosmic trees

Altman (2000) suggests that the concept and symbolism of a 'Tree of Life' was derived from the idea of a 'cosmic tree'. Cosmic or world trees are found in many ancient cultures. Philpot (1897) thought that the origins and development of cosmic trees were related to primitive man's pre-science views on nature. Primitive people wondered why the moon, the sun, and the stars did not fall from the sky to the earth. Philpot felt that "his [primitive man's] mind naturally demanded some prop or support" to explain this (Philpot, 1897; 109). The idea of a cosmic tree was that it formed the central axis of the world with the branches holding up the sky. This was an important belief for many primitive people.

From seeing clouds resting upon the mountain peaks people who lived on mountains developed the idea of a mountain supporting heaven while the inhabitants of plains considered heaven to be supported by a central tree. Philpot (1897) suggested that "the two conceptions were combined and the world-tree was placed on the summit of a world-mountain" (Philpot, 1897; 110). The mythical image of cosmic trees is associated with ancient cosmology, and it represented the universal concept of the world. According to Altman (2000) cosmic trees can be 'World Trees', 'Trees of Life', and 'Trees of Knowledge'.

In Norse mythology, a cosmic tree called Yggdrasil served as the axis of the world and supported the universe (Philpot, 1897; Ameisenowa and Mainland, 1939; James, 1966; Altman, 2000; Emick, 2006) (see Fig. 2.15). The roots of Yggdrasil were said to go through the three levels of Norse cosmology: “one reached into Niflheim, the underworld or world of the dead; another into Midgard, the middle world or the Earth where humans dwelled; and the third reached to Asgard, the home of the gods” (Altman, 2000; 23). Yggdrasil was regarded as a world tree that connected all living things and grew through the three realms of heaven, earth and the underworld.



Figure 2.15 World-ash Yggdrasil.
(Illustration reproduced from Wikipedia).

The Asvattha is a world tree which appears in ancient Hindu texts (Ojha, 1991; Lalit, 2003). According to the early Indian mythology, the Asvattha’s roots grew up to the sky and its branches grew downward to cover the earth (Lalit, 2003). It was also believed to be the abode of gods and goddesses and as such was venerated (Ojha, 1991).

According to Mayan myths, the ceiba tree (see Fig. 2.16) is considered as the centre of the world and as the ‘mother’ of all life (Altman, 2000).

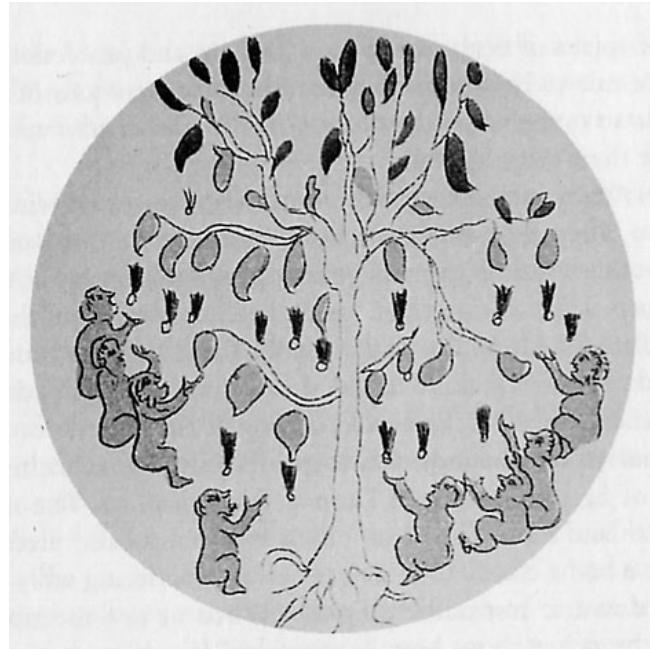


Figure 2.16 The ceiba tree from the Vatican-Rios Codex.
(Illustration reproduced from Aguilera, 1985).

Widengren (1951) also defined the term ‘Tree of Life’ as a cosmic tree based on an investigation of the *Book of Daniel*. He cited from the texts of Daniel:

“And lo, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and waxed strong, and its height reached unto heaven, and the view of it to the whole earth’s end. The leafage of it fair, and its fruit much, and food in it for all. (Daniel 4:7 b-9⁴) ”

The ‘Tree of Life’ is also represented in the Jewish *Kabbalah* (see Fig. 2.17). The Kabbalah ‘Tree of Life’ is a model of the Universe, it defines divine world order and describes the path of knowledge which can help humans to return to God (Halevi, 1972; Parpola, 1993; Altman, 2000).

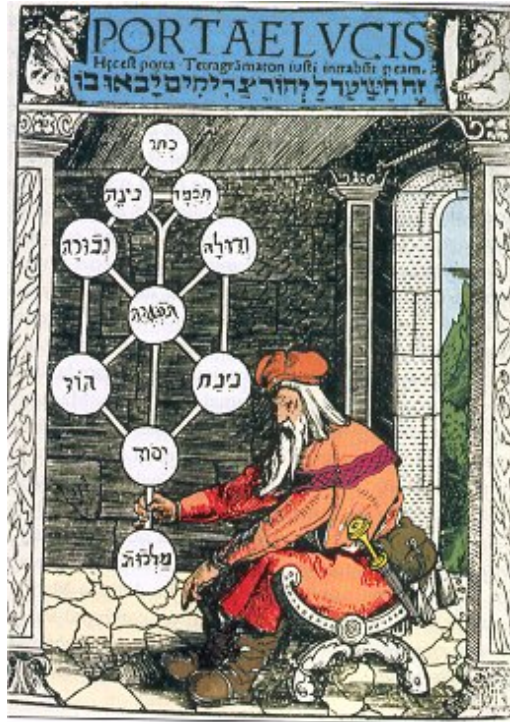


Figure 2.17 ‘Tree of Life’ (Kabbalah).
 (Illustration reproduced from Wikipedia).

According to Egyptian legends, the ‘Tree of Life’ was described with branches reaching out and supporting the sky, while its roots reached down into the watery abyss of the Netherworld (the ‘World of the gods’) (Fletcher, 1999).

2.2.6 Trees and creation stories

Legends of the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, said that “The beginning was void. The first thing to be formed in the heart of the void was a tree. The first tree sprang out of a womb of energy, and, emerging from its millions of buds, there spouted the whole of creation” (Altman, 2000; 36). Moreover, Galton (1853) stated that the Damaras of South Africa believe that trees were the universal creators.

In Celtic creation stories, the oak tree was also said to be the ancestor of mankind. The first man and the first woman were believed to have been created from an oak tree by gods and goddesses (Emick, 2006). Oak trees are also often referred to in the

Shamanic literature of the Druids. Emick (2006) suggested that the word Druid comes from the Celtic name for oak, 'daur' and that the root of the oak was considered to be the doorway to the 'Otherworld, the realm of Fairy'. According to Emick "a Druid was one who was 'Oak Wise', meaning learned in Tree magick and guardian of the doorway" (Emick, 2006; 21).

Ancient Greeks and Romans also believed that the first race of mankind was created from the trunks of trees. This concept can be found in the Aeneid, written by Virgil in the 1st century BCE (between 29 and 19 BCE). In this it was said "Nymphs, and fauns, and savage men, who took their birth from trunks of trees and stubborn oak" (Aeneid, viii. 315). Fletcher (1999) also felt that the concept of a 'Tree of Life' as a tree of creation could be found in ancient Egyptian writings with texts referring to a primordial tree of creation, being plucked from the water god Nu.

2.2.7 Sacred trees and 'Trees of Life'

Dafni, (2006) considered a sacred tree to be able to be classified by four criteria:

- a. natural elements: the physical characteristics of the tree;
- b. supernatural elements: the beliefs that spirits or gods inhabited trees;
- c. human ritual: the ceremonies and behaviours related to trees;
- d. botanical criteria: climate and biodiversity.

Dafni defined a 'Tree of Life' as both a religious 'metaphysical tree' and 'spiritual tree'. According to Dafni the tree is related to human ritual and therefore a 'Tree of Life' may also be regarded as a sacred tree. Parpola (1993) also argued that many scholars often use the term sacred trees rather than the term 'Tree of Life' but that essentially the terms were synonymous. As such for the purposes of this research a sacred tree and a 'Tree of Life' are considered to be the same.

2.2.8 The ‘Tree of Life’ in Asia

As has been stated earlier trees were worshipped in Mesopotamia and the concept and images of a ‘Tree of Life’ were found in poetry, pottery, monuments, seal cylinders and textiles. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* described how the hero King Gilgamesh travels to get a mythical tree and uses the tree to resurrect the dead (Griggs, 1989; Gardner, 1998).

A significant Assyrian image from 1000 BCE is shown in Figure 2.18. The tree is pointed at (or fed) by kings. Saggs (1988) and Cherie (2004) explained this scene as showing a ‘cone-smearing’ ritual where kings bestow new life on the date-palm. Saggs (1988) says that “the purpose of the ceremony was magically to identify the king with the ‘Tree of Life’ and so to invest him with the fertility and longevity of the tree” (Saggs, 1988; 307).

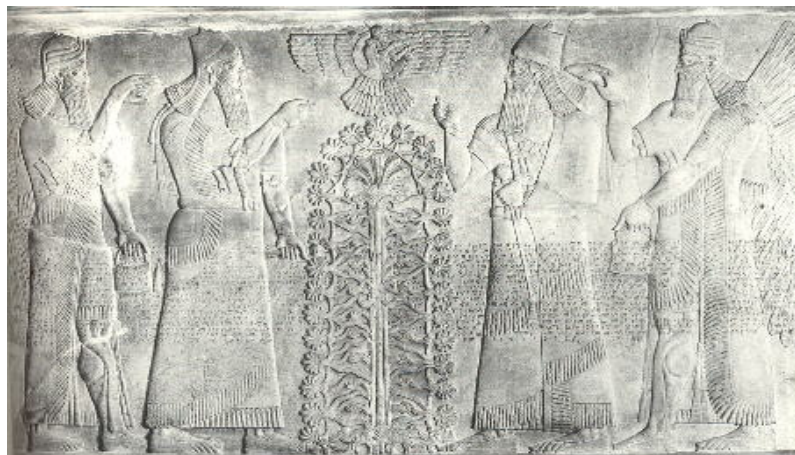


Figure 2.18 Assyrian Relief : The ‘cone-smearing’ rite.
(Photograph by the author from The British Museum collection).

Altman (2000) stated that in ancient China, the orange tree represented fertility because of its many seeds. He also stated that the Chinese consider a gigantic peach tree to be a ‘Tree of Life’. The peach is a symbol of immortality in China and according to Chinese mythology fairies give peaches that allow those who eat them

immortality (Altman, 2000). Immortality is a recurring idea theme of the 'Tree of Life' in China where many traditional 'Tree of Life' designs appeared in folk art.

2.2.9 The 'Tree of Life' in Europe

Many references to 'Trees of Life' can also be found in Celtic myths and legends. Trees provided the basic requirements to sustain the earliest Celtic civilisations. Meehan (1995) and Emick (2006) suggest that trees were considered sacred as they were used to produce basic sustenance such as food and fuel for the early Celtic peoples. "Without trees, life would have been extraordinarily difficult" (Emick, 2006; 21). Emick concluded that the concept of the 'Tree of Life' came about because of the close and dependent relationship between men and trees.

According to Celtic myths, the oak tree was regarded as a 'Tree of Life'. It represented a mythical bridge between the worlds of gods and humans (Altman, 2000; Emick, 2006). The oak tree also represented wisdom. The Celtic alphabet was associated with sacred trees with each letter of the alphabet representing a particular tree (Gifford, 2000; Emick, 2006).

Many traditional Celtic 'Tree of Life' designs appeared on pots and in textiles (see Fig.2.19, 2.20). The designs were considered symbols for the interconnection of all living things and a link between heaven and earth. According to Miller (1998) most Celtic 'Tree of Life' patterns "have a logical growth pattern with branches from a main stem to form cornucopia from which other branches with leaves and fruits emerge." He further cites from Bain's (1973) book *Celtic Art: the methods of construction* to state that "The Celtic 'Tree of Life' completes the total of created life" (Miller; 1998; 6).

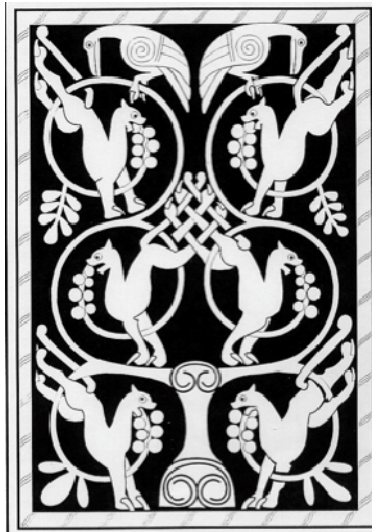


Figure 2.19 The Celtic 'Tree of Life'.
(Illustration reproduced from Meehan, 1995).



Figure 2.20 The Celtic 'Tree of Life'.
(Illustration reproduced from Meehan, 1995).

There are frequent references to 'Trees of Life' in Greek literature. Homer's epic *The Odyssey*, refers to an unusual palm growing out of the altar of Apollo (Griggs; 1989). The olive tree was also regarded as a 'Tree of Life' in ancient Greek cultures. Griggs (1989) states that "The victors of the Olympic games were crowned with branches and leaves from an olive tree growing near sacred altars at Olympia. The games represented the ritual process of obtaining the 'Tree of Life' " (Griggs, 1989; 3).

2.2.10 The ‘Tree of Life’ in Africa

Tree-worship in Africa has been mentioned in Section 2.2.4. Baobab trees are considered to be Africa’s ‘Tree of Life’ and still worshipped in Africa (Roback, 1990; Earle, 2001). The concept of a ‘Tree of Life’ is explicitly mentioned in Egyptian folklore. Griggs (1989) drew evidence for this from Egyptian artefacts and demonstrated that the fruit of the ‘Tree of Life’ represented eternity in religious rituals.

He stated that:

“...partaking of the fruit of the tree is a sacramental act, one that symbolises unity with the gods; hence, the fruit is not available to mortals in the normal course of daily but can be found only in the rituals relating to eternity.”
(Griggs, 1989; 2)

2.2.11 The ‘Tree of Life’ in America

Sorenson (1953) noted that ‘Tree of Life’ symbolism occurred widely in Mexico and Central America in ancient times and that many of the same symbols and features occur in scenes there as in Eastern art (Sorenson, 1953).

2.2.12 The ‘Tree of Knowledge’

Some ancient writings also refer to ‘Trees of Knowledge’. Griggs (1989) identified passages from the Bible in the book of *Genesis* as evidence for this stating that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. They were then banished from Eden (the garden of paradise). Griggs took this as evidence to explain why “whenever man regained God’s presence, a ‘Tree of Life’ representation was used to symbolise that reunion” (Griggs, 1989; 3).

“And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (King James Bible, Genesis 2-7)”

This 'Tree of Life' was also linked to the concept of living forever:

“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the ‘Tree of Life’, and eat, and live for ever. (Genesis 3:22)”

The concept of a magical or sacred tree in the middle of a perfect garden or paradise is not only found in Christianity. In ancient Egypt people believed that there was a radiant tree in the midst of Paradise and according to Babylonian mythology, the ‘Tree of Life’ was a magical tree in the middle of Paradise (Widengren, 1951; Emick, 2006).



Figure 2.21 Engraving by Heinrich Aldegrever.

(Photograph by the author from The Whitworth Art Gallery collections).



Figure 2.22 Engraving by Heinrich Aldegrever.

(Photograph by the author from The Whitworth Art Gallery collections).



Figure 2.23 Engraving by Heinrich Aldegrever.

(Photograph by the author from The Whitworth Art Gallery collections).



Figure 2.24 Engraving by Heinrich Aldegrever.

(Photograph by the author from The Whitworth Art Gallery collections).



Figure 2.25 Engraving by Heinrich Aldegrever.

(Photograph by the author from The Whitworth Art Gallery collections).

Engravings by the German engraver, Heinrich Aldegrever illustrate the story of Adam and Eve and all five feature a ‘Tree of Life’. These engravings are shown in Figures 2.21-2.25.

Many scholars who have studied the ‘Tree of Life’ quote from a phrase in the Old Testament of the Bible (Proverbs 11.30) “The fruit of the righteous is a ‘Tree of Life’” (Ameisenowa and Mainland, 1939; James, 1966; Griggs, 1989; Babinski, 2005; Sluder, 2005).



Figure 2.26 Menorah.

(Illustration reproduced from Widengren, 1951).

‘Trees of Life’ are also found in Judaism. Yarden (1971) looked at the two olive trees on either side of the menorah, the seven-branched Jewish candle-stick (see Fig. 2.26). He stated that “the menorah originated from a sacred tree, more specifically the ‘Tree of Life’ of mythology-a primal image which can be glimpsed as early as the third millennium B.C.” (Yarden, 1971; 35).

2.2.13 Christmas trees

With regard to the origin of the Christmas tree, there appears to be a relationship between earlier Druidic tree-worship and Christianity. Altman (2000) suggests that the tree-worship of the Druids stopped when Christianity became dominant in Europe.

However, the ‘Tree of Life’ symbolism continued to influence Christian thought.

According to German myth about St. Winifred:

“St. Winifred, filled with religious enthusiasm and with desire to destroy the pagan forms of worship, dared one Christmas Eve to defy the ancient gods, and hewed down the sacred oak of the Druids. From the center of the fallen oak sprang a young fir tree with shining lights on its branches and the face of the Christ Child above. St. Winifred gave the tree to his followers as a symbol of the new spirit of religion - the young tree meaning the Christ Child, the lights on the green boughs, the light of everlasting life in the soul of man.”
(Altman, 2000; 83)

2.3 Trees in every day life and communities

The previous sections have discussed the origin of tree-worship, cosmic trees, sacred trees and ‘Trees of Life’. The following considers the importance of trees in human daily life.

Trees played important roles in the evolution of human life. The evidence from ancient Europe, Egypt, Africa, China and the Middle East reflects the fact that relations between man and trees can be traced back to the very beginning of the human race. Research shows that mankind has been intimately associated with trees from early times on a very fundamental level, that is trees had a very practical meaning (Li, 1963; Rival, 1998; Ennos, 2001; Logan, 2005). Trees were crucially important to humans at the beginning of agricultural civilisation, by providing basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing (Li, 1963; Altman, 2000; Ennos, 2001). In addition, trees were extensively used in tool-making and for fuel. According to archaeological studies on prehistoric life, wood was used by primitive people to make hunting weapons such as wooden spears and shelters. Making fire allowed men to ward off wild animals, cook food, and provide warmth (Blankenship, 1996; Altman, 2000; Ennos, 2001; Logan, 2005).

Celtic tribes viewed a tree as a 'Tree of Life' because the tree provided basic sustenance such as food, shelter and fuel (Meehan, 1995; Freeman, 1998; Emick, 2006). In Indonesia the coconut palm is presented with food offerings, because it provides food and material for many everyday items (Giambelli, 1998). Cherie (2004) also concluded from studying motifs on Assyrian monuments and cylinders that Assyrian 'Trees of Life' were often the commonest trees that were used every day for their fruits or wood.

Altman (2000) considered that a particular tree is regarded as sacred because "the tree provides an essential product or service to the community" (Altman, 2000; 15). Communities throughout the world frequently have special trees. In many villages, the villagers used to plant what they called a 'community tree' in order to protect the crops and inhabitants. Li (1963) cited Kramer's (1956) article to explain the origin of the community tree. He noted that the first record of huge trees with spreading canopies (shade trees) being planted in gardens can be found on a Sumerian stone tablet from about the third millennium BCE. Kramer interpreted the scene as showing an ancient story where a gardener used wisdom to plant a huge tree in the garden. According to Kramer this fable "seems to explain the origin of shade-tree gardening, and thus reveal that the horticultural technique of planting shade trees in a garden or grove to protect the plants from wind and sun was known and practiced thousands of years ago" (Li, 1963; 17-18). The community tree served as a protector for crops from earliest times. Philpot (1897) suggested that a huge tree in a village also represented a warrior and provider for the tribe.

2.4 Trees and fertility

‘Trees of Life’ have long been believed to have special natural powers with regard to human and animal procreation, that is they can ensure a woman’s fertility and ability to give birth. Altman (2000) argued that trees, especially deciduous trees, have always been considered as symbols of cyclical life by many native peoples. Deciduous trees came to be regarded as the embodiment of the spirit of rebirth because of their ability to drop or shed their leaves each autumn, but come into leaf again in spring. Equally evergreen trees such as pine, spruce and fir trees were also used in fertility ceremonies to symbolise immortality and the power of life (Odigon, 1997; Altman, 2000). The evergreen tree was considered a symbol of eternal life because it stayed green all year and endured the buffeting of winds and storms. In North America, some tribes used evergreen trees as symbols in fertility worship (Altman, 2000).

To ancient people fertility was very important. Having fertile fields which were able to grow strong and healthy crops for themselves and their flocks was imperative for their survival. Equally they needed their womenfolk to be fertile so their tribe would continue. Some gods were considered to have power over fertility and as such they were worshipped by early people. “The peasant clung to the observances by which the spirit of fertility was propitiated” (Philpot, 1897; 90). Hua (1993) supports this with a claim that fertility worship has existed throughout history and was a primitive religion.

Trees have been found to be worshipped in fertility rites in nearly every culture. The determining factors that have made trees symbols of fertility have been examined in many studies (James, 1966; Rival, 1998; Altman, 2000). In some parts of Australia,

aborigines held fertility rites before certain sacred trees because the trees were said to be the home of the spirits of unborn babies (Altman, 2000; Philpot, 1897). Trees with a particular abundance of fruit or seed have frequently been believed to have magical properties affecting fertility (Altman, 2000; Earle, 2001). The pomegranate tree, for instance, has been viewed as a symbol of fecundity and the original ‘Tree of Life’ for many indigenous peoples (Hughes, 2005). The Assyrians regarded the pomegranate tree as a sacred tree and its fruit is often depicted on reliefs of the Assyrian period (Parpola, 1993; Altman 2000; Cherie, 2004). Altman (2000) explained that the pomegranate tree was venerated because it contains dozens of seeds which, as well as symbolising fertility, also symbolised prosperity (see Fig. 2.27). Tylor suggested the ‘Tree of Life’ in ancient stone monuments of Assyria indicated fertility and immortality.

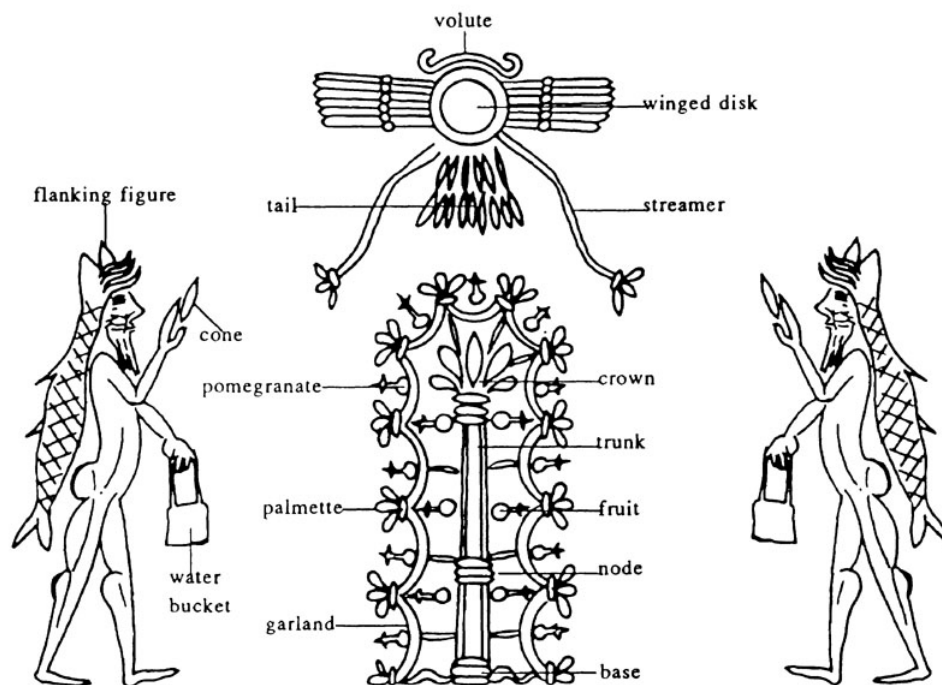


Figure 2.27 Structural elements of the Assyrian Tree Motif.

(Illustration reproduced from Parpola, 1993).

The baobab has also long been regarded as a symbol of fertility in Africa. According to Baum (1995) the word 'baobab' derives from the Arabic descriptive word 'buhibab' in sixteenth-century meaning many-seeded fruit.

Other trees were considered to be connected with human fertility because they were inhabited by gods or goddesses (Philpot, 1897; James, 1966; Altman, 2000; Edmonds, 2002). For example, the sij tree is regarded as the home of Manasa, the goddess of fertility, and as such is worshipped by Indian women who want to conceive children. Altman (2000) stated that particular sacred trees have long been important in female fertility rites in India, because of the deities associated with them (see Fig. 2.28).



Figure 2.28 Women and tree-god (India).
(Illustration reproduced from Altman, 2000).

Many tribes, held fertility rites in the shade of trees (Altman, 2000) and a significant rite in Europe was the ‘Maypole dance’ (May comes from the month the dance was performed). Several studies (Philpot, 1897; Hawthorne; 1937; James, 1966; Wilks, 1972; Maity, 1989; Altman, 2000) have demonstrated that the Maypole, which is usually made from pine or silver birch, was regarded as possessing power over human fertility.

Maypole dancing was common in many Western Europe communities, especially in England, Sweden and Germany with people dancing around the Maypole which was decorated with flowers, streamers and other emblems (see Fig. 2.29 and 2.30). The pole was then taken from house to house and finally burnt. Maity (1989) and Altman (2000) interpreted that this custom was to ensure the fertility of crops and animals, and bless the childless with offspring. They suggested that the ritual “originated in the belief of the fertilising power of the tree spirit” (Maity, 1989; 179; Altman, 2000; 86). Nowadays, Maypole dances are still performed in England and the United States.



**Figure 2.29 Early Maypole Dance
England 1750.**

(Illustration reproduced from
Elmbridge museum catalogue).



Figure 2.30 Recent Maypole Dancing.
(Illustration reproduced from Altman, 2000).

2.4.1 Tree marriage

Tree marriage is a form of proxy marriage that has been found in many tribes throughout the world. In many early cultures, trees were thought to be gods and as such marriage to a tree was considered as marriage with a god. Rival (1998) gave a detailed discussion of the cultural and historical context of tree marriage in Japan. Altman (2000) stated that tree marriage is still practised in India where a widow or widower will marry a tree before marrying again. This is because it is believed that a second marriage will bring bad luck while a third marriage will not.

2.4.2 Trees and children's birth and growth

Many studies of the world's tribes show that trees have frequently been part of rituals linked to important milestones in life (Philpot, 1897; Frazer, 1922; Roback, 1990; Bonnemere, 1998; Giambelli, 1998; Uchiyamada, 1998; Altman, 2000; Fediuk, 2006) and as such trees are frequently linked to the birth and growth of children.

The M'Bengas in Western Africa plant and worship trees when children are born. The children's souls are believed to be incorporated into the trees, and it is thought that if the tree dies, the child would too (Philpot, 1897; Frazer, 1922). The Ainu people of Japan also planted a tree when a child was born. The Ainu also believed that the fate of child was linked with the tree. If the tree flourished, the child would be strong and healthy. However, if the tree withered or died, the child would have a life of illness or even an early death (Altman, 2000).

In Africa the indigenous people in some parts believe that mankind was born in a baobab tree and because of this it is customary to wash a baby or a young child in the sap from baobab bark to ensure the child will grow into a strong adult (Earle, 2001).

The notion that trees were linked with children also prevailed among countries such as Russia, Germany, England, France, Italy and Fiji (Frazer, 1922). Many of the native people believed that the lives of children were bound up with trees. In Germany it used to be believed that a sick child would recover after being placed in a tree (Philpot, 1897).

2.5 The ‘Tree of Life’ and death

The ‘Tree of Life’ has often been related to death and dying and as such has long played an important role in funeral ceremonies all over the world. James’s book *The Tree of Life* discusses the close connection between the ‘Tree of Life’ and rituals to do with death. Ancient people wondered about the mystery of death; and so they used the symbol of the ‘Tree of Life’ to “signify the maintenance and preservation of life from fear of death” (James, 1966; 201).

Studies have found that a number of sacred trees have been important in traditional funeral ceremonies in China. The white and fragile flowers of the pear tree are good examples of funerary symbols. The flowers of the pear tree served as objects to be used in meditation on the fragility of a human life (Altman, 2000). Certain trees such as the plum, peach, bamboo and willow were considered to be able to ward off demons and therefore were widely used in funeral ceremonies to protect the spirits of the dead from evil. A rod of green bamboo was used in funeral processions to ward off evil spirits and facilitate the journey of the deceased into the heavenly worlds (Altman, 2000). In addition, willow was a symbol of immortality and it was often strewn on coffins to ward off evil spirits (Altman, 2000).

A variety of trees were used to decorate the funerary pottery of Egypt. Petrie (1920) described the various forms of the leaves: some straight, others curling over inwards. He considered that the trees might have been acacias. The motif of the 'Tree of Life' frequently appeared on Egyptian coffins linked with the god Osiris and the goddess Nut, and in the archaic texts and passages inscribed on the interior walls of pyramids (James, 1966; Griggs, 1998).

Altman (2000) says that the Sumerians regarded trees as the personification of the dual forces of the universe: consciousness and unconsciousness, male and female, light and darkness, life and death. Referring to Sumerian ancient myths, he stated that certain trees were considered to serve as a bridge between the realms of life and death.

2.5.1 Rebirth and the afterlife

Altman also considered the reason why the tree was seen as the symbol of life force was linked to deciduous trees. The shedding of the leaves in Autumn, was representative of death for primitive humans while in the Spring with new leaf growth the tree was considered to be reborn. "Humans have the image of passing from death into a new phase of life through resurrection or reincarnation" (Altman, 2000; 168). Evergreen trees were often used to symbolise eternal life due to the fact that these trees never lose their leaves. According to Altman trees "symbolise the promise of human transformation that goes beyond the physical world" (Altman, 2000; 168).

The 'Tree of Life' motif with the Earth-mother (a goddess who serves as a female fertility deity or the giver of life) was found on a Minoan sarcophagus in Greece. James (1966) interpreted this scene according to the Minoan perception of life. He stated that, "Life is conceived as a vital energy produced by the earth and requiring

renewing continually by oblations, sacrificial blood and the fruit of life-giving trees and plants...it may be imparted to the deceased in the tomb” (James, 1966; 225). The significance of the ‘Tree of Life’ would appear to have been to facilitate the resurrection or rebirth in the after world of the deceased.

Myrtle and box trees are connected to life after death in Greece. According to Greek mythology and folklore, the symbolism of the myrtle is of one life ending and another beginning; myrtle branches are therefore carried to any new settlements by Greeks in order to symbolise the beginning of a new life (Altman, 2000). Traditionally, the box tree was used to represent the Greek deity Hades, the Lord of the Underworld, and symbolised both mourning and immortality. The box tree “revealed to the ancients that death is but a passage to a life in the hereafter” (Altman, 2000; 168).

In parts of Africa, the hollowed trunk of the giant baobab tree was regarded as a place through which tree gods could be contacted. After death human bodies were placed inside the hollowed-out tree trunk to allow them to journey to the after-life via the tree (Altman, 2000). James’s study (1966) of ancient texts found that Egyptian gods sat on lofty sycamores in the east of the sky, or at the eastern gate of heaven (James, 1966). In addition, Egyptian coffins often depicted a scene where the goddess Nut was personified as a ‘Tree of Life’, offering drink and nourishment to the souls of the dead (Griggs, 1998). In North America the cedar tree is a deep-rooted tree that lives to a great age; it too was considered as a ‘Tree of Life’ and intimately associated with the cycles of rebirth in the spirit realms in North America (Altman, 2000). In China, the souls of the dead were believed to become a tree or live in a tree for their after-life (Philpot, 1897; Warner, 1989). Philpot (1897) explained this as being related to transmigration and a belief in the immortality of the soul.

2.5.2 Immortality

There is a long traditional symbolism of trees being linked to immortality. Warner (1989) suggested that the tree stands for eternity due to its strong roots. Emick (2006) expands this viewpoint to state that the continuous regeneration of seeds and fruits from a tree represents immortality. Yew trees were considered as vitalising agents in ancient England, Scotland, and Ireland with family burial grounds often located beneath yew trees in churchyards. In Britain it was believed that a yew tree could give immortality; and so a yew tree was considered as a ‘Tree of Life’ giving eternal life (Altman, 2000; Gifford, 2000).

The symbol of the ‘Tree of Life’ therefore appears to be associated with the transformative process of life, death, and resurrection.

2.6 Analysis of findings

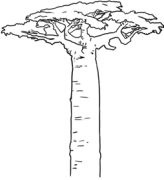






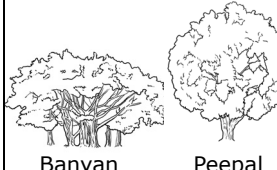







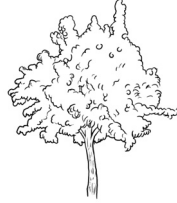
Several reasons for trees being worshipped and therefore being considered as sacred have been identified in this literature review. Sacred trees are also usually known as ‘Trees of Life’ and have been found all over the world in many cultures and throughout the history of mankind. To be better able to use the findings from this literature review to inform subsequent research a series of tables have been produced.

Table 2.1 presents a list of trees that have been referred to as being sacred or ‘Trees of Life’ in the literature. The trees in this table are classified into two types: evergreen and deciduous. In many countries and cultures evergreen trees have been regarded as the ‘Tree of Life’ and a symbol of eternal life because they never lose their leaves staying green all year (Altman, 2000). Equally in many parts of the world deciduous

trees have also been considered as ‘Trees of Life’ and a symbol of rebirth due to the fact that they are come to life again in the Spring producing new leaves after a barren Winter following the loss of their leaves in the Autumn (Altman, 2000).

This table contains the Latin name for each tree and details about its size, characteristics and uses. A pictorial representation of each tree has been drawn by the author to help with a brief comparison of tree shapes. As the drawings indicate, the foliage of ‘Trees of Life’ most commonly form rounded shapes. Most trees also have uses as tools or as a source of food although some are only cultivated for ornament.

Table 2.1 Trees referred to as being sacred or ‘Trees of Life’. (Drawings by the author).

Evergreen trees			Deciduous trees		
Baobab <i>Adansonia</i>	Tree 5-30 m Cultivated for fruit		Acacia <i>Robinia</i>	Shrub or tree up to 20 m Cultivated as ornament and for fruit	
Box <i>Buxus</i>	Shrub or small tree 2-12 m Cultivated as ornament and for its wood		Ash <i>Fraxinus</i> * also evergreen varieties	Medium to large tree Up to 50-80 m Cultivated for its wood	
Cedar <i>Cedrus</i> Member of conifer family	Tree 30-60 m Cultivated as ornament		Ceiba <i>Ceiba</i>	Large tree up to 70 m Cultivated as ornament and for its fruit	
Coconut palm <i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Tree up to 30 m Cultivated for fruit		Fig (Banyan and Peepal) <i>Ficus</i> * also semi-evergreen varieties	Large tree up to 30 m Cultivated as ornament	 Banyan Peepal
Cypress <i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	Tree up to 35 m Cultivated as ornament and for its wood		Lotus flower <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> ,	Aquatic perennial 1.5 m Cultivated for fruit	
Date palm <i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	Tree 15-25 m Cultivated for fruit		Oak <i>Quercus</i> * also evergreen varieties	Shrub or tree up to 30 m Cultivated for its wood	
Fir <i>Abies</i>	Tree 10-80 m Cultivated for its wood		Peach <i>Prunus persica</i>	Tree 4-10 m Cultivated for fruit	
Green bamboo <i>Bambuseae</i> Members of the grass family	Woody plant 35-40 m Cultivated as ornament and for food (shoots)		Pear <i>Pyrus</i>	Medium sized tree 10-17 m Cultivated for fruit	










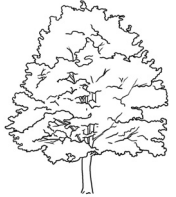






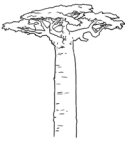






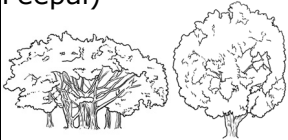
<p>Myrtle <i>Member of Myrtaceae family</i></p>	<p>Shrub or small tree growing to 5 m Cultivated as ornament</p>		<p>Pine <i>Pinus</i></p>	<p>Tree 15-45 m Cultivated for its wood and fruit</p>	
<p>Olive <i>Olea europaea</i></p>	<p>Small tree 8-15 m Cultivated for oil and fruit</p>		<p>Plum <i>Prunus</i></p>	<p>Shrub or tree 8-12 m Cultivated for fruit</p>	
<p>Orange tree <i>Citrus</i> Member of rue family</p>	<p>Flowering tree up to 10 m Cultivated for fruit</p>		<p>Pomegranate <i>Punica</i></p>	<p>Shrub or small tree 5-8 m Cultivated for fruit</p>	
<p>Palm <i>Arecaceae or Palmae</i></p>	<p>Shrub, tree or vine up to over 20 m Cultivated for fruit and as ornament</p>		<p>Silver birch <i>Betula pendula</i></p>	<p>Medium sized tree 15-25 m Cultivated as ornament</p>	
<p>Tamarisk <i>Tamarix</i> * also deciduous varieties</p>	<p>Small shrub or tree 1-18 m Cultivated as ornament</p>		<p>Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i></p>	<p>Large tree 20-35 m Cultivated for its wood</p>	
<p>Vine <i>Vitis</i></p>	<p>Climbing or trailing plant Cultivated for its fruit</p>		<p>Tulasi (or holy basil) <i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i></p>	<p>Shrub 30-60 cm Cultivated for fruit</p>	
<p>Yew <i>Taxus baccata</i> Member of conifer family</p>	<p>Small to medium-sized tree 10-20 m Cultivated as ornament</p>		<p>Willow <i>Salix</i></p>	<p>Tree or shrub 20-30 m Cultivated for its wood</p>	











Table 2.2 arranges the trees that were identified in the literature as ‘Trees of Life’ according to their geographical region. This table shows that some trees were regarded as ‘Trees of Life’ in more than one geographical area. For example, a cedar is considered as sacred in Egypt, North America and Mesopotamia while a date palm is venerated in both Egypt and Mesopotamia and an oak tree is regarded as a ‘Tree of Life’ in Mesopotamia, Britain and Greece. Pine and silver birch trees are considered to be sacred in the United States, Britain, Germany and Sweden.











Creating this table identified that while the literature reviewed referred to ‘Trees of Life’ in Africa, North America, Asia and Europe there were no references found for particular trees being worshipped in South America and Australasia. This is an area where more research could be carried out.

A world map showing the locations of ‘Trees of Life’ was developed from this table (see Fig. 2.31). A simple world map was identified. The drawings of the trees that were mentioned in the literature reviewed were arranged around the map and arrows were drawn from the trees to the countries where the literature notes these trees as being identified as being sacred.

Table 2.2 Trees referred to as sacred or as being a ‘Tree of Life’ by geographical region.

Trees	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe
Acacia 	Egypt			
Ash 				Greece
Baobab 	Africa			
Box 				Greece
Cedar 	Egypt	United States of America	Mesopotamia	
Ceiba 		Mexico		
Coconut 			Indonesia	
Cypress 			Japan	
Date palm 	Egypt		Mesopotamia	
Fig (Banyan and Peepal)  Banyan Peepal			India	

Fir			Mesopotamia	
Green bamboo			China	
Lotus flower		Egypt		
Myrtle				Greece
Oak			Mesopotamia	Britain Greece
Olive				Greece
Orange tree			China	
Palm				Greece
Peach			China	
Pear			China	

Pine			United States of America		Britain Germany Sweden
Plum				China	
Pomegranate				Mesopotamia	
Silver birch			United States of America		Britain Germany Sweden
Sycamore		Egypt			
Tamarisk		Egypt			
Tulasi (or holy basil)				India	
Vine				Mesopotamia	
Willow				China	
Yew					Britain

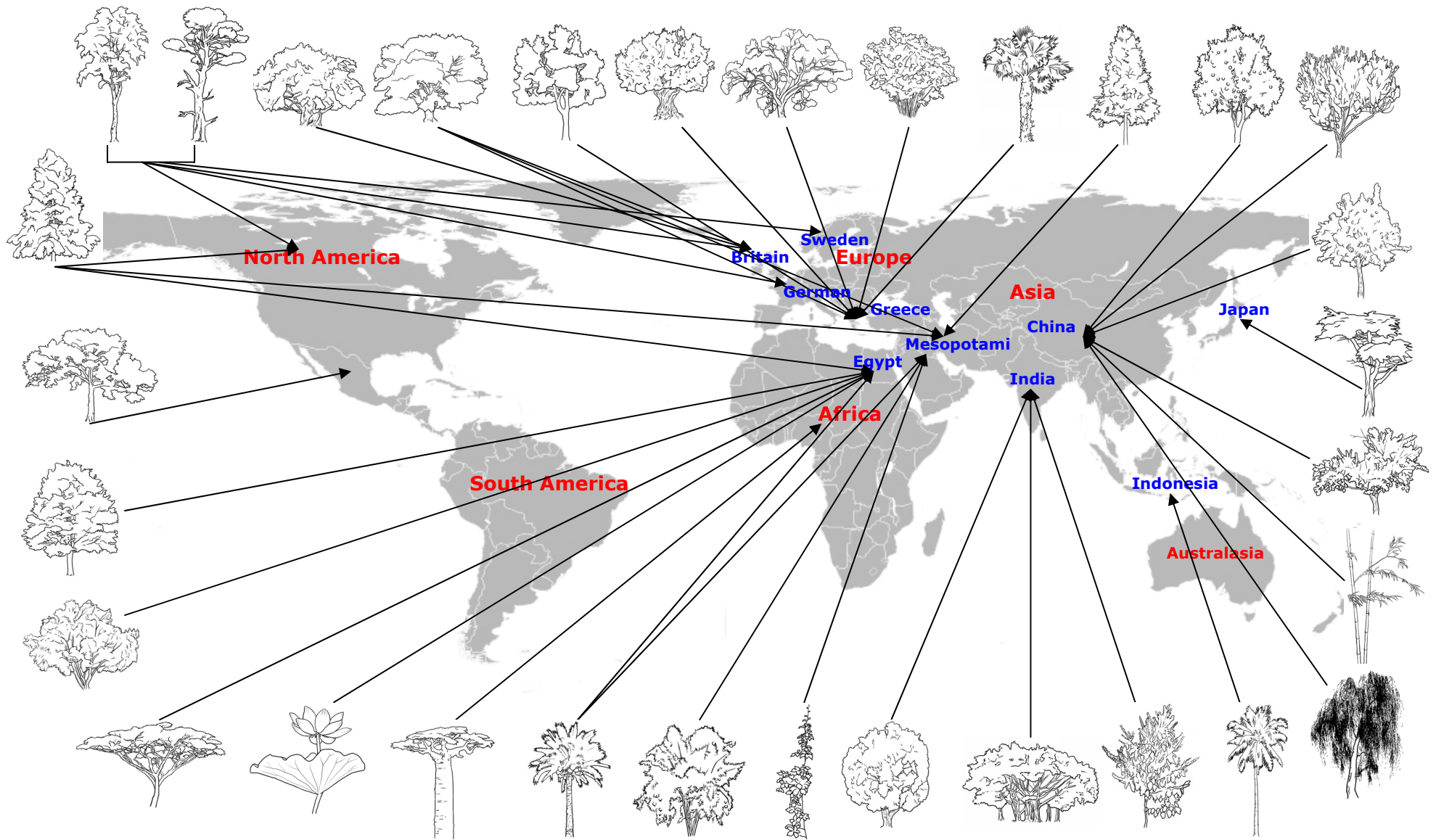


Figure 2.31 A world map showing locations of 'Trees of Life'.

The crucial determining factors that were considered to make a tree sacred and therefore considered a 'Tree of Life' identified from the literature review are given below. The factors presented were used to formulate the questions for the Chinese interviews in Chapter 5.

Trees were worshipped because:

- of the size and shape of the tree - many trees were considered special because they had an unusual shape (such as the tree looked as if it was upside-down,) were extraordinarily huge, or very wide with spreading branches;
- they provided food, materials for making tools and even shelter;
- they were:
 - linked to the creation of the world;
 - linked to ancestor worship;
 - considered to be manifestations of gods or spirits;
 - considered to be the homes of gods or spirits;
 - associated with protection against misfortune and evil spirits;
 - associated with fertility - both human fertility and creation and the fertility of land and growth of crops – frequently trees associated with fertility had lots of seeds or fruit;
 - linked to the birth and growth of children;
 - associated with funeral rites and ceremonies – some societies considered trees to be homes for the dead;
 - associated with immortality and resurrection;
 - prominent in legends and folklore.

With the different trees considered to be ‘Trees of Life’ and the factors which made them such Table 2.3 was created. This table linked the key factors identified previously to tree types. Most trees thought to be sacred were considered so for two or more of the identified factors. Ten of the fourteen reasons for a tree being considered sacred are recorded in the literature reviewed as applying to the baobob.

Table 2.3 Trees referred to as sacred or as a ‘Tree of Life’ and the associations that are key in defining them as such.

Trees	Special shape or great size	Source of power (firewood)	Source of food (fruit)	Source of materials (for tools and construction)	World creation	Manifestations of gods/spirits	Homes of gods/spirits	Protection against evil spirits	Human fertility and procreation	Fertility of land and growth of crops	Birth and growth of children	Funeral rites and ceremonies	Immortality and resurrection	Sacred animals
Acacia												✓		✓
Ash					✓									
Baobab	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Box						✓						✓	✓	
Cedar						✓							✓	
Ceiba					✓									
Coconut			✓					✓						
Cypress						✓			✓					
Date palm						✓	✓		✓				✓	✓
Fig (Banyan and Peepal)							✓							✓
Fir									✓				✓	
Green bamboo								✓				✓		
Lotus flower					✓								✓	
Myrtle												✓	✓	
Oak					✓	✓								
Olive						✓								
Orange tree									✓					
Palm							✓							
Peach								✓						✓
Pear												✓		
Pine									✓	✓	✓		✓	
Plum								✓						
Pomegranate		✓	✓				✓		✓					
<i>Sij</i>							✓		✓					
Silver birch									✓	✓	✓			
Soma						✓			✓				✓	
Sycamore													✓	
Tamarisk						✓			✓					
Tulasi (or holy basil)							✓							
Vine						✓	✓							
Willow								✓					✓	
Yew												✓	✓	

2.7 Summary

This chapter offers an overview of the 'Tree of Life' throughout the world. Research has been carried out to establish why trees are worshipped and what the attributes are that cause a tree to be considered sacred and therefore a 'Tree of Life'. There is considerable evidence that shows that trees have held a special significance in the cultures of the ancient world. From archaeological evidence it can be seen that the worship of trees has been prevalent from ancient times. From a study of the literature it can be concluded that the origin of tree-worship comes from animism, pre-animism, and ancestor worship. The worship of trees is firmly and deeply rooted in almost every form of religion with the research showing that 'Trees of Life' were often also fundamental to world creation with cosmic trees connecting the heavens to the earth or the living world to the underworld.

As has been established trees were worshipped because of their unusual size or shape and because they provided food, medicines, materials for making tools, shelters and other useful items. Linked to the creation of the world 'Trees of Life' were also associated with fertility, birth, death, rebirth and immortality. Often considered to be the homes to gods and spirits from the supernatural world they were also frequently worshipped to give protection against misfortune and evil spirits

The literature review has revealed a number of common factors which determine certain trees as being sacred and worshipped as 'Trees of Life'. These crucial determining factors are given in Table 2.3 and were used to inform the research which is presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 3

Fashion adoption and the design process

3.1 Introduction

The chapter considers the literature on fashion theory, in particular fashion adoption. It explores how patterns from the past have been frequently used to inform contemporary patterns throughout history, how traditional patterns can be reused and adapted and whether traditional culture-based symbolism in textile design is acceptable in mainstream fashion and textiles.

A significant body of professional and scholarly literature demonstrates that design is considered to be a key factor in contributing to the success of fashion and textile enterprises in a highly competitive global market (Gale and Kaur, 2004; Perivoliotis, 2005) and that an effective design process can facilitate the success of apparel and textile products (Regan et al., 1997; LaBat and Sokolowski, 1999; Watkins, 1988; Lamb and Kallal, 1992). This chapter gives an overview of the design process used in design, particularly with regard to textile and clothing design and reviews the processes involved with regard to using traditional elements for contemporary products.

3.2 Definitions

In any study relating to fashion it is important to define the meaning of the term fashion. While there are many definitions, the definition used for this research is that provided by Sproles and Burns. Their general definition of fashion is:

“A fashion is a style of consumer product or way of behaving that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because that chosen style or behaviour is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation.” (Sproles and Burns, 1994; 4)

A key concept of fashion, therefore, is that it is a complex and time-related phenomenon that takes place in various consumer products because of human behaviour. That this behaviour is ‘socially appropriate for a time and situation’ also places it into a cultural context.

Sproles and Burns also gave the terms ‘fashion’ and ‘fad’ two different meanings. They reviewed several studies and came to the agreement that fads are revolutionary, unexpected, and are born overnight. In contrast, fashions are the historical continuity of style (Sproles and Burns, 1994). They also concluded that fads were accepted only by particular groups, rather than being adopted by the masses. They did however concede that some styles which are perceived as fads at first, later turn into accepted fashions (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

It is also necessary to understand the concepts of high fashion (*haute couture*) and mass fashion. Sproles and Burns (1994) defined high fashion as exclusive, high-priced and adopted only by the wealthy. High-fashion styling is often *avant-garde* and innovative and frequently referred to as ‘designer’. Mass fashions are those that are considered popular by a large percentage of the population, with a high level of adoption and sold across a wide range of prices. Mass fashion is usually more basic than high fashion, often lacking the high quality and intricate design details that are often a feature of high fashion. However, the differences are becoming less clear as some high fashion is now mass-produced for ready-to-wear (Sproles and Burns,

1994) and intricate designs are now often found on low-price products produced in countries where labour is cheap.

Certain fundamental terms such as 'design', 'style' and 'materials' associated with fashion have also been defined by researchers. According to Roach and Eicher (1973) the design of apparel fashion is defined by silhouette, construction, material, pattern, colour, and ornamental details. They feel a fashion designer should strive to create an overall form that is "visually pleasing, socially acceptable, or that represents a cultural ideal of physical attractiveness" (Sproles and Burns, 1994; 6).

Sproles and Burns (1994) explained the relationship between style and fashion. They defined a style as "a characteristic mode of presentation that typifies several similar objects of the same category or class" (Sproles and Burns, 1994; 7). This definition reflected a style as being many designs with common features. They also pointed out that a basic style (one where many designs had the same basic silhouette and construction) may be identified as fashion when accepted by a number of people at a specific time.

As for material, Sproles and Burns (1994) said that many aesthetic elements such as pattern, colour, and texture made up a material or fabric, and that these elements determine the appearance, fit characteristics, and tactile qualities. They also point out that textile designs can be created by interlacing fibres or yarns, and by aesthetic finishes applied to fabrics such as those applied through dyeing, printing, napping, or glazing (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

3.3 Fashion process

Just how certain styles are adopted as fashion has been a major area of concern for many researchers. Everett Rogers, is an expert on the diffusion (acceptance) of innovations. He suggested the adoption process has five basic stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption (Rogers, 1962; 75). Sproles and Burns (1994) built on and expanded Rogers's model. They argued "the fashion process is the result of many individuals making the decision to adopt-purchase and wear-a new style of appearance" (Sproles and Burns, 1994; 17). They then divided the fashion process into six sequential stages: creation, fashion leadership, increasing social visibility, conformity, saturation, decline and obsolescence. Their concept of the fashion process was that it was a dynamic mechanism of change with its own life-cycle. They said that all new styles will reach saturation and eventually become obsolete. Research however has shown that some basic styles have received acceptance over a long period of time by many different social groups. Examples of such styles include the basic crew neck t-shirt, basic straight-leg denim jeans and the trench coat which are all termed as 'classics' (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

3.4 Fashion consumption

Law et al. (2004) applied some of the major features of chaos theory (where very different outcomes can come from very similar starting points) to develop a chaotic fashion consumption model. They identified three associated conditions: the cultural context, the social system and the perceived degree as to how fashionable consumers are and advocated that consumers perceive different degrees of fashion based on cultural context and society.

Law et al.'s chaotic fashion-consumption model can be broken down and analysed into six stages: awareness (consumers become aware of new clothing and styles), searching (consumers look for different elements of fashion change such as appearance and clothing styles), filtering (consumers consider what they require), bifurcation (consumers evaluate whether the new styles will satisfy their working requirements and their desired image), attractor (consumers further evaluate their perceived requirements with the attributes and qualitative patterns located in the new styles or attractors), and consumption (if the new styles conform to their requirements, consumers will buy, otherwise they will reject and return to the exploratory stage) (see Fig. 3.1). While Law et al.'s model is more detailed, it overlaps in many ways with Rogers's model.

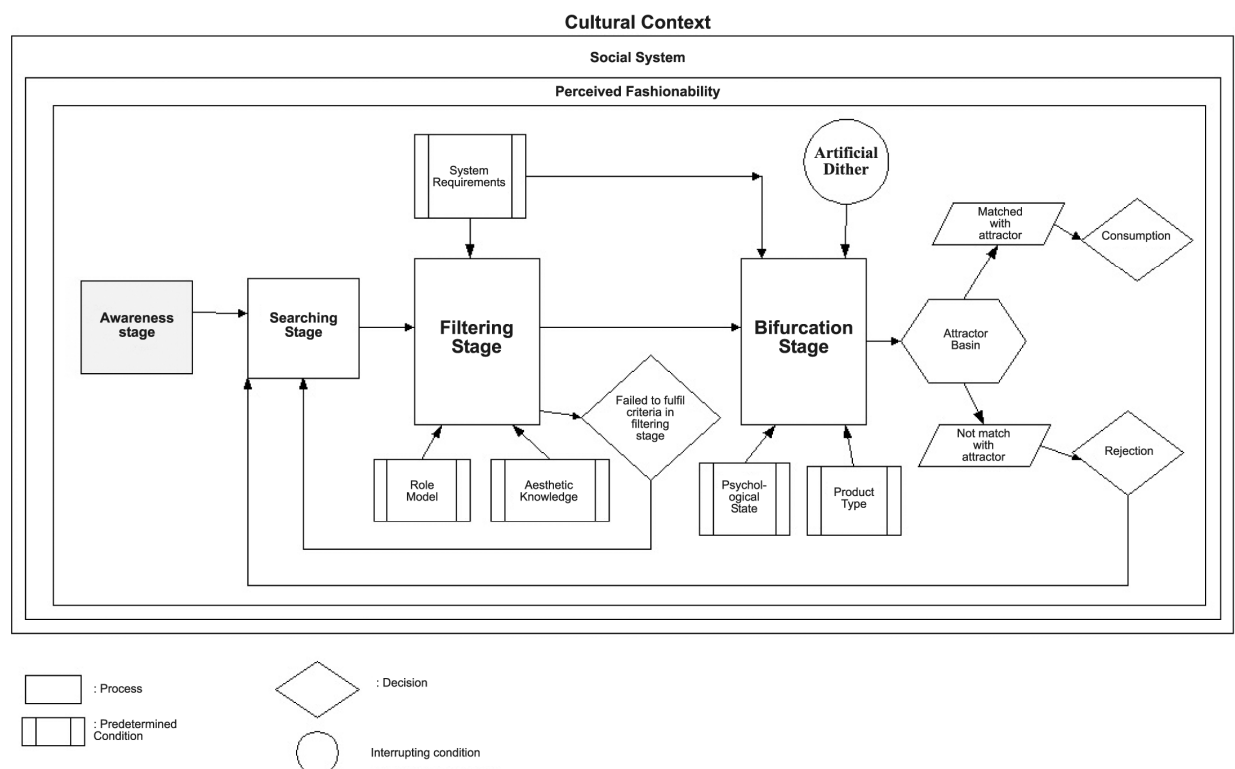


Figure 3.1 Chaotic fashion consumption model.
 (Illustration reproduced from Law, Zhang and Leung, 2004).

3.5 Sociological models

Sociological approaches have been used to analyse how consumers start and spread new fashion trends. Studies done in this area have resulted in several theories of fashion adoption including the trickle-down, trickle-up, trickle-across, collective selection and social-conflict theories.

3.5.1 The trickle-down theory

The trickle-down theory was first put forward by Georg Simmel (1904), a German social philosopher. Simmel's theory suggests that fashion is an elitist phenomenon, with the upper classes adopting new fashions as symbols of exclusiveness to distinguish themselves from their social inferiors. The lower classes would then copy the fashions in order to aspire to a higher class. The new fashions therefore trickle down to the lower classes (Simmel, 1957; Sproles and Burns, 1994). Simmel explained this as:

“The fashions of the upper stratum of society are never identical with those of the lower; in fact, they are abandoned by the former as soon as the latter prepare to appropriate them.” (Simmel, 1957; 543)

Clearly, this form of class competition encourages new fashions. When the upper-classes are aware that all classes have adopted a certain fashion, they look for a new fashion and the whole process starts again. This argument is supported by Forty (1986), in his book *Objects of Desire*, where he discusses the change to the cotton dresses worn by the middle and upper-class in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century from printed to white cotton. He pointed out that when printed cottons became popular in the working-class market, they were abandoned by the middle and upper classes, who started to buy only fine white cottons. Forty offered an explanation to this phenomenon by saying that printed cottons had become common

and were no longer perceived as a status symbol or as class identifiers for the middle and upper classes (Forty, 1986).

The trickle-down theory was expanded by others. Daniels (1951), a businessman, suggested that a new style was initially adopted by social leaders, and then imitated by every segment of society. Daniels added that new styles will not be adopted by social groups unless these are relatively consistent with the dominant trends already established in society. In 1961 the economist Robinson reaffirmed the trickle-down theory, and added the concept of simultaneous horizontal flow of fashions within social classes. This concept is important to the development of a new, mass-market theory of fashion.

3.5.2 Trickle-up theory

The trickle-up theory originated in the 1960s and early 70s. This theory was also referred to as the 'bottom-up', 'status float', or 'subcultural leadership' theories. It suggested that new styles can also come from lower-status segments or subcultures of the population with the styles adopted by these groups diffusing upwards into the mass population (Field, 1970; Sproles and Burns, 1994). Fashion theorists observed that subcultures play important roles in fashion changes. According to Sproles and Burns (1994), the fashion industry often borrows from minority cultures to inspire design. Before this work most research focused on consumer groups. What was considered important was consumers' general consumption patterns and exposure to the media rather than any subculture's influence as a fashion leader.

As this research is looking to explore how the fashions of minority cultures can move into mainstream fashion it was considered necessary to explore how the styles of subcultures become the fashions followed by the mass market.

Most research demonstrates that lower-status segments and subcultures become fashion leaders because of the styles they wear (Troxell and Judelle, 1971; Sproles and Burns, 1994). Consumers look to different groups for new ideals of aesthetics to express fashionability. As designers research previous art and cultures as a source of creative ideas the result can be styles that create a demand from the market. Sproles and Burns (1994) explain the reason for new styles emerging in lower classes as being due to the fashion industry always servicing middle-income customers. This leads to the lower classes being forced to create their own styles. They further pointed out that not all of the innovations in some subcultures come from their cultural heritage. They suggested that “the unique style of a subculture, whether new or customary, may be noticed by the large population and admired for its creativity, artistic excellence or appropriateness to current life-style” (Sproles and Burns, 1994; 124).

Additionally, Sproles and Burns considered that the styles of subculture might also jump to the upper classes and then trickle down. Troxell and Judelle (1971) added the concept of ‘gapbridgers’ to the diffusion of subcultural style. The gapbridgers were defined as “prestigious persons, celebrities, youths, opinion leaders or even average persons having regular contact with subcultures or special appreciation of their styles” (Troxell and Judelle, 1971; 125). Many of these gapbridgers advocated the ideas of social equality, anti-materialism, environmental concern, and practicality and were actually innovators within their social systems (Troxell and Judelle. 1971).

3.5.3 The trickle-across theory

The trickle-across theory is frequently referred to as the horizontal-flow and mass-market theory. This theory proposed that mass production and mass communication influenced the modern fashion process. Paul Nystrom (1928), an economist and marketer, observed that fashion leadership was transferred from the upper classes to fashion-conscious social groups. He commented that fashionable things are related to large-scale production and marketing in different segments of society. As such he argued that something bought by very wealthy people may be a sort of style, but it is not fashion.

According to Sproles and Burns (1994), new styles and information about new styles can diffuse simultaneously to all socioeconomic classes of the population via mass production and mass communication. They also considered that real leadership of fashion is in a person's own social class and especially in their peer groups, rather than a higher class. That is to say, fashion innovators and opinion leaders in all segments of the population play influential roles in initiating diffusion of new styles in their social groups. The acceptance of new styles is determined by these people rather than by being dictated by some higher authority.

3.5.4 The collective selection theory

This theory evolved from the concept of collective behaviour. Herbert Blumer (1968), a theorist in human collective behaviour, suggested that fashion is a process of 'collective selection' and the formation of collective tastes within a mass of people. Many new styles will be introduced and compete for acceptance among consumers in this process. Blumer also considered that innovators, such as celebrities, play an important role in leading the process of collective selection. Blumer considered a

trend is established only as collective tastes become adopted by a mass of people in society.

Sproles and Burns (1994) gave a more detailed account of this concept. They suggested that fashion was a collective or mass movement; that is, individuals' selected styles become a reflection of a collectively-endorsed standard. This theory assumed that people perceive and judge the appropriateness of their behaviour by social norms. It also implied that the fashion process involves a collective conformity to social norms.

It has also been argued that as mass fashion-marketing and mass communication influence collective behaviour in fashion the styles manufactured and promoted often homogenise consumer tastes. On the other hand, there is rarely a single collective norm due to diverse values and life-styles (Sproles and Burns, 1994). Sproles and Burns also pointed out a new style would be adopted by customers according to its social visibility.

3.5.5 Social-conflict model

One concern of sociologists has been the relationship between cultural changes and fashion process. It has been observed that two forms of dress emerged in a society when customs of dress are challenged by changing fashions: one is 'antifashion' which may include traditional dress that shows cultural identity; the other is fashion which symbolises cultural change.

3.6 Psychological models

Psychologists have long been interested in fashion, often focusing on the relationship between fashion leader and fashion seeker. Some major perspectives in psychology such as conformity, individualism and uniqueness have been used to formulate different theories to explain buying motivation and behaviour. These three perspectives can be examined in terms of the motivation for pursuing fashion and the process of choice.

3.6.1 Conformity-centred model

Conformity is a major force with regard to the widespread acceptance of any fashion. Sproules and Burns (1994) stated that “conformity is the change between the subjects’ initial judgments and the judgments they subsequently made after being exposed to the group influence manipulation” (Sproules and Burns, 1994; 148). This definition highlights the power of a group in terms of influencing an individual’s choices. For example peer pressure can dramatically influence people’s behaviour. The pressures however may actually be imagined.

The groups that influence individual’s choice can be divided into different types: formal versus informal, membership versus aspirational, and positive versus negative (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Formal groups are large, formal organisations which have regular and official meetings. On the other hand, informal groups refer to small groups of friends or peers. Peer groups often have more influence on the individual’s purchase decisions. A membership reference group is an organisation or group of people the consumer belongs to. An aspirational reference group consists of well-known figures (celebrities) whose tastes and preferences influence many people, such as successful business people, athletes, or performers (Solomon and Rabolt,

2004). The effects of reference groups on consumers' purchase decisions may be either positive or negative. A consumer will wish to avoid being associated with negative reference groups (avoidance groups) because they try to distance themselves from that group.

3.6.2 Individualism-centred model

Consumers themselves can initiate new trends through being individualistic. An individualistic style is a look that is different from others. Reasons for individualism are “the pursuit of novelty, excitement-seeking, exhibitionism, ego-screaming, masquerading, fun-seeking” (Sproles, 1985; 59). Individualism also offers an explanation for the creation and the decline of a fashion. When a fashion is overused and reaches a point of ‘social saturation’, the novelty-seeker or creative individual desires to experiment with new styles, leading to the evolution of new fashions (Sproles, 1985). Stone (1962) argued that an individual presents personal identity, attitudes, moods, and values or self-worth through personal appearance: that is their dress, cosmetics and fashion expressions.

3.6.3 Uniqueness motivation model

Psychologists and social scholars have argued that the theory of uniqueness is critical to fashion adoption (Fromkin and Lepshitz, 1976; Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Sproles and Burns, 1994; Laurent and Ronald, 2006). According to this theory, people not only strive toward a certain level of similarity with others but, at the same time, they also search for differences to others.

Fromkin and Lepshitz (1976) showed that people feel most positive when they see themselves as moderately similar to others. This can be used to explain why

customers purchase fashion items that are perceived as moderately similar to their comparison group. On the other hand, when individuals see themselves as either dissimilar or very similar to the comparison individual or group they have negative reactions. Laurent and Ronald (2006) argued that if new styles are too different, these will not diffuse to social groups and not become fashion.

These theories can explain why people conform to the basics of a fashion trend; but why individuals at the same time look for moderate differentiation from others. The desire to avoid being very similar to others may be the reason why new styles occur and new trends start.

3.7 Aesthetic and historical models

Aesthetic approaches are often ignored when scholars analyse fashion (Child, 1968). This is a serious oversight however for fashions are aesthetic products based on aesthetic components (Sproles, 1985). It is important therefore to consider the relationship between aesthetics and fashion. The following section reviews the literature on this area and discusses three models: the art movement model, the ideals of beauty model, and the aesthetic perceptions and learning model. The historical models are also reviewed.

3.7.1 Art movement model

Essentially, the art movement model explains the relationship between art movements and evolving fashions. According to Sproles and Burns (1994), fashions of a specific period reflect popular art forms of their time. To support their opinions they cited a number of examples of styles being influenced by art movements. For instance, the softly draped styles in the late 1700s were influenced by the Neoclassic art movement

of that time. Paul Poiret (1879–1944), a well-known French couturier, who revolutionised women’s fashion at the beginning of the twentieth century, was deeply influenced by the Art Nouveau movement of the time and his designs clearly show this (Sproles and Burns, 1994). Fashion and fabric design were considered mediums for artists in the Surrealist movement of the 1920s and 1930s (Martin, 1987). Horn and Gurel (1981) suggested that fashion and fabric designs in the 1960s reflected the Pop and Op art movements of the time when fabrics were printed with optical illusions or served as a canvas for Andy Warhol-style designs. In addition, the styles and heavy shoulder-padded silhouettes of the 1980s were derived from the post-modern art movement at the time (Sproles and Burns, 1994). This evidence indicates that art movements have a strong influence on the fashions of the time.

3.7.2 Ideals of beauty model

The term ‘ideals of beauty’ refers to the fact that all societies have their own standards with regard to what is considered the best or most perfect aesthetic expression in terms of appearance (Roach and Eicher, 1973; Banner, 1983). These standards are influenced by a number of factors including art, the commercial beauty culture of the time and cinema (Sproles, 1985). Banner (1983) stated that there appears to be a dominant ideal of beauty at any give time, and the fashion that emerges follows this ideal. Sproles and Burns (1994) also suggested that a design is likely to become fashionable when the overall form expresses the cultural ideal of physical attractiveness at the time (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

3.7.3 Aesthetic perceptions and learning models

Studies on the aesthetic perception and adoption of fashion have tended to focus on how a consumer decides to choose a new style (Sproles, 1981). Minshall (1994) proposed that aesthetics were associated with the science of perception and involved two aspects that might be described as 'knowing' and 'liking'. DeLong et al. (1986) explained the process of consumer response to fashion products by saying that when consumers explored any new object, they would form an initial evaluation based on a holistic appraisal rather than an attribute-by-attribute analysis. If a new product was too different or too complex, it was unlikely to be accepted immediately by most consumers. However Sproles (1985) suggested that "if a strong preference for a new object is not formed at first, later reinforcements will increase familiarity and liking, or at least adjustment (acceptance) if not liking" (Sproles, 1985; 63-64). That is new objects would eventually be considered fashionable and accepted by consumers as they are seen more and become more familiar. These studies provide in-depth explanations for the process of aesthetic perception and learning in fashion consumption.

The perceptual process has been explained by many researchers. For example, Solomon and Rabolt (2004) argued that the perceptual process could be considered to occur when people receive stimulus through their receptors (sense organs), and the stimulus entered their consciousness. However, people might not objectively make sense of the information that their senses are receiving. "The meaning of a stimulus is interpreted by the individual, who is influenced by his or her unique biases, needs, and experiences" (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 290).

Solomon and Rabolt (2004) identified three major stages in the perceptual process: exposure, attention, and interpretation. The exposure stage is when sensory receptors frequently receive the same stimuli from the external environment. In this case, people are more aware of a stimulus or message as a result of getting it more often. Attention means “the extent to which processing activity is devoted to a particular stimulus” (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 307). The interpretation stage refers to the interpretation of sensory stimuli as people assign meaning to stimuli. It is clear that the perceptual process is how sensory stimulation is transformed into perceptions in order to create meaning. Such process may be applied to studying the consumption of fashion products. Solomon and Rabolt (2004) stated “we rely on colours, odors, sounds, tastes, and even the ‘feel’ of products when forming evaluations of them” (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 312).

The traditional decision-making process is generally agreed to have five steps: 1. problem recognition, 2. information search, 3. evaluation of alternatives, 4. product choice, and 5. outcome (see Fig. 3.2). Solomon and Rabolt (2004) however concluded from their research that the decision-making process involved in making fashion purchase decisions was different (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 352-353). They felt that the traditional decision-making model was based on purchase decisions being made rationally and did not take into account that any decision about fashion would have a strong emotional aspect. Their fashion decision-making model, included six stages: 1. fashion object, 2. awareness of object, 3. interest, 4. evaluation, 5. decision, 6. outcome (see Fig. 3.3). While such models tried to account for the sequence of steps in the consumer’s buying process, they could not explain many purchase decisions. Solomon and Rabolt (2004) pointed out that consumers choose different decision-making processes as appropriate for the type of decision being made.

Solomon and Rabolt (2004) stated that a decision to purchase something is influenced by the shopping environment, physical surroundings and product placement. Consumers make purchase decisions based on their emotional experiences. This perspective highlights “the Gestalt, or totality, of the product or service” (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 354).

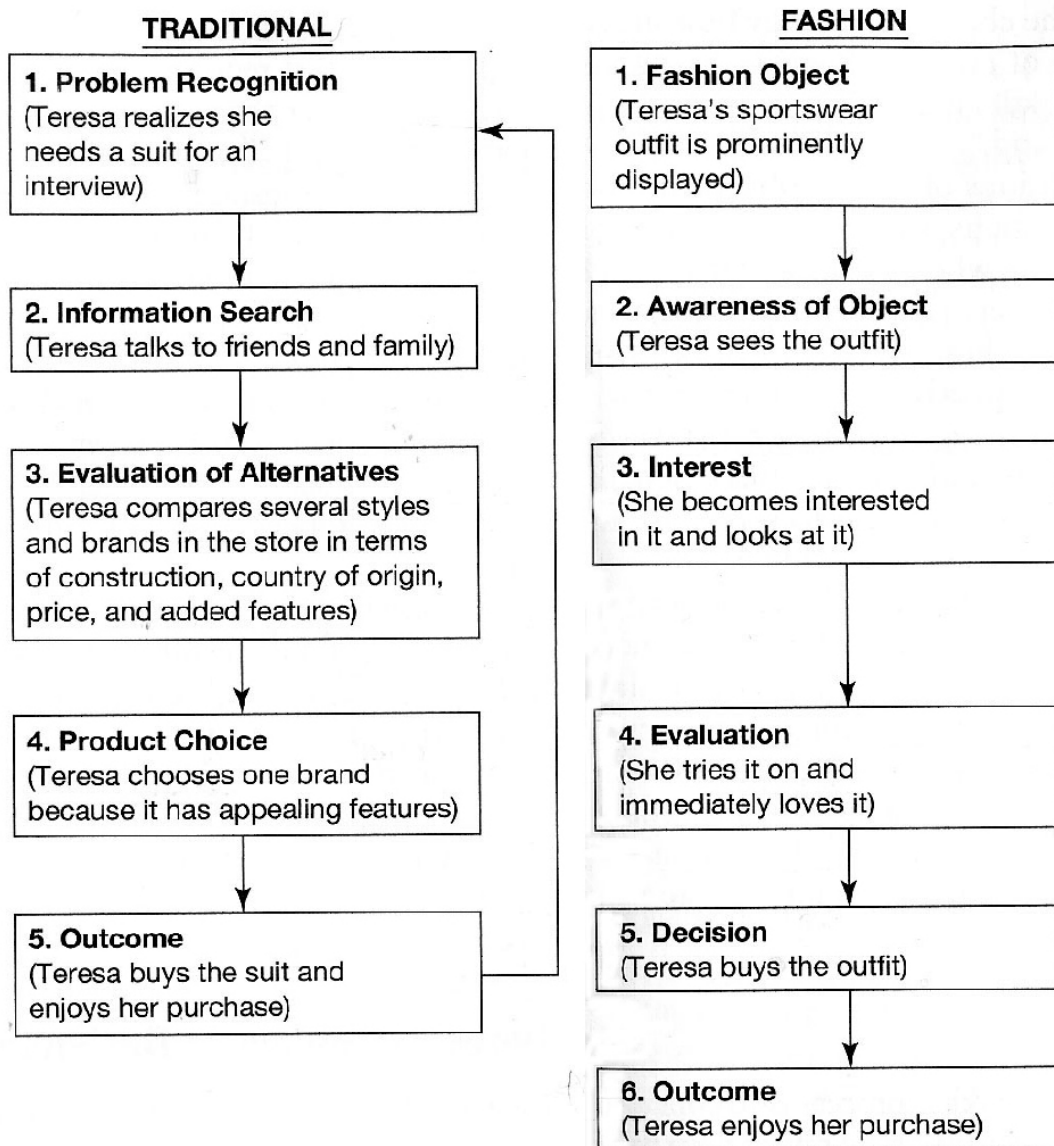


Figure 3.2 Stages in Traditional Decision Making.

(Illustration reproduced from Solomon and Rabolt, 2004).

Figure 3.3 Stages in Fashion Decision Making.

(Illustration reproduced from Solomon and Rabolt, 2004).

Evaluative criteria are “the dimensions used to judge the merits of competing options” (Solomon and Rabolt 2004; 365). Solomon and Rabolt (2004) considered that evaluative criteria could be applied to fashion decisions and viewed from two perspectives: extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors refer to price, brand name, and store image while intrinsic factors are generally understood to mean style, colour, fabric, care, fit, and quality.

They further identified different fashion criteria used by consumers to include:

1. Appropriateness/personal style: suitability to individual, good fit, appropriate for occasion, comfort, fabric type and quality, wardrobe coordination, suits my personality.
2. Economy/usefulness: price, good buy, ease of care, durability, versatility, matching, utility.
3. Attractiveness/aesthetics: beautiful, fashionable, colour/pattern, styling, good fit, pleasing to others.
4. Quality: quality of construction, fabric type, fibre, durability.
5. Other-people-directed/image: prestige, sexy, brand and store name, label, fashionable.
6. Country of origin: made in USA or imported.
7. Fibre/fabric: natural or synthetic; knits or wovens.

(Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 365-366)

It is inevitable that cultural differences will have an impact on the importance of these fashion criteria. However generally speaking, fit, style, quality, and price are more important than brand and country of origin (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; 365). Solomon and Rabolt’s study provided valuable insights into the factors affecting fashion decisions.

3.7.4 Historical resurrection model

Fashion is often a reflection of the past with designers drawing inspiration from history. A new fashion however rarely comes back exactly as it was in the past. In

other words, previous fashions are modernised, resurrected and updated in some innovative way to become fashion trends in contemporary society (Sproles, 1985).

3.7.5 Historical continuity model

With regard to fashion change, some analysts have tended to focus on the concept of continuity and cycles in new fashions. According to Sproles and Burns (1994), continuity is seen as a basic element of new fashions, that is, fashions evolve from previously existing fashions with gradual changes from year to year. They also pointed out that fashions are unlikely to change dramatically in a short period, because a radical departure from any current style would be too innovative to be accepted immediately by most consumers (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

Other studies gave greater attention to the cyclical nature of fashionable styles, that is, the silhouettes and characteristics of fashion progress along their own repeating cycles of change (Kroeber, 1919; Richardson and Kroeber, 1940; Young, 1937; Robinson, 1975, 1976; Carman, 1996; Weeden, 1977; Sproles and Burns, 1994). Alfred L. Kroeber (1919), an anthropologist who studied 300 years of women's fashion, was the first to investigate the cyclical development of fashions. He discovered that skirt length changed in a periodic cycle, and explained that fashion evolved according to its own internal laws. He came to the conclusion that fashion changes cannot be explained by outside factors since fashion has its own cycle which is beyond the control of individuals. He named this phenomenon 'super-organic'.

Young (1937) noted that:

“When the typical annual fashions are arranged chronologically in unbroken series over a long term of years, their changes appear to follow rather definite laws of modification and development within an almost unchanging pattern of evolution.” (Young, 1937; 107)

Young's hypothesis derives from an examination of representative pictures of skirts from 1760 to 1937. She concluded that each skirt style had a cycle of 30 to 40 years. As a result of this fashion changes could be considered to be cyclical.

Sproles and Burns (1994) considered that fashion change was not a closed system, but was affected by external factors such as dramatic socio-political changes which included wars and changes in the political attitudes of a country. They suggested that radical fashion changes only occurred a few times in history and were the result of dramatic socio-political changes. An example they cited was Christian Dior's post World War II 'New Look' which, in style terms, jumped from the masculine fashion of war time to ultra feminine dresses (Sproles and Burns, 1994). From this work, fashion can therefore be considered as an indication of social change.

Lowe and Lowe (1985) did not feel that a cyclical model fitted for twentieth century fashion. As they noted when discussing Robinson and Kroeber's work:

“The deterministic cycles they espoused are not well realised in the period from 1937 to 1980. Skirts do not balloon outward to Civil War proportions in the mid-twentieth century as Robinson and Kroeber suggest they should. Likewise the bustle has failed to return in the 1970s as Young's model would have predicted.” (Lowe and Lowe, 1985; 204)

Lowe and Lowe (1985) also suggested that advancements in the production and distribution of fashion accelerated the rate of fashion change. They pointed out that a greater variety of consumers participating in any fashion will increase the variety of the style (Lowe and Lowe, 1982, 1984, 1985). While it appears that fashion trends primarily follow a relatively continuous pattern of changes, that is, the historical-continuity model, these trends are not necessarily cyclical in nature. According to Sproles and Burns (1994), basic and broad fashion trends in dimensions

and silhouettes change gradually by small increments. By contrast, details such as ornamentation, colour, and fabric designs are influenced by current social forces and more easily allow dramatic changes. In general, the findings of Lowe and Lowe (1982, 1984, 1985) and Sproles and Burns (1994) support the view that fashion is an open system affected by external forces and that new fashions evolve from previously existing fashions in a continuous manner, progressing along repeating cycles of change.

3.8 Economic models

There are four economic models which can be applied to fashion and fashion consumption: the traditional 'demand' approach, the 'scarcity-rarity' model, the 'conspicuous consumption' model, and the 'spatial diffusion' model

3.8.1 Demand model

The demand model proposes that when a fashion is highly priced demand for it is limited. As prices drop, demand often grows substantially (Sproles, 1985). Leibenstein (1976) however pointed out that three situations will change the price-demand relation: 1. the 'prestige-exclusivity' effect, that is, consumers may evaluate the prestige and exclusivity of fashion items because they desire to express their uniqueness; this situation influences the demand curve in that that high price still results in high demand; 2. the 'snob' effect which refers to the desire of people to be exclusive or unique; that is to say, the demand for an item is decreased because others are also consuming the same commodity; for this reason, demand falls and even dies with low prices; 3. the 'social conformity' effect, that is, social norms and pressure will influence consumers' choices for fashion, and they will become less price-sensitive. Leibenstein's arguments can be supported by the

individualism-centred, uniqueness motivation and conformity-centred theories previously described.

3.8.2 Scarcity-rarity model

The scarcity-rarity theory is important in explaining the relationship between the prices of fashion items and consumers. Robinson (1961) stated that objects have special value and command the highest prices if they are rare, scarce, or in short supply. Thus, the scarcity (rarity) of the fashion items or the limitation of a person's purchasing ability may enhance the value of the items. Scarcity or limited supply is therefore equated with desirability and high price. Sproles (1994) also pointed out that research demonstrated that individuals positively related to clothing perceived as unique or scarce. Therefore, it appears that clothing and apparel which are not available are more desired. Sproles came to the conclusion that the value of clothing is enhanced when it is scarce and people consider it unique. The idea of uniqueness is key in both the scarcity-rarity theory and the individualism-centred theory.

3.8.3 Conspicuous-consumption model

The term 'conspicuous consumption' was first mentioned by Thorstein Veblen (1912) in his classic book *The Theory of Leisure Class*. According to Veblen (1912), the rising wealthy classes displayed their growing wealth through their lavish spending and used this to attain and affirm social status. He stated that:

“Our apparel is always in evidence and affords an indication of our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first glance... No one finds difficulty in assenting to the commonplace that the greater part of the expenditure incurred by all classes for apparel is incurred for the sake of a respectable appearance rather than for protection of the person.” (Veblen, 1912; 167-168)

Veblen (1912) felt that the moneyed leisure classes lead in terms of conspicuous consumption of fashion. The idea of conspicuous-consumption theory can be traced

back to the trickle-down theory. Both of these two theories referred to the concept of social comparison between different classes. The key concept in both conspicuous-consumption and trickle-down theories is that fashion products symbolise wealth. Sproles (1985) argued however that nowadays the wealthy desire anonymity rather than visibility.

3.8.4 Spatial-diffusion model

Essentially, the spatial-diffusion theory explains diffusion of innovations within a social system as occurring in a wave like manner from larger to smaller centres, for example from urban to rural areas (Brown, 1981). In addition Brown pointed out that geographic accessibility is crucial to the diffusion of innovations. For example, in the United States fashions often diffuse from the coasts inland. Rogers (1983) proposed that the communications such as mass media, personal communications among adopters and potential adopters are vital elements in the diffusion process and it should be noted that isolated subcultures may develop their own unique fashions (Sproles, 1985).

Neighbours also impact on the diffusion process. Sproles talks about ‘a process of social contagion’ spreading innovations among neighbours (Sproles, 1985). Brown (1981) observed three stages: 1. the primary stage where diffusion centres are established; 2. the diffusion stage when neighbourhoods near diffusion centres adopt innovations; and 3. the saturation stage, when diffusion ends.

The spatial-diffusion theory offers basic principles for analysing the spread of innovations within social systems by using a geographical approach. However, diffused innovations across social systems are more often related to communications, cultures and politics (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

3.9 The use of traditional designs in contemporary fashion

Traditional designs have been a source of inspiration for designers and have been reused in contemporary fashion textiles (Au, Taylor and Newton, 2000; Yu et al., 2001; Gale and Kaur, 2004; Delong, Wu and Bao, 2005; Hyun and Bae, 2007). How past designs have influenced contemporary ones and how traditional designs can be reinterpreted are reviewed.

3.9.1 Culturally-inspired fashion products

Recent developments in textiles and fashion have heightened the need for cultural fashion products which incorporate the valuable knowledge of history and heritage with new ideas in design works (Perivoliotis, 2005; Hyun and Bae, 2007; Lin, 2007). Many researchers have highlighted the benefits of cultural products, stating that the use of traditional motifs in contemporary fashion can increase innovation, originality, and elegance of design products and reflect traditional beauty and preserve national cultural heritage (Perivoliotis, 2005; Hyun and Bae, 2007; Cho, 2009). According to Hyun and Bae (2007), traditional fashion products reflect cultural identity and national image because traditional patterns contain historical and cultural values. They suggest that “Traditional patterns have great historical and cultural value as a conventional structure of reflecting native culture through the collective value system and natural and emotional background of our nation” (Hyun and Bae, 2007; 140).

3.9.2 Traditional motifs used in contemporary fashion design

Hyun and Bae (2007) examined and analysed traditional Korean patterns appearing on fashion designs from 1990 to 2005. They pointed out that since 1990 traditional Korean elements have been increasing as a source of inspiration for Korean designers, and have become widely used in fashion products globally. Hyun and Bae (2007)

provided an excellent overview of the origin and evolution of traditional Korean patterns found in fashion design. They divided traditional patterns used in fashion design into three categories, according to the kinds of patterns and styles and the way these were constructed. From 1990 to the mid 1990s they found that traditional patterns started to be introduced into contemporary fashion. The styles used were limited to traditional plant patterns (peony, flower, bamboo), traditional geometric patterns (☰, ☷), and Chinese characters. These were combined with traditional Korean garment shapes during this period (see Fig. 3.4). Hyun and Bae concluded that peony patterns were the most popular and widely applied. They emphasised that “most patterns were used without transforming their forms, to emphasise traditional beauty” (Hyun and Bae, 2007; 144). From the mid to late 1990s a greater variety of patterns, techniques and materials were used. Hyun and Bae (2007) described various kinds of traditional pattern that were used in western-style clothing, including geometric patterns (☰, *Taegeuk* (the Great Absolute), *Palgwae* (the eight trigrams for divination), lattices, plants (flowers, the Four Gracious Plants), and Chinese character patterns (see Fig. 3.5). Designers at this time used a variety of techniques, such as painting, dyeing, beading, and applying gold leaf to highlight the characteristics of traditional patterns. In the period from 2000-2005 fashion designers made efforts to make Korean images more acceptable to a global market by fusing traditional patterns with modern designs. A variety of traditional patterns which had not been seen before appeared: geometric patterns (diaper), plant patterns (arabesque, lotus, palmette arabesque), and animal patterns (Chinese phoenix, tiger, giraffe). The techniques that fashion designers were then using included leather cutting, embroidery, patchwork and ink-jet printing. Hyun and Bae (2007) also pointed out that tree and plant patterns and Chinese character patterns have appeared more frequently than other types of patterns since 2000 (see Fig. 3.6). Hyun and Bae (2007) also identified that traditional

patterns were frequently used in fashion designs as symbols to bring good luck. Peony patterns which symbolise both female beauty and wealth, and have long been used in fashion while arabesque patterns represent longevity. The Korean fashion designer Sul Yun-Hyoung used black, red, blue-green, white and yellow as the basis for collections. These five colours all have significant meanings in traditional Chinese culture.

Hyun and Bae's research showed that a number of diverse traditional Korean patterns has been used in fashion designs; the way these traditional patterns have been expressed has been different at different times.



Figure 3.4 Sul, Yun Hyoung 1995 F/W SFAA Seoul Collection Elle Korea 1990.December. (Illustration reproduced from Hyun and Bae, 2007).
Figure 3.5 Bak Hngchi 1996 S/S SFAA Seoul Collection. (Illustration reproduced from Hyun and Bae, 2007).
Figure 3.6 Lie, Sang Bong 2004 S/S Prêt-à- Porter. (Illustration reproduced from Hyun and Bae, 2007).

3.9.3 Fashion designers inspired by traditional motifs

A review of the literature on fashion design indicated that many designers seek traditional historical sources for inspiration to create designs. Issey Miyake and Vivienne Westwood are most frequently mentioned in the literature (Au, Taylor and Newton, 2000; Gale and Kaur, 2004). Some of Miyake's design ideas were adapted from traditional Japanese styles and textiles such as the kimono, the checked cloth worn by farmers, the shapes of workers' clothes and traditional textiles (Au, Taylor and Newton, 2000). Miyake combined traditional elements of shape, form and fabric with modern materials and new trends in his designs. Miyake's designs reflected traditions and trends which fitted the historical resurrection and the art movement models proposed by Sproles (1985) (Au, Taylor and Newton, 2000). The influence of traditional and historical sources can also be found in many of Vivienne Westwood's designs in terms of silhouette and fabric choices. Her most recognisable trademark look, underwear-as-outerwear, was inspired by the corset (Wilcox, 2001; Gale and Kaur, 2004; Hyun and Bae, 2007). Other fashion designers like Karl Lagerfeld and Rei Kawakubo have also used traditional historical inspirations for their designs (Au, Taylor and Newton, 2000).

Nodir (2005) investigated fashion designers from Uzbekistan and concluded that folk traditions rapidly enter the contemporary fashion world with elements of traditional Uzbekistan culture reinterpreted and successfully integrated into modern fashion. Fashion designers such as L. Babaeva, S. Amir and L. Saifi are strongly inspired by traditional historical sources in relation to shape, form, fabric and pattern. Saifi combines many kinds of traditional Uzbek ornaments with hand painted fabrics in her design work (Nodir, 2005).

According to the literature reviewed there is strong evidence that traditional designs influence fashion. Traditional and historical references have been a major source of inspiration for both Western and Eastern fashion designers. On analysis of their work, it can be seen that traditional cultural values are integrated into contemporary fashion, fitting the historical-resurrection model.

3.9.4 Exotic influences in fashion

In addition to the traditional and historical sources that influence fashion designers, ethnic elements have been used in fashion for hundreds of years (Yu et al., 2001; Gale and Kaur, 2004; DeLong, Wu and Bao, 2005). Fashion designers like Yves Saint Laurent, Zandra Rhodes, Rifat Ozbek and Christian Dior have often used ethnicity and global culture to inspire their designs (Gale and Kaur, 2004). Asian cultures, such as Japanese, Chinese and Indian, have frequently been used as a source for Western designers since the eighteenth century (Yu et al., 2001). An example is the fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent who integrated Chinese elements into his designs in his 1977-78 collection (Yu et al., 2001).

Steele and Major (1999) wrote that:

“What may be new in our time is the intention on the part of many designers to integrate Asian design elements, shapes, fabrics, and iconography into Western fashion not simply as another resurgence of exoticism, but as a genuine expression of broadening cultural horizons around the world.” (Steele and Major, 1999; 98)

Yu et al. (2001) examined contemporary fashion that had been influenced by traditional Asian dress. Five Asian countries were selected and investigated: China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Designs were analysed in terms of shape, garment type, silhouette, colour, fabric features, surface pattern, trimmings, and

accessories. The results suggested that the surface pattern and the features of the fabric itself were the two aspects that had the most notable impacts on modern fashion. They noted that the application of ethnic-inspired surface patterns was widely found in modern fashion textiles, however, these “did not accompany the original ethnic meanings attached to them in the past” (Yu et al., 2001; 320). The study also showed that Chinese and Japanese cultures were the most widely used Oriental cultures in the fashion world. As they noted, “Chinese style was found to have the strongest influence on modern fashion among the five groups. Japanese style came in second place, with Korean” (Yu et al., 2001; 314). This indicated that Chinese culture provided inspiration to fashion designers. This result is confirmed by Kim and DeLong (1992) who investigated fashion that showed the influence of Japanese and Chinese culture in the magazine Harper’s Bazaar from 1890-1927. They concluded that at first fashion design was influenced by Japanese culture, but this was then surpassed by Chinese culture. DeLong, Wu and Bao (2005) added that the Chinese influence on contemporary Western fashion reached its peak in 1997.

Yu et al. (2001) argued that the reason that Chinese culture has very often been used in fashion is due to the long history of silk trading between Europe and ancient China. They explained that, “since the beginning of the silk trade in the 17th century, fabrics with exotic floral patterns, influenced by traditional Chinese patterns, have been fashionable in European countries” (Yu et al., 2001; 314). In addition, DeLong, Wu and Bao (2005) cited Bellafante’s (2003) reasons for the use of Chinese attributes in fashion design which included “the opening up of China and access to Chinese aesthetics, pragmatism, and a designer’s personal interest in China as a source of inspiration” (DeLong, Wu and Bao, 2005; 166-167). Fashion designs inspired by Chinese culture have been found in collections by Yves Saint Laurent, Emanuel

Ungaro, Oscar De La Renta, Christian Dior, Ghost, Kenzo, John Galliano, and Valentino (DeLong, Wu and Bao, 2005). Traditional Chinese dress attributes such as a round neckline, a straight and tubular sleeve, banding effects and a loosely defined waistline, traditional colours and patterns have been frequently adopted in modern fashion (DeLong, Wu and Bao, 2005).

Yu et al. (2001) felt that the influence of a mixed Chinese and Japanese style, also known as a 'hybrid influence', frequently emerged in Western fashion resulting in a blurred image of Chinese style. They believed that a hybrid style that mixes elements from different countries will continue to occur in the fashion world. They suggested:

“Whether or not the popularity of ethnic styles disappears in the normal fashion cycle, it is probable that with an unprecedented trend in cultural interaction as a result of globalisation, creative and experimental blending of different ethnic styles will continue.” (Yu et al., 2001; 310)

According to Yu et al. (2001) new fashion designs reflect ethnic styles that are “without any of the original ethnic meaning or significance attached” (Yu et al., 2001; 320). It is worth noticing, however, that even though ethnic dress seems to provide great inspiration to modern fashion designers, ethnic-inspired fashion designs appear to be a relatively minor trend in the modern fashion world.

3.9.5 Marketing of ethnic and ethnic-inspired apparel

Some studies focused on the successful marketing of ethnic or ethnic-inspired apparel by examining the influence of various factors on purchase decisions. According to Littrell et al. (1997), purchase decisions with regard to ethnic clothing could be attributed to a number of factors, but a particularly important reason identified was the if a particular culture was regarded favourably. They suggested that the meaning of

ethnic apparel was perceived differently by different consumers. Consumers that are more likely to be interested in ethnic apparel were found to be “well-educated, [have] travelled internationally, and, in varying degrees, to have held values supportive of environmental sustainability, equality and world peace” (Littrell et al., 1997; 42). Kim and Arthur (2003) examined how ethnic identification could influence the choice of ethnic dress, by investigating 167 Asian Americans who visited stores located in Honolulu. Their study found that the consumers’ ethnic identification had a strong influence on their attitudes toward, and ownership of, ethnic apparel, but had no influence on their intention to purchase ethnic apparel. That is, although strong ethnic identifiers were more likely to wear ethnic apparel for ethnic celebrations or special occasions, they were not normally likely to purchase ethnic apparel when there were other styles available.

3.9.6 Developing designs from traditional patterns

Many approaches to apply traditional motifs in design have been suggested in the literature. Wu, Xie and Mao (2008) address methods for the use of Chinese culture in modern product design. They pointed out that the spirit of traditional Chinese culture should be emphasised by means of colour and the meanings of traditional patterns. They suggested that a designer must deeply and fully understand the Chinese culture in order to seize its essence or spirit, and then transform it into a new design. “It should be a natural emotional outpouring of the designer after he or she gives a full understanding of the national culture” (Wu, Xie and Mao, 2008; 110). Advanced design concepts should be adopted when applying Chinese culture to product design in order to ensure a successful design (Wu, Xie and Mao, 2008). Wu, Xie and Mao (2008) also emphasised that designers needed to transform traditional elements and create new designs conveying the Chinese spirit, rather than simply using symbols or

patterns with traditional features. They explained that the use of symbols and pattern cannot fully reflect the profoundness of the traditional culture.

Perivoliotis (2005), a Greek textile design professor, described the process her students used in a project to create new textile designs using elements of ancient Hellenic textile design. She stated that the starting point for the designs was a collection of historical data, designs and techniques on ancient Hellenic textiles from libraries, museums, archaeological sites and expert interviews. Decisions about sources of inspiration were made during design sessions, then the materials, colours, patterns and techniques of Hellenic textiles were analysed. At the same time, students were encouraged to conduct market research, including the requirements and the present condition of the European textile market, products and their possible applications, and the commercial acceptability of their proposed designs. Finally, designs and colours were selected and used as the medium to express students' feelings, identities and their creativity. As Perivoliotis (2005) said, "their designs and colour selections expressed not only hidden emotions, artistic anxieties and visions, but also their cultural heritage and identity" (Perivoliotis, 2005; 14).

Cho (2009) also wrote about the development of fashion designs based on traditional culture. He derived his inspiration from *dancheong*, the decorative colouring on Korean buildings and items, and applied this to clothing (see Fig. 3.7). He examined the design process and suggested five steps for this: inspiration, intent and conception, definition, creative exploration, and implementation. In the inspiration stage, he researched the cultural context of *dancheong* with respect to its origin and function; the colours, patterns and meanings of *dancheong* were also examined. Next, the design intent and conception were developed, which was that people be blessed with

health, peace, and happiness. Definition referred to the ‘capacity’ and ‘requirement’ for a design (Cho, 2009, cited in Bevin, 1993). The designs Cho developed were for women’s special-occasion wear. The stage of creative exploration involved the visual analysis of dancheong for inspiration for the visual characteristics of the dress. Finally, the characteristics of dancheong were integrated into the new dress design (see Fig.3.8). Cho (2009) indicated that the symbolic meaning of dancheong in Korean culture should be emphasised by means of colours and Chinese characters.

Both Perivoliotis’s (2005) and Cho’s (2009) work have provided empirical evidence that traditional motifs can serve as the source of inspiration for designers. Cho’s design work used symbols such as Chinese characters to express the design intent, referring to fortune, health, peace, and happiness. Wu, Xie and Mao (2008) argued that the direct use of symbols and original patterns should be avoided. Each of these perspectives gives ideas as to how to develop new designs based on traditional motifs and suggests that the first step in developing traditional motifs is to research the cultural context. It is also essential that the materials, colours, patterns and techniques of traditional designs are analysed.



Figure 3.7 Dancheong shown under the roof of an ancient Korean architecture. (Illustration reproduced from Cho, 2009).



Figure 3.8 Front and back views of the new dress design. (Illustration reproduced from Cho, 2009).

3.10 Design and the design process

A structured design process can facilitate a quality product (Jones, 1992; Regan et al., 1997; LaBat and Sokolowski, 1999; Moalosi et al., 2007). In the field of clothing and textile design, the design process is critical to the success of apparel and textile products (Regan et al., 1997; LaBat and Sokolowski, 1999; Watkins, 1988; Lamb and Kallal, 1992).

3.10.1 Defining design

There are many definitions of design. It is claimed that design is a creative, magical, intuitive and elusive process (DeJonge, 1984; Hanks, Belliston and Edwards, 1977). However, another opinion is that design can be viewed as an investigative, rational, decision-making process (Wilson, 2001). In design theory, design is regarded as a process of finding the best solution to a problem (Jones, 1992).

3.10.2 Types of design process

The design process is generally classified into two types: black box design, also known as the magical design process, and glass box or transparent box design (Orlando, 1979; Jones, 1992). The black box method refers to the design process which occurs inside the designer's head. The designer is often said to be like a magician who produces outputs successfully without explaining how these outputs were obtained (Jones, 1992). In contrast, the glass box method is a rational, systematic, visible, and analytical design approach (Jones, 1992; Cross, 1989). Designers are required to describe the design process and give reasons for the decisions they make. Medland (1992) suggested that designers who work in isolation may not need to communicate design information to other designers, so the black box

approach is suitable for them. However, the glass box method can be valuable when there is a design team and designers have to convey design intentions to other team members and clients.

Similarly, Cross (1984) considered there to be two types of design process models—descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptive models focus on describing the sequences of activities that occur in designing a product and attempted to generate a solution concept in the early stage. Descriptive models are heuristic, “using previous experience, general guidelines and rules of thumb that lead in what the designer hopes to be the right direction, but with no absolute guarantee of success” (Cross, 1989; 19). Prescriptive models propose a systematic approach. The distinctive feature of a prescriptive model is that the generation of a solution at an initial stage is discouraged, rather design solutions develop through a systematic procedure.

3.10.3 The first design process models

Studies of design processes were first undertaken by The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and were written up in the *Handbook of Architectural Practice and Management* (1965). The handbook stated that the design process involved four main phases: assimilation, general study, development and communication (Lawson, 2006) (see Fig. 3.9). Assimilation was the process in which general information and specific information related to the problem were accumulated and arranged. General study referred to the investigation into the nature of problem and possible solutions by designers. After investigation, one or more tentative solutions were developed and refined. Finally the proposed solutions to the problem were communicated to people internally or externally (Lawson, 2006).

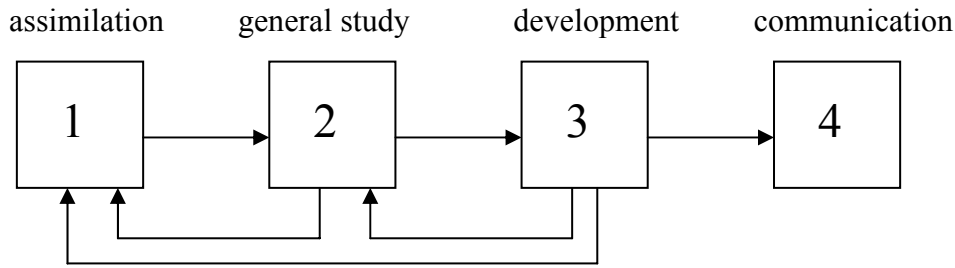


Figure 3.9 A map of the design process according to the RIBA plan of work.
(Illustration reproduced from Lawson, 2006).

The RIBA handbook (1965) also pointed out that the development of a design may proceed from phase 1 to phase 4, but the stages were not necessarily sequential (Lawson, 2006). That is to say, unpredictable jumps between the four phases could occur during the design process (Lawson, 2006).

Markus (1969) and Maver (1970) proposed a more detailed architectural design process. They divided the process into four stages: analysis, synthesis, appraisal and decision (Lawson, 2006) (see Fig. 3.10). The starting point for design was analysis; at this stage designers were required to order and classify the problems and objectives in order to explore and structure relevant information.

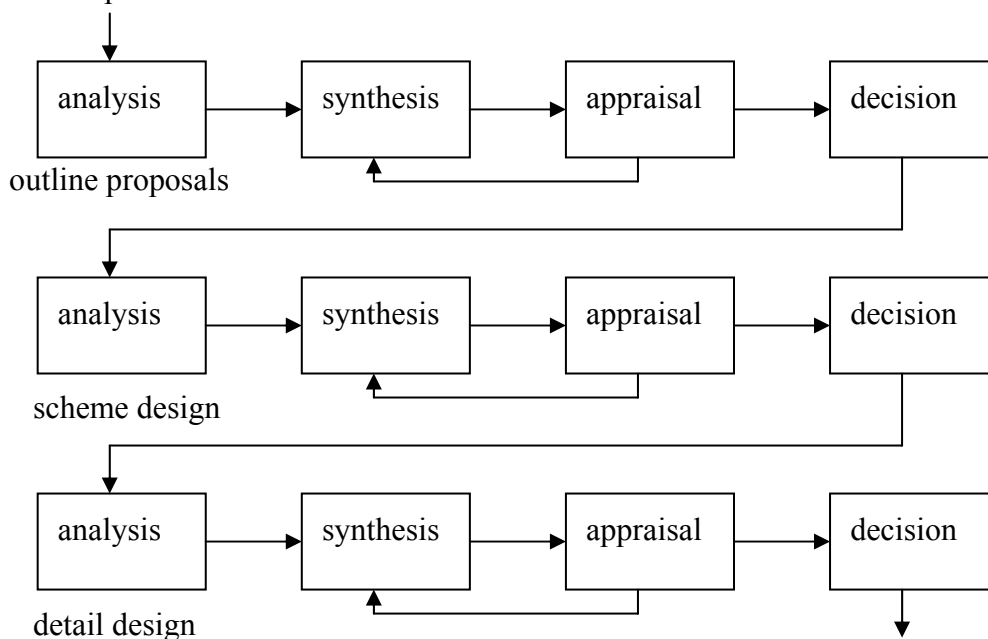


Figure 3.10 Markus/Maver map of the design process.
(Illustration reproduced from Lawson, 2006).

The next stage was synthesis where some initial solutions to the problem were generated. The appraisal phase involved the critical assessment of solutions against the objectives. After solutions were evaluated a decision was made (Lawson, 2006). It was considered important that the reciprocal transition from appraisal to synthesis should be allowed, since the designer may have a new idea if a previous one proved inadequate. These four stages were used for the outline proposals, the scheme design and the detail design (Lawson, 2006).

Lawson (2006) argued that iterative loops from appraisal to analysis were also needed (see Fig. 3.11). He concluded that design consisted of analysis, synthesis and evaluation phases and that the whole design process is an iterative cycle rather than a linear line (see Fig. 3.12).

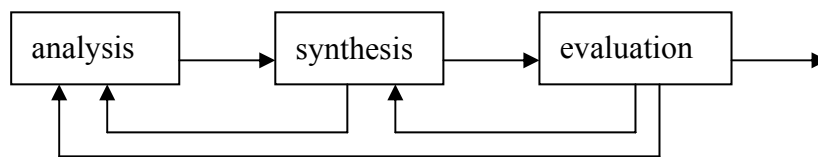


Figure 3.11 A generalised map of the design process.
(Illustration reproduced from Lawson, 2006).

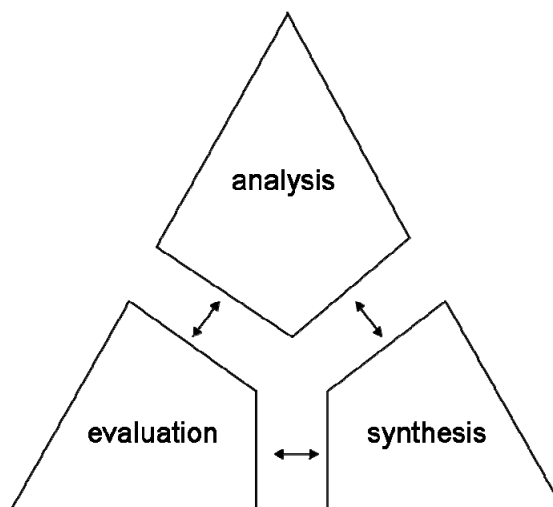


Figure 3.12 A more accurate graphical representation of the design process.
(Illustration reproduced from Lawson, 2006).

3.10.4 Industrial product design processes

While some researchers considered that architectural and engineering design theory could be applied to textile and apparel design, LaBat and Sokolowski (1999) pointed out that engineers often put less emphasis on the appearance of products. By contrast, industrial product designers “combine in-depth knowledge of the physical nature of materials and processes with a keen awareness of the aesthetic sense of the object” (LaBat and Sokolowski, 1999; 15). Industrial product-design processes may therefore be most closely related to the processes of textile and fashion design.

Jones (1981) proposed an innovative design process for industrial product design with three stages: divergence, transformation and convergence. The divergence stage could be defined as an extended type of analysis - before starting design work, designers should explore and identify all relevant factors such as sponsors, users, markets and producers that may be relevant to the design situation. Transformation involved “high-level creativity, flashes of insight, changes of set, and inspired guesswork” (Jones, 1981; 66). The convergence stage was similar to evaluation, which referred to “reducing a range of options to a single chosen design as quickly and cheaply as can be managed” (Jones, 1981; 69). Jones (1981) concluded that the design process was cyclical and flexible, and should allow designers to jump between the three phases.

3.10.5 Clothing design processes

Based on Jones’s design methodology, DeJonge (1984) proposed a design process for functional apparel design. She described the clothing-design process as a creative problem-solving process. DeJonge (1984) suggested that the designer should research all information that may be relevant to the given design situation, and expand objectives and problem boundaries in many directions in order to provide the

possibility of problem redefinition. After objectives were well defined, the designer was required to thoroughly explore specific factors affecting the design. The findings at this stage were used to establish design criteria for use in prototype development. The final stage was to evaluate the prototype against important design criteria and then make any necessary modifications. DeJonge (1984) also considered flexibility in a design process to be important, this was necessary to allow the designer to return to any activities.

Watkins's (1988) seven-step design process, adapted from Koberg and Bagnall (1981), was developed for teaching functional clothing design. She stated that the clothing design process involved seven stages: acceptance, analysis, definition, ideas, selection, implementation and evaluation. The term 'acceptance' refers to motivation.

“...the best acceptance comes when a student is truly fascinated with the problem and sees the assigned project as relating to his or her life, as exciting or rewarding in itself, or as an intellectual challenge that will lead to a future personal goal.” (Watkins, 1988; 11)

Analysis was possibly the most important and time-consuming stage of the design process. Watkins (1988) claimed that a designer should explore a design situation from as many aspects as possible in order to determine the true nature of the design problem, and begin the idea-generation process. After data had been collected in the analysis phase a designer should define goals and determine exactly what the design problems were based on this. The next step was to generate ideas. Watkins (1988) pointed out that the generation of design ideas also required the accumulation of design experience. Idea selection was the process in which some of most appropriate design ideas were selected for implementation. Watkins (1988) suggested that both cognitive and intuitive approaches were used for this. After this, design ideas were

taken through to designs. Evaluation was the final stage and “was based on the degree to which a design met the criteria listed in the definition within the boundaries set by the analysis” (Watkins, 1988; 14).

Lamb and Kallal (1992) claimed that there was no significant difference between functional apparel design and fashion design although functional design is often viewed as less concerned with aesthetics and social acceptance. They therefore proposed their ‘Functional-Expressive-Aesthetic (FEA) Consumer Needs Model’ (see Fig. 3.13). They identified three categories that could be used to establish design criteria. Functional considerations referred to the utility of an apparel product such as “protection, thermal comfort, fit, and ease of movement” (Lamb and Kallal, 1992; 43). Expressive considerations were associated with the communicative symbolism of dress, that is how the manner of dress of an individual conveys messages about the wearer. Aesthetic considerations related to the desire for beauty. Fashion designers should concern themselves with aesthetic elements such as line, form, colour, texture, and pattern, in order to create a pleasing design.



Figure 3.13 FEA Consumer Needs Model.
(Illustration reproduced from Lamb and Kallal, 1992).

The target consumer is at the centre of the FEA model. Lamb and Kallal (1992) pointed out that the design and development of apparel products required an understanding of the needs and wants of users and that this understanding came from the development of customer profiles. They further highlighted the importance of considering culture in developing customer profiles. Culture may affect the viewers' interpretation of the meaning of dress and a consumer's decision to purchase apparel is subject to cultural standards of beauty (Kaiser, 1990).

Lamb and Kallal (1992) further expanded their FEA model to incorporate a six-step design process which included the following: problem identification, preliminary ideas, design refinement, prototype development, evaluation, and implementation (see Fig. 3.14). They considered that an analysis of user needs and wants was necessary while the nature of the problem was being defined. In the preliminary idea stage, the designer generates design solutions (ideas) using sketches, brainstorming, research, surveys, and question-and-answer sessions.

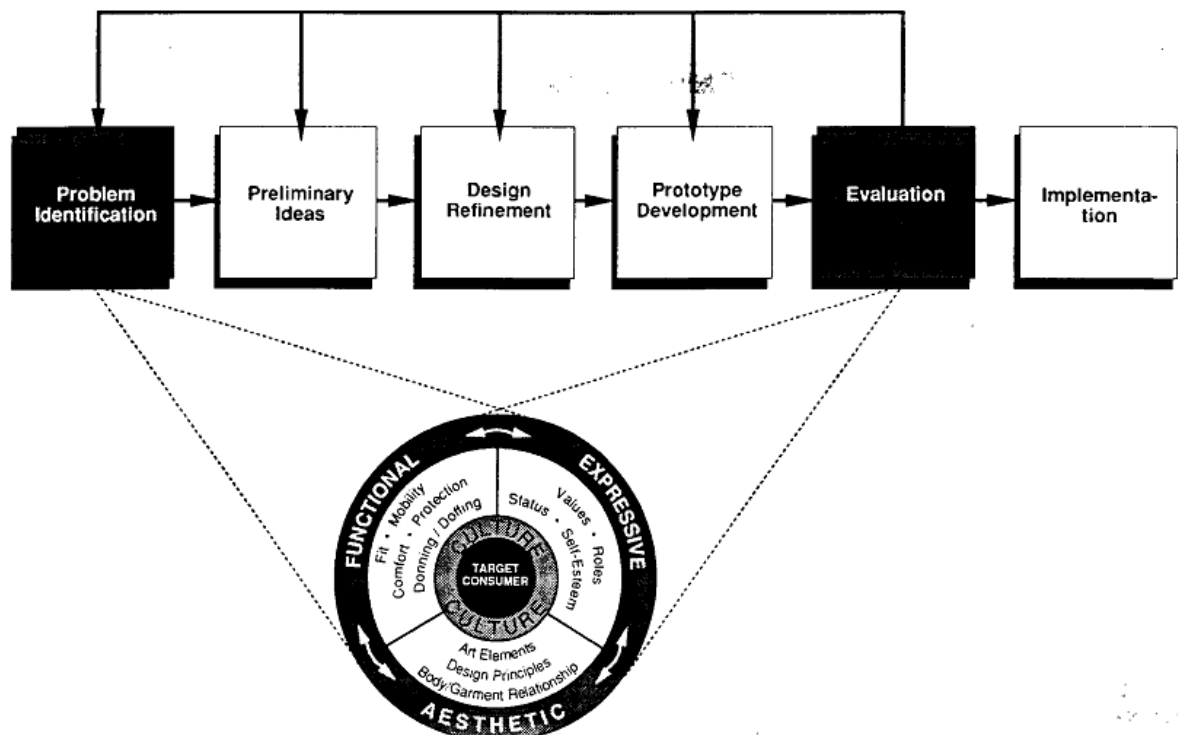


Figure 3.14 Apparel design framework.
(Illustration reproduced from Lamb and Kallal, 1992).

The following stage is to select preliminary ideas according to FEA criteria established in the problem-identification stage. The results of this phase are a few ideas that can be trialled (prototype development). In the evaluation stage, the designer may modify the prototype. After evaluation, the prototype is taken through to a final design to complete the process. Lamb and Kallal (1992) concluded that this design process was repeated until the design meets requirements.

LaBat and Sokolowski (1999) presented a design process for textile design based on examining the design processes in a number of areas. They claimed that all design processes reveal three common stages: (a) problem definition and research, (b) creative exploration, and (c) implementation.

3.10.6 Textile design processes

Wilson (2001) described a textile design process that had five main phases, as illustrated in Figure 3.15. The first step was the requirement or desire for a new product. After the initial request was made, designers should research information related to this need as widely as possible.

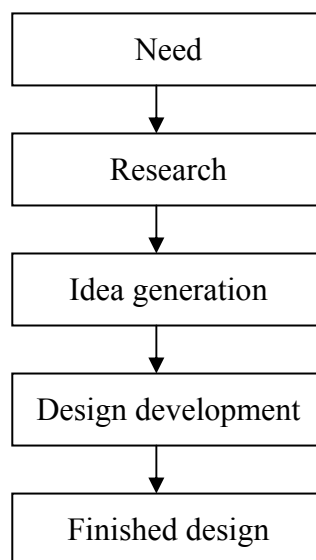


Figure 3.15 The design process.
(Illustration reproduced from Wilson, 2001).

Next, various initial ideas were generated, some of which were then selected and developed as proposals that would meet the initial need. This phase corresponded to Lamb and Kallal's (1992) preliminary idea and design refinement stages. The best solution to the design problem was determined and, finally, the specifications and instructions were given. A new item or product evolved from the process.

Wilson (2001) also considered the textile design process to involve range planning, range development and presentation, where a range is defined as 'a group of products offered for sale' (Wilson, 2001; 24). She described four operations for range planning: brief, research, design work and range (see Fig. 3.16). Wilson (2001) emphasised that forecasting was very important for designing new products because "the whole area of forecasting is one where much money is invested to 'get it right' and much money can be lost if a designer gets it wrong" (Wilson, 2001; 24). Information related to design should be gathered when planning a range. Wilson suggested that this information should include the type of product, the customer profile, price points for sales, manufacturing capabilities, quality required, the number of designs and colourways required. After briefing, the designer proceeds to more in-depth research of products and markets, production processes and techniques. In addition, ideas are generated to achieve the aims identified in the brief during initial research. Wilson (2001) suggested that brainstorming is a useful technique that helps designers to produce design solutions.



Figure 3.16 Range development.

(Illustration reproduced from Wilson, 2001).

In terms of range development, Wilson (2001) considered that the development of design ideas may be affected by two main factors: “How an individual designer prefers to work and what is being designed for” (Wilson, 2001; 28). She pointed out that a new range should be developed according to a colour palette “colour co-ordination does not mean that every design has to be in exactly the same colourway, but colours should be related” (Wilson, 2001; 26).

The design processes described previously in this chapter have several characters in common. Firstly, these design processes are systemic and logical processes. Secondly, they are flexible and iterative, that is to say, return loops are allowed in the design process in order to ensure a good solution to a problem. Finally, most clothing/textile design processes are adapted from existing design models.

3.10.7 Process of using traditional elements

Moalosi et al. (2007) argued that the idea of local identity emerged as a trend in contrast to globalisation. Globalisation leads to product standardisation and causes the homogenisation of users’ culture. To avoid this, designers should be challenged to come up with solutions that celebrate cultural diversity in products. Moalosi et al. (2007) proposed a conceptual culture-orientated design model (see Fig. 3.17). This design model was developed through field work which included interviews and observations. It was influenced by a ‘storytelling’ or ‘scenario’ approach where designers create a scenario for a user based on analysis of data such as lifestyle, technology, social trends, and market orientation. Storytelling can help designers to develop products from the viewpoint of the target customer, and thus better meet customers’ requirements (Moggridge, 1992; Kelley, 2001; McIlroy, 2003). Moalosi et al. (2007) claimed that their model focused on the consideration of users’ desires and

expectations because design solutions should meet users' needs and wants. This more consumer-focused concept was echoed by Lamb and Kallal (1992), who felt that understanding the needs of the intended user was crucial for developing design criteria. The first phase of the model (user domain) is user research, identifying socio-cultural factors, including material factors, social practices, emotional factors and technology/design factors.

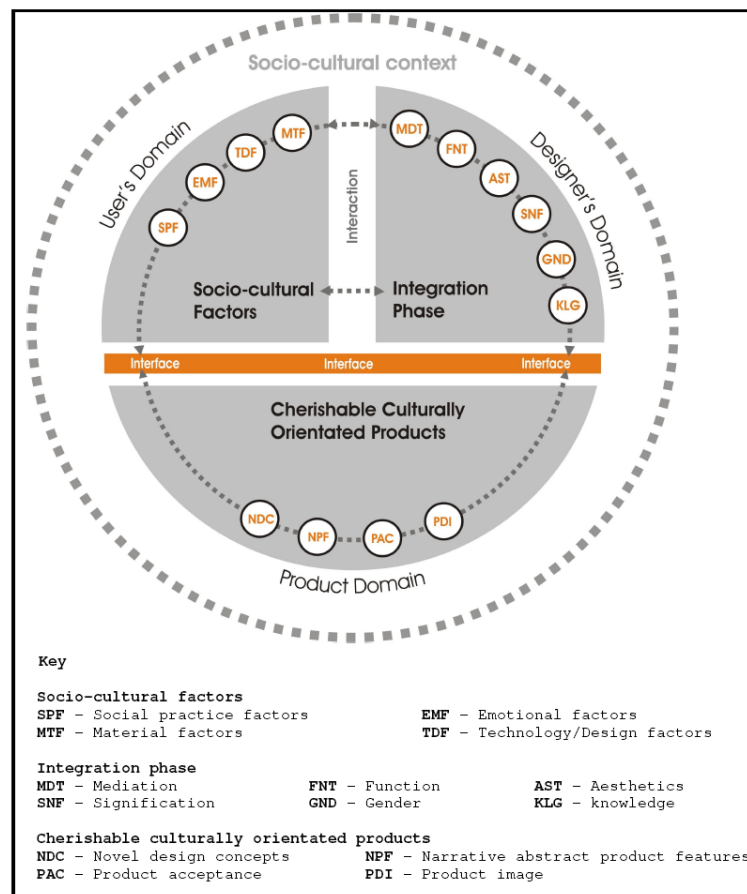


Figure 3.17 Culture-orientated design model.
 (Illustration reproduced from Moalosi et al., 2007).

Moalosi et al. (2007) stated:

“The sources include but are not limited to the following: folktales, oral traditions, songs, reports on culture, poetry, books and users. These sources cover the inner core layers of culture and thus basic assumptions, values, systems and institutions... Socio cultural factors were used as a way of uncovering or at least shedding light on users' social, emotional and aesthetic values and habits.” (Moalosi et al., 2007; 13)

Socio-cultural factors could be gathered through interviews and observations and be used to help designers to gain information about users. In addition, traditional socio-cultural factors could reveal the cultural practices which are most valuable for a society, and which have to be preserved and revived in order to adapt to modern society (Moalosi et al., 2007). At the integration phase the designer transforms socio-cultural factors into appropriate product design features for the group being designed for. Moalosi et al. (2007) claimed that humanness is very important in design, so designers must take notice of users' interactions with products. The stage of 'cherishable culturally-orientated products' referred to the generation of novel design concepts which fit users' demands and product images. Moalosi et al. (2007) suggested that a product image conveys messages about users' identities and aspirations.

Lin (2007) proposed a cultural model for use in designing a successful cross-cultural product. His model consisted of three main phases, as illustrated in Figure 3.18: the conceptual model, the research method, and the design process. The conceptual model referred to the way that the cultural features of an object were extracted and transferred into a design model. The research method consisted of three steps: identification, translation, and implementation. The first step was the identification of key features of the original cultural object, including three levels of design features, namely appearance, function and cultural meaning. At the translation stage, the design information is translated into design knowledge and elements. A designer develops prototypes in relation to these design elements and considers the factors that will influence design, such as economic issues, social culture, and technology. In the implementation stage, the design elements and a designer's aesthetic sensibility are combined to create a cultural product. Lin (2007) emphasised that all levels of cultural

features should be considered in design. He applied scenario and storytelling approaches for cultural product design. His culture design process involves four steps: investigation (setting a scenario), interaction (telling a story), development (writing a script), and implementation (designing a product). The first step is the analysis of cultural features of the object and setting a scenario. After the scenario stage, a designer should explore the interaction between culture and technology and the dialogue between users and designers. Lin (2007) stated, “according to these interactions, a user-centred approach based on story-telling is developed to describe the user’s needs and the features of the product” (Lin, 2007; 48). The following step is the development of ideas and the final step is the application of cultural features. Lin (2007) suggested that a designer should list all the important cultural features in a list or table. The final product or prototype may be modified by evaluating the features, meaning, and appropriateness of the product.

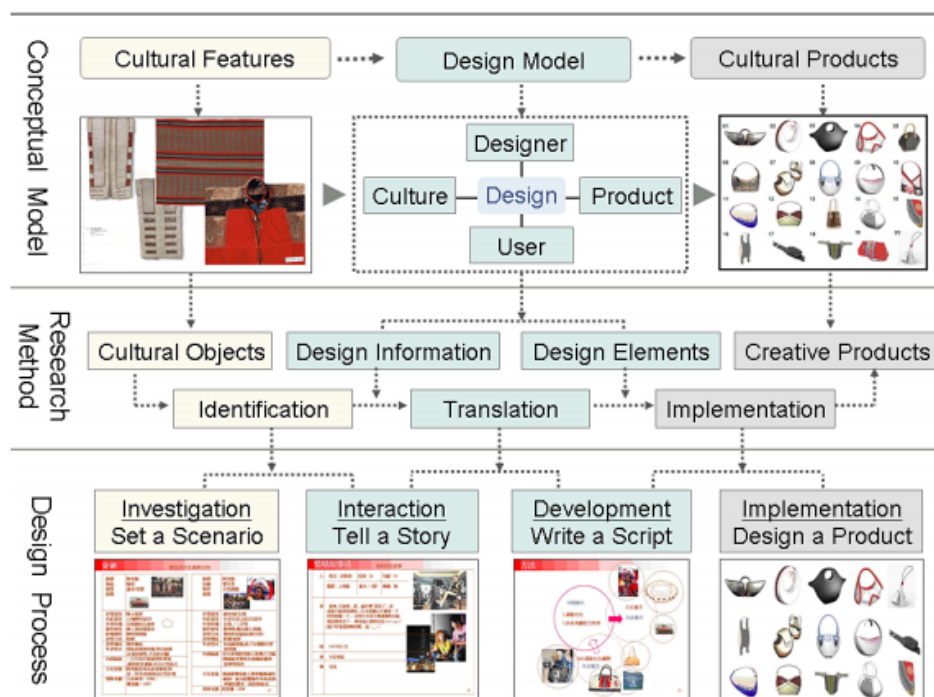


Figure 3.18 Culture product design model.

(Illustration reproduced from Lin, 2007).

Lin's and Maolosi's two cultural design models both illustrate ways designers transform cultural features and elements into product design. Users' requirements and their interaction with products are the focus of both design models, and a storytelling approach is applied in both models. One question however that needs to be asked, is whether these cultural product design processes could be applied to apparel and textile design. Compared with product design, clothing and textile design seems to be more focused on expression and aesthetics as defined by Lamb and Kallal (1992). In order to provide designers with an effective design process for clothing and textile design a detailed culturally-orientated design process should be developed. The major stages of the design processes discussed are presented in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Design processes in the fields of clothing/textile and cultural product design.

Design processes in the clothing and textile design	DeJonge (1984)	Request Mode	Design Situation Explored	Problem Structure Perceived	Spaces Described	Design Criteria Established	Prototype Developed				Design Evolution
	Watkins (1988)	Accept Problem		Analyse	Define	Ideate		Select		Implement	Evaluate
	Lamb and Kallal (1992)	Problem Identification			Preliminary ideas	Design Refinement	Prototype Developed	Evaluation		Implement	
	LaBat and Sokolowski (1999)	Problem definition and research			Creative exploration					Implementation	
	Wilson (2001)	Need	Research		Idea generation		Design development			Finished design	
		Brief	Research		Design work					Range	
The cultural product design process	Moalosi et al. (2007)	Social-cultural factors			Integration phase					Cherisable culturally orientated products	
	Li (2007)	Investigation/setting a scenario			Interaction/ telling a story	Development/ Writing a script				Implementation /designing a product	

3.11 Summary

This chapter considered the literature on fashion theory, with particular regard to fashion adoption and the use of traditional cultural patterns in fashion and textile design. It also investigated the design process. This review of literature was undertaken to establish whether traditional patterns could be used as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs and what design process models could be used.

With regard to the concept of fashion, scholars distinguish between high fashion (*haute couture*) and mass fashion. It is therefore important for any designer involved in fashion to consider the proposed position of a product in the marketplace at the start of the design process. In addition research has demonstrated that aesthetic elements such as pattern, colour, and texture make up a material or fabric, and that these elements will determine the appearance, fit characteristics, and tactile qualities.

Fashion adoption theories indicate that class competition encourages new fashions. In addition the trickle-up theory and historical-resurrection model show that designers frequently research previous art movements and cultures for a source of creative ideas that could create a demand from the market. Traditional patterns can be a source of creative ideas for the fashion textiles industry and research detailed in this chapter has shown that many designers have successfully used traditional imagery for contemporary designs. It has also been found that Chinese traditional designs and imagery can be reinterpreted successfully for European, as well as Asian, markets. Many traditional Korean patterns have been successfully used in fashion products since 1990. In addition, many fashion designers such as Issey Miyake and Vivienne

Westwood have looked to traditional historical sources for inspiration to create designs. This fits the historical-resurrection model.

The conformity-centred and the collective-selection models show that social norms and reference groups influence people's choices for fashion. This suggests that market segmentation is important and that designers should design different fashions and fabrics for different market segments. Economic models would be useful to analyse Taiwanese fashion markets and develop marketing strategies for ethnic-inspired fashion product in Taiwan.

Culturally-inspired fashion products reflect traditional beauty, cultural identity, national image and preserve national cultural heritage. Many ethnic elements have been used in modern fashion. The application of ethnic surface patterns has been seen widely in contemporary fashion with Western designers incorporating elements of Asian cultures into modern clothing. Chinese and Japanese cultures are two most common used Oriental cultures for inspiration in fashion world.

In terms of marketing ethnic and ethnic-inspired apparel, the evidence shows that recognition and favourable perception of that culture will affect the decisions regarding purchase (Littrell et al., 1997). In addition consumers' ethnic identification influences their attitudes toward and ownership of ethnic apparel, although it does not really influence their intention to purchase clothing with an ethnic influence.

The design processes used in many fields of design and the process of reinterpreting traditional patterns for contemporary product designs were reviewed in this chapter. This has identified that designers can take and make use of the essence and spirit of

traditional patterns to transform the traditional elements for new designs and that new fashion textile designs can reflect the spirit of traditional culture by means of traditional colours, symbols and the meaning of traditional patterns. These findings were used to develop interview questions to answer the fourth objective of this study which is to explore the potential use of traditional Chinese 'Tree of Life' motifs in modern fashion textiles for the Taiwanese market.

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Several different research methods were used for the work that is written up in this thesis. The methods chosen and the theory behind them are explained in this chapter. How the methods were used in practice is covered in this chapter and in further chapters as appropriate.

4.2 Research design

A research design provides a framework for collecting the evidence required to fulfil the research objectives that have been established, to answer the research questions that have been formulated, and to analyse the data that is subsequently collected (De Vaus, 2001; Bryman, 2004). Figure 4.1 gives a research framework which shows the stages in the research process and the research objectives.

Research objective 1 is to establish what is meant by a ‘Tree of Life’ throughout different cultures and societies around the world; research objective 2 is to establish any commonalities in ‘Trees of Life’ around the world; research objective 3 is to investigate in detail the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China; research objective 4 is to investigate the potential use of traditional Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market.

There were three main stages to the research. The first stage, which aimed to address the research objectives 1 and 2 above, reviewed literature to discuss the concept, image and symbolism of the 'Tree of Life' worldwide. This literature was analysed to provide the research questions for subsequent interviews in China. The second stage, to address research objective 3, used semi-structured interviews to identify and analyse the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the 'Tree of Life' in China. To address research objective 4 the third stage was a further literature review to understand how past designs have influenced contemporary designs, and to fully understand the design process. The results of this stage were used to formulate the research questions for a series of semi-structured interviews undertaken in Taiwan. The initial findings of the research can be used as a foundation for further work and research.

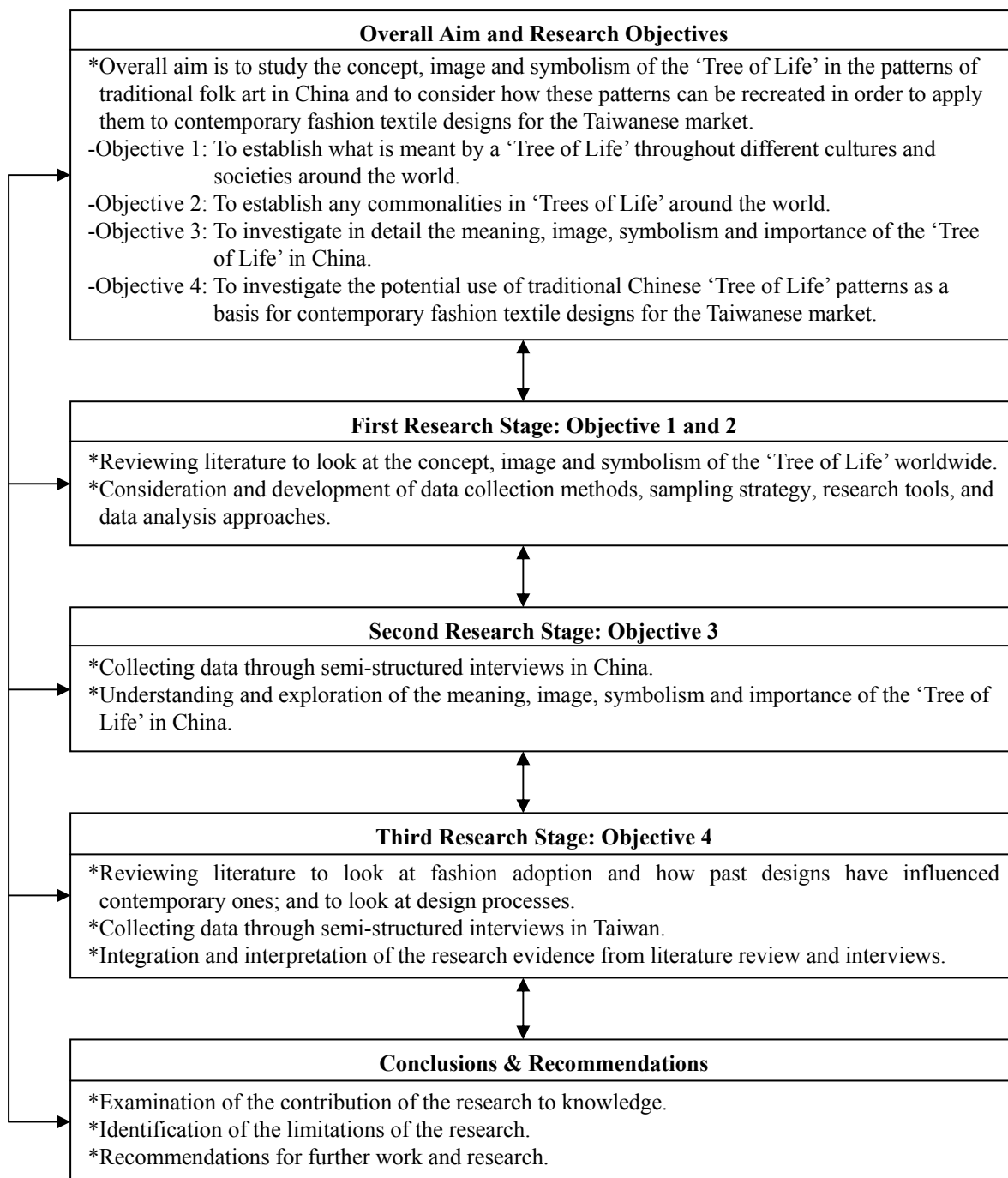


Figure 4.1 Main stages of the research.

4.3 Research methods

The methods used in this research are aimed at achieving the research objectives by answering the research questions identified. A number of different methods were used and these are outlined below.

4.3.1 Methods used to address research objective 1

Research into what is meant by a 'Tree of Life' throughout different cultures and societies around the world was undertaken by a review of relevant literature.

Literature reviews

A literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area. It can be a simple summary of the sources but usually combines a summary with a reorganisation of the information that has been found. It should be a critical and evaluative account of what has been published on a chosen research topic, essentially describing and analysing the existing knowledge in the field being investigated. In addition it can also identify any gaps in the knowledge in the area being studied (Bell, 2005).

As well as providing a context for the research and helping refine the research questions and allowing learning from previous theory, the literature review undertaken on the concept, image and symbolism of the 'Tree of Life' worldwide enabled the author to identify where the research undertaken for this thesis fits into the existing body of knowledge. The review found only limited information with regard to 'Tree of Life' in China and this led to the field studies.

4.3.2 Methods used to address research objective 2

The literature review was also used to identify the characteristics of a 'Tree of Life' and establish any commonalities. This led to the development of a series of comparative tables. The table which shows the characteristics identified as being those that make a tree considered as a 'Tree of Life' provided the questions for subsequent interviews in China. The tables themselves should add to the understanding and knowledge in this field. The way these tables were put together is described in Chapter 2.

4.3.3 Methods used to address research objective 3

Research into the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the 'Tree of Life' in China was undertaken through fieldwork in China. The investigation involved semi-structured interviews. The decision to use semi-structured interviews was made after a review of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This review is covered later in this chapter. As stated above the questions for the interviews were derived from the analysis of the findings from the literature review of 'Trees of Life' around the world.

4.3.4 Methods used to address research objective 4

A second literature review was undertaken to look at the design process and how contemporary designs have frequently been influenced by past designs. The findings from this literature review are reviewed in Chapter 3 and led to a series of semi-structured interviews undertaken in Taiwan with a number of key personnel in the Taiwanese textile industry.

4.4 Research philosophy

4.4.1 Positivism - a natural science epistemology

In literature about research methodologies there is a focus on epistemology. That is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with how knowledge is acquired and “what is regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (Bryman, 2004; 11). The literature identifies two main strands in knowledge acquisition: positivism and interpretivism.

Auguste Comte (1848), a French social philosopher, is considered to be the first to have used the term ‘positivism’ to refer to a philosophy that knowledge should be generated through strict scientific methods and principles. Bryman (2004) gives five principles with regard to positivism and the following is adapted from his work.

1. Only phenomena confirmed by the senses can genuinely be considered as knowledge.
2. The purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that by this testing will allow explanations of laws to be assessed (the principle of deductivism).
3. Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws (the principle of inductivism).
4. Science must, and presumably can, be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, objective).
5. There is a clear distinction between scientific statements made by scientists in the natural sciences and normative statements which are judgemental.

(Bryman, 2004; 11)

Positivism is often considered to be associated with quantitative methods; that is methods that involve data that can be measured or quantified (Punch, 1998). There has however, been much debate as to whether the social world can be studied by purely scientific approaches.

4.4.2 Interpretivism - an anti-natural science position

Interpretivism is a philosophy that holds that the humanities are fundamentally different from the natural sciences, and as such the social world cannot be studied according to the same procedures as the natural sciences. A different research procedure is required, “one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order” (Bryman, 2004; 13). The study of the social world has an emphasis on ‘understanding’ and ‘interpretation’ of human behaviour.

4.5 Quantitative research

4.5.1 The characteristics of quantitative research

Two main approaches to research in the social sciences can be identified: quantitative and qualitative. In order to determine which research strategy is the most effective for collecting information in any given circumstance it is important to have an understanding of the characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research. Bryman (2004) suggests that quantitative research focuses on data that can be analysed in a quantitative way and that it involves a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. In other words it tends to test theories. He also refers to quantitative research as combining “the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular” (Bryman, 2004; 19).

4.5.2 The main steps in quantitative research

Bryman (2004) introduces a process framework for quantitative research that focuses on the testing of hypotheses. He identifies eleven stages in his model of quantitative research. The following is adapted from Bryman’s model.

1. Theory.
2. Deduce a hypothesis from the theory.
3. Research design is selected.
4. Devise ways of measuring concepts.
5. Select research site.
6. Select research subjects/respondents.
7. Administer research /collect data.
8. Process data (ongoing).
9. Analyse data.
10. Findings/conclusions – interpretation of results and consideration of any implications with respect to theory.
11. Write up of findings/conclusions.

(Bryman, 2004; 63)

4.5.3 Criticism of quantitative research

Although quantitative research methods are considered important there are some weaknesses (Schutz, 1962; Cicourel, 1964). Bryman (2004) gives four criticisms. A main criticism is that “quantitative researchers fail to distinguish people and social institutions as being quite different to nature and natural laws” (Bryman, 2004; 78). As such Bryman explains that quantitative research is more suitable for investigating the natural sciences rather than the social world. Another disadvantage is that the nature of the measurement processes used can wrongly give a sense of precision and accuracy. For example the concepts or terms used in quantitative approaches such as the fixed-choice answers in questionnaires that have been chosen by the researchers may not be those that would have been chosen by the respondents. In addition respondents may interpret questions differently. Bryman’s final criticism is that being so reliant on measuring and having precise procedures, quantitative methods can mean research is very separate from everyday life.

According to Cicourel (1982, cited in Bryman 2004; 79) many methods of quantitative research ignore whether or not respondents have the required abilities to answer questions. Self-completion questionnaires require respondents to have enough knowledge on, and interest in, survey topics to be able to respond.

4.5.4 Data collection in quantitative research

Much of the literature on quantitative data collection for the social sciences talks about 'survey research'. Bryman (1989) provides the definition of survey research as:

“Survey research entails the collection of data on a number of units and usually at a single juncture in time, with a view to collecting systematically a body of quantifiable data in respect of a number of variables which are then examined to discern patterns of association.” (Bryman, 1989; 104)

Survey research is concerned with the collection of data in numeric form. It quantifies variation and analyses causal relationships between variables. Robson (2002) gives three essential features to survey research.

1. The use of a fixed, quantitative design.
2. The collection of a small amount of data in standardised form from a relatively large sample.
3. The selection of representative samples from known populations.

(Robson, 2002; 230)

The advantage of survey research is that because of the large size of the sample generalised conclusions may be drawn. Survey research provides visible and accessible methods and procedures as to how researchers arrived at the study's conclusions.

The two most common data collection methods used in quantitative surveys, are the structured interview and the self-completion questionnaire (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004; Bell, 2005).

Structured interviewing

Sometimes referred to as a 'quantitative interview' or a 'standardised interview' structured interviews are used for public opinion polls, market research and government surveys (Oppenheim, 1992; Bryman, 2004). This type of interview is administrated in person or by telephone using a schedule of standard questions. The aim of the structured interview is "for the interviewing of respondents to be standardised so that differences between interviews in any research project are minimised" (Bryman, 2004; 110). All interviewees are supposed to get exactly the same questions and in the same order as they appear on the schedule. Survey questions are usually very specific with fixed-choice answers. Such questions are often called 'closed', 'closed-ended' or 'pre-coded' questions (Bryman, 2004) and as such accuracy in processing answers can be increased. A quantitative researcher conducting a structured interview can write down the interviewee's responses without misinterpreting what is said.

The structured interview has the advantage of reducing error in interviewer variability and facilitating the processing of data (Bryman, 2004). The structured interview "promotes standardisation of both the asking of questions and the recording of answers" (Bryman, 2004; 111).

There is however a number of disadvantages in using structured interviews. The respondents' replies may be affected by factors such as the interviewer's ethnic background, gender and class (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004). Closed-ended questions force respondents to choose fixed answers, rather than giving them the opportunity to respond in their own words (Bryman, 2004). There is also a tendency for respondents to give the responses they feel are expected when structured interviews are conducted in person. This is what sociologists call 'social desirability bias' (Bryman, 2004). Robson (2002) further states that:

“...Others view surveys as generating large amounts of data often of dubious value. Falsely prestigious because of their quantitative nature, the findings are seen as a product of largely uninvolved respondents whose answers owe more to some unknown mixture of politeness, boredom and a desire to be seen in a good light than to their true feelings, beliefs or behaviour.” (Robson, 2002; 231)

There may also be a problem with the meaning of questions in structured interviews in that the respondent and the interviewer may not understand the terms used in the questions in the same way (Bell, 2005). Bryman (2004) put forward the argument that “the possibility that interviewer and respondent may not be sharing the same meaning systems and hence imply different things in their use of words is simply sidestepped in structured interview research” (Bryman, 2004; 127-128). It is therefore very important to ensure that the questions are worded precisely and unambiguously.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire is an important tool in survey research. It is often referred to as the self-completion questionnaire, the self-administered questionnaire or the postal questionnaire (Punch, 1998; Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004). The key difference between the questionnaire and the structured interview is that questionnaires are

completed by the respondents themselves. Self-completion questionnaires usually have fewer open questions than structured interviews to ensure that questions are easier to answer (Bryman, 2004). Questionnaires should not be too long in order to reduce 'respondent fatigue' (Bryman, 2004). This is where respondents become tired of answering questions if a survey is too long (Bryman, 2004).

The questionnaire has advantages and disadvantages which will impact on decisions as to whether it is the best method for gathering information in a particular study (Sarantakos, 1998). The major strength of the self-completion questionnaire is that it is cheaper and quicker than other methods. Questionnaires can be sent to respondents by mail eliminating travel time and reducing travel costs for interviewers (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004). Another advantage is that questionnaires are not affected by the problem of social desirability bias. The use of self-completion questionnaires can also avoid the problem of interviewer variability, that is, it does not offer any opportunities for interviewers to ask questions in different orders or ways to respondents (Sarantakos, 1998; Bryman, 2004). In addition it is more convenient in that respondents can decide when they want to complete questionnaires and they control the speed at which they complete the questions (Bryman, 2004).

There are however disadvantages to the use of the self-completion questionnaires. The major limitations are considered to be not being able to probe further on a topic or area of interest and the lower response rates (Sarantakos, 1998; Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004). Response rates from self-completion questionnaires are typically much lower than interview-based studies. Punch (1998) suggests that very low response rates may yield biased and invalid results. To ensure good response rates, the use of face-to-face questioning is much better than a mailed questionnaire. Because of

this problem with response rates and the problems associated with respondent fatigue it is difficult to ask a lot of questions or to collect additional data through a questionnaire. Closed questions may also not accurately reflect the complex reality of study issues. Postal surveys also have rather different response times in comparison to structured interviews (Punch, 1998; Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2004) with delays in respondents completing and returning questionnaires or forgetting to send them back. Postal questionnaires also have a weakness in that researchers cannot be sure whether the questionnaire is posted to, and is completed by, an appropriate person (Sarantakos, 1998; Bryman, 2004). Some questions may not be answered because respondents ignore questions that are not relevant to them (Bryman, 2004). In addition there may be problems if respondents do not understand the questions or have low levels of literacy.

4.5.5 Reliability and validity of quantitative research

In any research it is important that data gathered is reliable and valid. The term 'reliability' is generally understood to mean the ability to produce consistent results (Sarantakos, 1998; Bryman, 2004). Payne (2005) has provided a detailed definition of reliability: "Reliability is about being confident that the way data were gathered could be repeated without the methods themselves producing different results" (Payne, 2005; 196). Reliability is vital in quantitative research, because quantitative research is typically concerned with the question of whether a measure is reliable or stable (Bryman, 2004). Robson (2002) further suggests that "By presenting all respondents with the same standardised questions, carefully worded after piloting, it is possible to obtain high reliability response" (Robson, 2002; 231).

The term ‘validity’ refers to the integrity of the conclusions that accurately reflect the specific concept being measured (Bryman, 2004; Payne, 2005). Generally, validity can be classified into four main types: measurement validity, internal validity, external validity and ecological validity.

Measurement validity

This is about the way a concept is measured, whether the method used is appropriate.

Internal validity

Internal validity is about the appropriateness of the survey itself; how it has been constructed and how it is conducted. If the findings are obtained from incomprehensible or ambiguous questions, the results are considered to be invalid.

External validity

External validity is the extent to which the findings obtained from an investigation conducted under particular circumstances can be generalised to other circumstances. To ensure external validity participants should be selected to strict criteria.

Ecological validity

For a research study to possess ecological validity, the methods, materials and setting of the study must be familiar to the sample being surveyed. For example the findings deriving from a questionnaire-based study may have low ecological validity because of “the unnaturalness of the fact of having to answer a questionnaire” (Bryman, 2004; 29).

4.6 Qualitative Research

4.6.1 The characteristics of qualitative research

An in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons for such behaviour requires a different approach to that used in quantitative research. The qualitative approach seeks to study people, things and events in their natural setting (Punch, 1998). It is more about reaching conclusions based on observations and is often used to generate theories (Punch, 1998; Bryman, 2004). Qualitative research takes an interpretive stance rather than a positivistic stance in social research. That is to say, qualitative approaches focus on how “individuals interpret their social worlds” rather than positivistic practice and scientific methods (Bryman, 2004; 20). Qualitative researchers usually describe social reality as “a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation” (Bryman, 2004; 20).

Qualitative research designs should “delay conceptualising and structuring data until later in the research” (Punch, 1998), and should not manipulate a situation for research purposes. Miles and Huberman (1994) when writing about qualitative inquiry, identified eight characteristics of qualitative research.

1. Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a ‘field’ or life situation. These situations are typically banal or normal ones, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies, and organisations.
2. The researcher’s role is to gain a holistic overview of the context under study: its logic, arrangements, and its explicit and implicit rules.
3. The researcher attempts to capture data from the inside, through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending preconceptions about the topics under discussion.
4. Reading through interview data, the researcher may identify certain areas that can be reviewed with informants.

5. A main task is to explain the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations.
6. Many interpretations of qualitative data are possible.
7. Relatively little standardised instrumentation is used at the outset. The researcher is essentially the main measurement device in the study.
8. Analysis is done with words. The words can be assembled, clustered or broken down into semiotic segments. They can be organised to allow the researcher to contrast, compare, analyse, and identify patterns.

(Miles and Huberman, 1994; 6-7)

4.6.2 The main steps in qualitative research

Bryman (2004) gives the qualitative research process as a six-stage process. The following is adapted from Bryman's work.

1. Identification of general research question/s.
2. Selection of relevant site/s and subjects.
3. Choice of research methods and collection of relevant data.
4. Interpretation of data.
5. New concepts emerge which lead to:
 - a. further refining of the research question/s.
 - b. collection of further data.
6. Writing up of findings/conclusions.

(Bryman, 2004; 268-270)

Bryman refers to this developing of research questions and the collection of further data as an iterative process (Bryman, 2004). The process of qualitative research is one that highlights the links between theory and concepts with research data. The sequence of steps in qualitative research tends to achieve the generation of theories rather than the testing of theories. Consideration of qualitative research as discussed above suggests this approach can achieve a deep understanding of issues.

4.6.3 Criticism of qualitative research

Bryman (2004) lists four reasons why qualitative research has been criticised by many quantitative researchers. Firstly, qualitative research seems to be subjective. The most commonly heard criticism is that the findings of qualitative research are too impressionistic and subjective. Essentially, qualitative study usually begins with broad and open-ended questions in order to elicit subjects' views about the most relevant areas of the research. The researchers then have to narrow down broad research questions or problems more specifically.

Another criticism of qualitative research is that the findings are difficult to test and practically impossible to be replicated by other researchers in a meaningful way. Qualitative research does not use controlled conditions or follow the standard procedures that quantitative research does. The characteristics of the researcher, such as their personality, age and gender, may affect participants' responses. In addition interpretation and analysis of qualitative content might be strongly influenced by a researcher's biases and prejudices because of the unstructured nature of data (Bryman, 2004).

A further criticism of qualitative research is with regard to making generalisations. Quantitative researchers often argue that the findings from qualitative investigations are limited as the people who are chosen to be interviewed in qualitative research cannot ever be fully representative of a population.

According to Bryman and Burgess (1994) yet another criticism is that qualitative research lacks transparency with regard to the process of data gathering and data analysis. To avoid this criticism, qualitative research must therefore provide detailed

descriptions as to how samples were selected and how researchers arrived at conclusions. It is therefore necessary in any qualitative survey to describe in detail the specific sampling procedures and exactly how data has been analysed.

4.6.4 Data collection in qualitative research

Qualitative interview

The qualitative interview is the most commonly used approach for data collection in qualitative research. A qualitative interview is “a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent” (Moser and Kalton, 1971; 271). The main purposes of an interview were described by Punch (1998) as “...a very good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. It is also one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others” (Punch, 1998; 174-175).

An interview allows individuals to speak their personal thoughts about experiences and issues that are relevant and important to them. Terms used by researchers to describe qualitative interviews include ‘in-depth’, ‘exploratory’ and ‘free-style’ (Bryman, 2004, Oppenheim, 1992). Oppenheim says that such interviews aim to “develop ideas and research hypotheses rather than to gather facts and statistics” (Oppenheim, 1992; 67).

Qualitative interviews can be semi-structured or unstructured. There are a number of important differences between semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The main difference is that although the interviewers in both interview methods do not have to slavishly follow a schedule as in quantitative research interviewing, in semi-structured interviews the interviewers will control the interview by using a script to cover particular issues (Oppenheim, 1992; Bryman, 2004).

The first step in conducting a semi-structured interview is to prepare a list of questions, often referred to as an interview guide (Bryman, 2004). Interviewers may follow up interesting points made by the interviewees in order to keep the conversation flowing without interruption. Generally, the interview process is flexible, that is, the interviewees are allowed to talk about things significant to them and the interview can move freely from one topic to another (Bryman, 2004; Bell, 2005). All of the questions however should be asked in a similar way for each interviewee. The interviewers have to elicit the required information from interviewees, and the emphasis should be placed on how the interviewee views and understands issues and events (Bryman, 2004).

The factors that will affect the choice of which type of qualitative interview to use were identified by Bryman (2004). He suggests that researchers who wish to gain a more genuine and in-depth understanding of the respondent's views, common attributes, or their social setting use an unstructured interview. On the other hand, if researchers have a fairly clear focus for the investigation rather than a very general notion of research topic before beginning their research, the semi-structured interview is a more appropriate data collection tool.

The merits of qualitative methods are acknowledged by Oppenheim (1992) who stated that exploratory interviews can add new dimensions to any study by suggesting new ideas and hypotheses which will broaden and deepen the original plan of the research.

Qualitative interviews ask mostly open-ended questions that are able to help individuals investigate the topics that are important to them in their area of the

research. Bell (2005) also suggests that a major strength of the qualitative interviews approach is its adaptability. Qualitative interviews are usually face to face interviews, in which the interviewee's tone of voice, facial expression or other body language can convey more information than a written response.

A major disadvantage in conducting qualitative interviews is that these are costly and time-consuming (Oppenheim, 1992; Bell, 2005). Because of cost and time limits, the numbers of respondents who can be questioned is limited. Researchers therefore have to choose key informants who can offer the most relevant information for the research project. In addition an interview is "a highly subjective technique" (Bell, 2005; 157) and personal bias may occur during the course of the interview or in the analysis of responses.

Recording and transcription

Interview data needs to be recorded, transcribed and analysed (Punch, 1998; Bryman, 2004; Bell, 2005). The recording of open-ended qualitative interviews typically involves one or more of the following - tape-recording, video recording and note taking. Tape-recording is usually the preferred method of recording interviews. Bryman (2004) says that "qualitative researchers are frequently interested not just in what people say but also in the way that they say it" (Bryman, 2004; 329). Because of this it is often felt necessary to record a complete account of all that is said in an interview. This allows interview transcripts to be examined by other people and kept for future reference. Tape-recording can be helpful with content analysis as the researcher can listen to the tapes several times and then identify particular topics or categories (Bell, 2005). "It [tape-recording] allows you to code, summarise and to note particular comments" (Bell, 2005; 164). Oppenheim (1992) says that

tape-recording allows an interview to be “analysed in detail afterwards, for there is much that will have escaped the interviewer in the stress of the actual interview” (Oppenheim, 1992; 67). In addition recording responses avoids interrupting the flow of conversation (Bryman, 2004; Bell, 2005). Another strength of tape recording interviews is that it frees up the interviewer to follow up any interesting points said by the interviewee, probe any particular issues and pick up on any inconsistencies in the interviewee’s responses.

Heritage (1984) identifies the following six advantages of recording and transcribing interviews.

1. It helps to correct the natural limitations memory and of the intuitive glosses that might be placed on what people say in interviews.
2. It allows a more thorough examination of what people say.
3. It allows repeated examinations of the interviewees’ answers.
4. The data can be scrutinised by other researchers, who can analyse the findings themselves to evaluate the work carried out by the original researchers.
5. It helps to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher’s values or biases.
6. It allows the data to be reused in other ways from those intended by the original researcher.

(Heritage, 1984; 238)

The major disadvantage of tape-recording and transcribing interviews however is that the procedure is very time-consuming. In addition a tape recorder may be off putting for interviewees and as such inhibit honest responses (Bryman, 2004; Bell, 2005).

Sampling

There are two broad ways of identifying groups or ‘samples’ for interview. These are ‘probability sampling’, also known as ‘random sampling’, and ‘non-probability sampling’. The term probability sampling refers to a sampling technique that selects a

sample from a population by a random or chance process (Bryman, 2004). By contrast, non-probability sampling is a strategy that usually involves the selection of a sample based on the judgment of a researcher rather than any random selection method (Syque, 2008). Traditionally, random or probability sampling is what is recommended in quantitative research. Qualitative researchers however argue that such sampling is not suitable for qualitative research. They claim that as qualitative research is concerned with understanding social phenomena or factors that affect people's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs (Punch, 1998; Bryman, 2004; McRoy, 2007) it is important that researchers observe or interview people who are relevant to the research questions. Non-probability sampling or purposive sampling is therefore more suitable for qualitative research. The term purposive sampling is also called deliberate sampling which means "sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind" (Punch, 1998; 193). Punch (1998) notes that "a maximum variation sampling plan would deliberately seek as much variation as possible, whereas a homogeneous sampling plan would seek to minimize variation" (Punch, 1998; 193). The specific sampling strategies selected should therefore be aligned with the research purpose and research questions.

There two main methods of purposive sampling are 'snowball sampling' and 'theoretical sampling' (Bryman, 2004). Snowball sampling is often employed in interview-based research and is where those first identified as relevant to the research topic are asked to nominate other people for interviewing (Bryman, 2004). It is difficult (if not impossible) to find a sample that is truly representative of a population when using the snowball sampling method. This means this method is only suitable for qualitative research.

Theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) is widely used for qualitative data analysis and is also known as ‘grounded theory’ (Bryman, 2004). Theoretical sampling may be defined as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; 45). This definition emphasises that theoretical sampling is a complex iterative process (see Fig. 4.2).

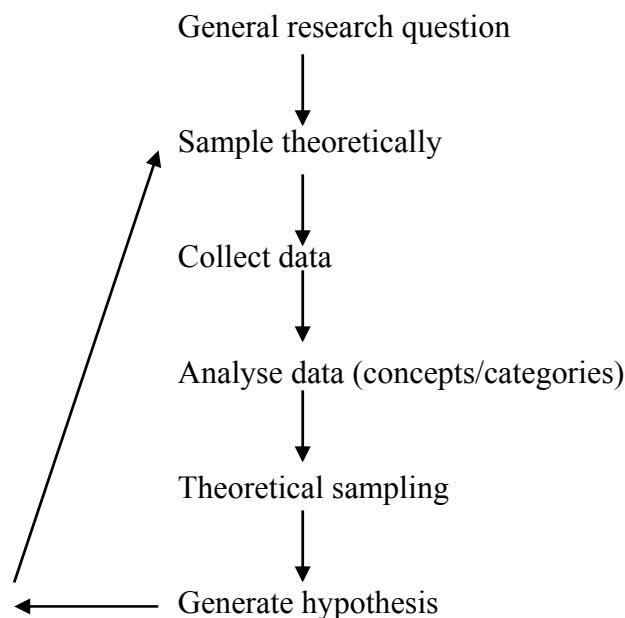


Figure 4.2 The process of theoretical sampling.

(Illustration reproduced from Bryman, 2004).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined theoretical sampling as:

“Data gathering driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of ‘making comparisons’, whose purpose is to go to place, people, or events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions.” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; 201)

Strauss and Corbin (1998) described in detail theoretical saturation:

“This means, until (a) no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated.” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; 212)

Theoretical sampling is more concerned with the refinement of ideas, rather than boosting sample size. Theoretical sampling is strongly associated with grounded theory and controlled by conceptual emergence. Grounded theory methodology will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

4.6.5 Validity and reliability in qualitative research

Whether the concepts of reliability and validity are applicable to the practice of qualitative research is debatable and many qualitative researchers reject the necessity for reliability in qualitative research. They argue that “social life is not repetitive or stable, and so our research perceptions of it cannot be entirely consistent” (Payne, 2005; 198). For this reason, the primary emphasis of qualitative research is on validity rather than on reliability (Sarantakos, 1998; Bryman, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that qualitative research requires different assessment methods. They propose the term ‘trustworthiness’ as a criterion that can be applied to qualitative research. Bryman (2004) states that there are four aspects to trustworthiness that are relevant to qualitative research criteria.

1. Credibility, which parallels internal validity that is how believable are the findings?
2. Transferability, which parallels external validity that is how do the findings apply to other contexts?

3. Dependability, which parallels reliability that is are the findings likely to apply at other times?
4. Confirmability, which parallels objectivity that is has the investigator allowed his or her values to intrude a high degree?

(Bryman, 2004; 30)

Robson (2002) suggests that qualitative researchers should pay attention to the accuracy of recordings and testing the truthfulness of claims in order to guarantee trustworthiness in their research.

4.6.6 The analysis of qualitative data: grounded theory analysis

Grounded theory is a systematic qualitative research methodology in the social sciences and it can be argued to be one of the most prominent and widely used approaches for analysing qualitative data. The emphasis is on the generation of theory from the data collected from the research. Raw data taken from interviews is mainly unstructured text-based data and therefore is not straightforward to analyse (Bryman, 2004). From the data collected the key points from the text are marked with a series of codes. The codes are grouped into similar concepts in order to make them more workable. From these concepts, categories are formed, which are the basis for a theory. Theory is therefore developed as an ongoing process from data collected.

This approach was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Bryman, 2004). According to a definition provided by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is a “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another” (Glaser and Strauss, 1998; 12).

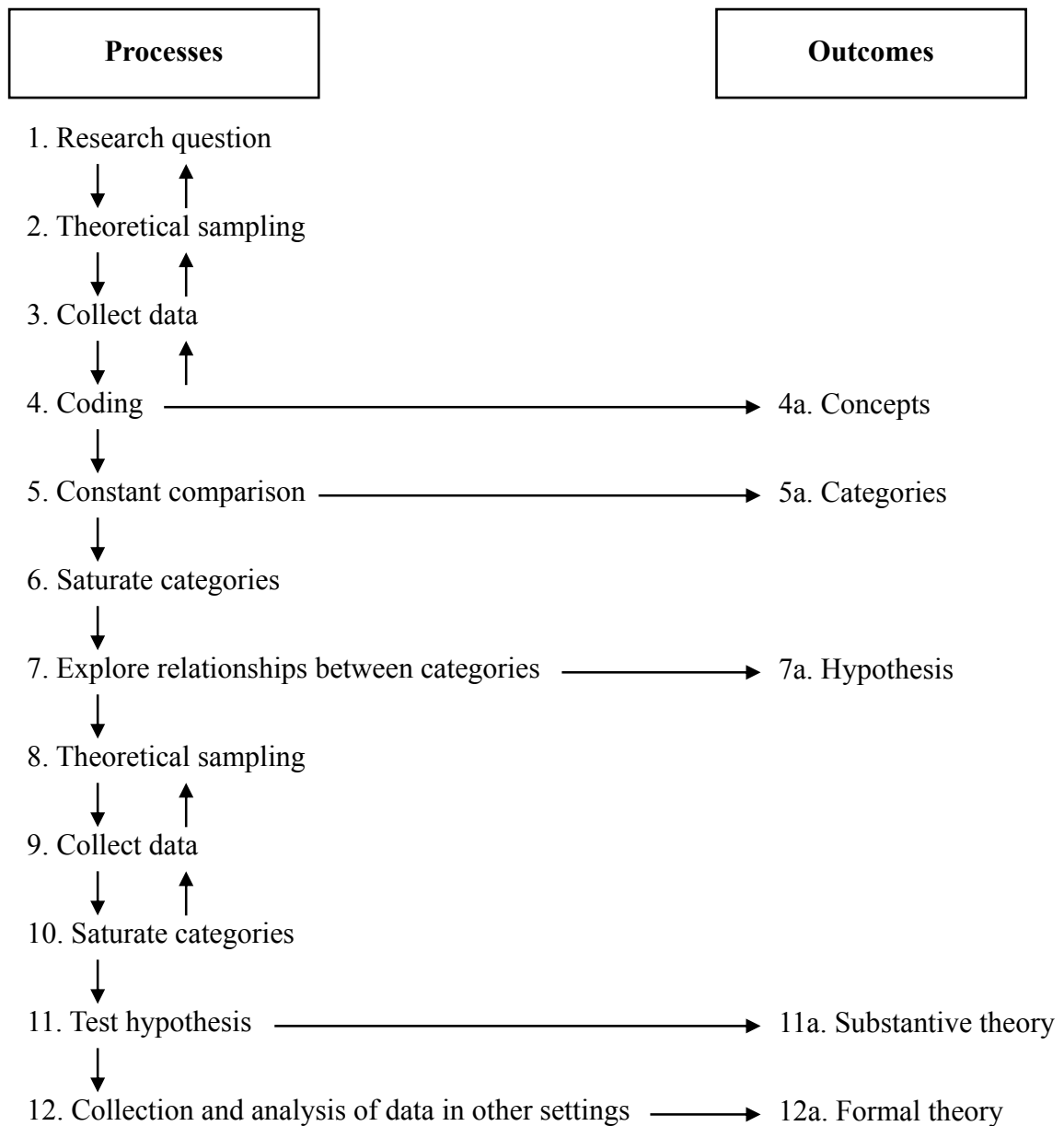


Figure 4.3 Processes and outcomes in grounded theory.

(Illustration reproduced from Bryman, 2004).

As shown in Figure 4.3, Bryman describes twelve stages that make up the process and generate outcomes of grounded theory. Coding is a commonly used notion in qualitative data analysis and is defined precisely by Miles and Huberman (1984):

“A code is an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words - most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribed field notes - in order to classify

the words. Codes are categories. They usually derive from research questions, hypotheses, key concepts, or important themes. They are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular question, hypothesis, concept, or theme. Clustering sets the stage for analysis.” (Miles and Huberman, 1984; 56)

This shows that coding allows the researcher to cluster key issues in initial data and develop new concepts, which are later turned into categories. According to Bryman (2004) the coding stage (step 4) is the key process in grounded theory and referred to as ‘open coding’ practice. Open coding can be defined as “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 61). The constant comparison stage (step 5) is ongoing and refers to “a constant movement backwards and forwards between the first four steps, so that early coding suggests the need for new data, which results in the need to theoretically sample” (Bryman, 2004; 404). It also involves comparing concepts in order to generate categories (step 5a). After that, categories are saturated during the coding process (step 6). Bryman (2004) describes saturation as when “you reach a point where there is no further point in reviewing your data to see how well they fit with your concepts or categories” (Bryman, 2004; 403). Relationships between categories are then explored (step 7) and so hypotheses about connections between categories emerge (step 7a). Further data collected via theoretical sampling (step 8 and 9) may need to be governed by the theoretical saturation principle (step 10) which implies that “once a concept or category has been developed, you may wish to continue collecting data to determine its nature and operation but then reach a point where new data are no longer illuminating the concept” (Bryman,2004; 403). The testing of the emerging hypotheses (step 11) may also spur the collection of further data to test the hypotheses, and this can lead to the specification of substantive theory (step 11a).

According to Bryman, the substantive theory generated by grounded theory methodology in relation to different settings may result in formal theory (step 12a). “A formal theory will relate to more abstract categories, which are not specifically concerned with the research area in question” (Bryman, 2004; 405). However, Bryman argues that step 12 is not as necessary a feature of the process of grounded theory as the other steps, because researchers usually concentrate on a certain setting.

Concepts and categories are recognised as key elements in grounded theory. Concepts have come to be referred to as the ‘building blocks of theory’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Categories are used to represent real-world phenomena which may cover two or more concepts (Bryman, 2004). As such categories are said to be more abstract than concepts. According to Bryman (2004) the qualitative researcher usually places more emphasis on grounded concepts rather than grounded theory. Consequently, the key processes in grounded theory such as coding, theoretical sampling, and theoretical saturation are designed for generating concepts and categories.

4.6.7 Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis

One of the most notable improvements in qualitative research over the past few years is the development of computer software programs designed to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data (Bryman, 2004). There are however both advantages and disadvantages of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). There are three main advantages of using computer software for qualitative data analysis. The first is that CAQDAS can make the process of coding and retrieving faster and more efficient (Bryman, 2004). This means that CAQDAS allows the coding of data to be done more quickly and the process of retrieving the coded data faster and more complete. The second is that CAQDAS can enhance the transparency

and rigour of the analysis process (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). One of the criticisms often made about qualitative research is that the process of qualitative data analysis is frequently unclear and made much less explicit (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). CAQDAS may force researchers to make the process of analysis much more explicit and this can improve the transparency of qualitative analysis (Bryman, 2004). The third is that CAQDAS may be helpful in developing explicit links between codes. “CAQDAS invites the analyst to think about codes that are developed in terms of ‘trees’ of inter-related ideas” (Bryman, 2004; 420).

There are however some arguments against the use of CAQDAS for the analysis of qualitative data. Firstly, CAQDAS cannot help the analyst make decisions about the coding of textual data or the interpretation of findings (Sprokkereef et al., 1995; Weitzman and Miles, 1995). Secondly, CAQDAS may not be suitable for focus group data. Focus groups are a form of group interview that use group interaction or communication between research participants to generate data (Bryman, 2004; Bell 2005). The interaction that occurs between group members is important in the focus group analysis (Kitzinger, 1994). However, the code and retrieve function offered by CAQDAS tends to result in a loss of the communication process. CAQDAS is therefore not suitable for focus group data (Catterall and Maclaran, 1997). Further disadvantages are the cost of a CAQDAS programme and the significant length of time required to become familiar with the operation of the software (Stanley and Temple, 1995; Bell, 2005). Coding and retrieval functions are achievable through word-processing software such as Word for Windows and this has been suggested as an alternative approach to processing qualitative data (Stanley and Temple, 1995).

4.7 A comparison of quantitative and qualitative research methods

Table 4.1 outlines some common contrasts between quantitative and qualitative research.

Table 4.1 A comparison of between quantitative and qualitative research. (Table reproduced from Bryman, 2004; Neill, 2007).

Quantitative research	Qualitative research
Deductive: testing of theory	Inductive: generation of theory
Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Objectivism	Constructionism
Objective: seeks precise measurement and analysis of target concepts, e.g. uses surveys, questionnaires etc.	Subjective – individuals: interpretation of events is important, e.g. uses participant observation, in-depth interviews etc.
Researcher knows clearly in advance what he/she is looking for	Researcher may only know roughly in advance what he/she is looking for
Data is in the form of numbers and statistics	Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects
Point of view of researcher	Point of view of participants
Researcher is distant	Researcher is close
Theory and concepts tested in research	Theory and concepts emergent from data
Static	Process
Structured	Unstructured
Generalisation	Contextual understanding
Hard, reliable data	Rich, deep data
Macro	Micro
Behaviour	Meaning
Artificial settings	Natural settings

There are a number of important differences between quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research tends to analyse data numerically, by contrast, qualitative research is usually about words describing and explaining events and suggesting new perspectives. Quantitative research is frequently concerned with large-scale social trends (Macro), whereas qualitative research is frequently concerned with small-scale social reality (Micro) (Bryman, 2004). For quantitative research, the process of analysis of the data is very linear, and does not include an iterative component. For qualitative research, by contrast, new problems may emerge when the data is interpreted.

Similarities include the selection of a research site/s and the selection of subjects/respondents, selecting appropriate data collection methods, writing up findings and drawing conclusions.

4.8 Combining quantitative and qualitative research

4.8.1 The advantages of using multi-strategy research

Many researchers are now combining quantitative and qualitative approaches (Mathison, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Punch, 1998; Bryman, 2004). There are a number advantages in integrating the two approaches. Bryman (2004) provides in-depth analysis of using mixed methods and states that the two approaches are considered capable of being merged. He borrows the term ‘multi-strategy research’ (Layder, 1993) to stand for research that mixes quantitative with qualitative research.

Bryman suggests that one of the major advantages is that qualitative research can provide hypotheses and background information for quantitative research. As qualitative research usually begins with an unstructured or open-ended approach to data collection it can provide contextual knowledge or act as a source of hypotheses for quantitative research. In-depth knowledge of social contexts can also be used in developing quantitative survey questions for structured interviewing and self-completion questionnaires. Some background information may help to clarify and decide the most appropriate terminology to be used in the survey questions (Bryman, 2004). In addition, qualitative research may be used to explore and interpret the relationship between variables.

When quantitative methodologies do not give any results of worth or are not as anticipated, qualitative research may be used to salvage the research by exploring and explaining the reasons for and relationships among variables. In this way it can be used to make sense of quantitative findings.

On the other hand, quantitative research can facilitate qualitative research by identifying participants to be interviewed. That is to say, a quantitative survey can show how people respond to particular issues and from this a group of people who are relevant to research topics can be selected for interviewing through a qualitative survey. Quantitative research can also fill the gaps in a qualitative study; for example when the researcher cannot gain access to particular groups of people for observing or interviewing (Bryman, 2004).

The term 'triangulation' is also used for this blending of the two approaches (Hammersley, 1996; Webb et al., 1996; Laws 2003; Bryman, 2004; Bell 2005).

According to a definition provided by Laws (2003) triangulation is an approach used in data analysis “to see the same thing from different perspectives and thus to be able to confirm or challenge the findings of one method with those of another” (Laws 2003; 281). This view is supported by Webb et al. (1996) who say that being able to measure a concept in more than one way increases confidence in the findings. Similarly, in Bryman’s discussion of the triangulation exercise (Bryman, 2004) he points out that “it implies that the results of an investigation employing a method associated with one research strategy are cross-checked against the results of using a method associated with the other research strategy” (Bryman, 2004; 454). Triangulation allows the examination and cross-checking of findings. As a result, it can give greater confidence in results.

There are many models for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The most significant model is given by Miles and Huberman (1994) who use the term ‘linkage’ with four phases. First of all data is collected by both quantitative and qualitative methods. Then a survey is conducted several times (a multi-wave survey). This multi-wave survey is carried out at the same time as ongoing fieldwork. The exploratory qualitative fieldwork leads to quantitative measurements and the quantitative data analysis process is followed by further qualitative work. Finally, there is another survey followed by in-depth qualitative research, which then leads to an experiment to test some hypotheses.

4.8.2 The disadvantages of using multi-strategy research

Despite an emphasis on the importance of multi-strategy research, it has been argued that in practice there are problems in using this approach. One main criticism has been that the two research methods are very different in terms of epistemological

orientation with quite distinct paradigms or thought patterns (Smith, 1983; Guba, 1985; Morgan, 1998; Bryman, 2004). Quantitative research is considered a positivist knowledge theory using an approach favoured by the natural sciences while qualitative research is shown as interpretivist where the researcher needs to explain human behaviour in a natural setting. The very marked differences in approach are such that a multi-strategy research may be a very difficult one to follow.

While multi-strategy research or triangulation may help to enhance the validity of findings the results are likely to be inconsistent (Bryman, 2004). In addition multi-strategy research may dilute the research effort. Limited resources such as funds would need to be spread over the different methods (Bryman, 2004). For research where funds or time is limited a single-method approach may be more suitable.

4.9 Interviews

The review of qualitative and quantitative research led to the decision to use semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data about the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the 'Tree of Life' in China which was the third research objective. Interviews were also used to gather information in Taiwan to address the fourth research objective. A multi-strategy approach may have been helpful to cross-check findings and enhance the validity of results. However with funding and time limitations this was not appropriate for this research.

When considering the validity and reliability of this research, there appears to be a problem with bias creeping into interviews. This is inevitable as the interviewer's manner may have an effect on respondents (Bryman, 2004). However, Sarantakos

(1998) and Bryman (2004) point out that in conducting qualitative research, the primary emphasis has usually been laid on validity rather than on reliability. To improve the validity of interviews experts were interviewed. In addition, electronic records were used to ensure the accuracy of the interview recording. This should increase the trustworthiness of this research.

4.9.1 Selection of interviewees

Purposive (deliberate) sampling was used to identify interviewees in both China and Taiwan. As already stated, snowball sampling as described by Bryman (2004) is often used in interview-based research and is where those first identified as relevant to the research topic are asked to nominate other people for interviewing (Bryman, 2004; 100). The expert who was initially interviewed for the interviews in China is an academic who has presented many papers at international conferences about the cultural dress and textiles of minority tribes in China. Throughout this thesis this expert is referred to as Interviewee A. Interviewee A suggested a further three people who work in Yunnan Academy of Social Science as being appropriate to interview in the context of this research. In turn these three suggested another seven. The ten interviewees identified by this snowball sampling (not including Interviewee A) came from eight different tribes including the Hani, Miao, Derung, Dai, Yao, Bai, Zhuang and Naxi. The diverse ethnic backgrounds of the interviewees enabled the author, in a short space of time, to get a good overview of tree-worship and the 'Tree of Life' symbolism from a large number of tribes in China. Traditional Chinese tribal culture is something the Taiwanese Government is keen to preserve. Using purposive sampling allowed the collection of relevant and valid information to address the research objectives in an achievable time frame.

In the interviews carried out in Taiwan, the identification of appropriate people to interview was through academics at the Shih Chien University in Taiwan and through a number of designers and managers in fashion and textile organisations who were already known to the author.

4.9.2 Data protection

The purpose of the interviews was explained to all interviewees and they were all told that all data collected in this survey would be held anonymously and securely. They were told that while they gave some personal data this was not mandatory. All gave their consent for the information they gave to be published, they all stated that they were happy to be involved in the study and had no problems with data being shared. To keep their personal details confidential in the data analysis process each of interviewee was assigned a specific identification code (see Appendix 1).

4.9.3 Interview guide

Interviews were carried out with pre-prepared semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix 2). The use of such interview guides is a key component to conduct a successful research interview (Bryman, 2004). The interview questions in China were directly derived from the outcomes of the review of the literature of the ‘Tree of Life’ which identified the key factors for identifying a tree as sacred, and as such a ‘Tree of Life’. These factors formed the basis for questions for the semi-structured interviews in China.

The interview questions in Taiwan were linked to the outcomes of the literature review on fashion adoption and the design process. The literature suggests that design is much more than an idea that a designer subjectively expresses. Factors such as the

social culture, social standards of beauty, market demand, commercial concerns and the industrial environment should also be considered when creating fashion and textile designs (LaBat and Sokolowski, 1999). From this it was therefore important to take into account the current situation and future trend of the Taiwanese fashion industry and market which formulate the research questions in Part I of the semi-structured interview guide. In order to determine appropriate ways of printing for Taiwanese market, it was necessary to consider commercial factors. The issue of the development of digital printing and screen printing in Taiwan has been an area of concern which determine the research questions in Part III. The use of traditional designs in contemporary fashion has been reviewed in Chapter 3. Fashion designers frequently make use of colours, symbols and meaning of traditional patterns when transforming traditional patterns into contemporary designs. These results were used to help to define the nine research questions in Part II.

4.9.4 Data analysis

Each interview was tape-recorded. They were then transcribed and checked to ensure accuracy and completeness of the interview data. Interview data was analysed using grounded theory. This theoretical sampling is where data collected is coded and analysed as an ongoing process; that is after coding and analysis more data is considered as appropriate (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

For this research, qualitative data analysis computer software NVivo was used as a tool to assist the process of analysing the interview data. The use of NVivo can help the analyst to code qualitative data and retrieve the coded text more quickly (Bryman, 2004). It also can enhance the transparency of the process of qualitative data analysis (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). However, NVivo may not be very appropriate for focus

group data because the code and retrieve function tends to result in a loss of the communication process (Catterall and Maclaran, 1997). As the qualitative data in this research is interview data rather than focus group data NVivo was considered suitable for this research. The whole process of data analysis was carried out in Chinese and later presented in English. In the results (see Chapter 5 and 6), all quotations are verbatim as far as the translation process has allowed. The process of analysis of interview data is described in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.10 Analysis of the collected pictures

Interviewee A has a collection of paper cut-outs, embroidered textiles and woven fabrics which were collected between 1980 and 2000 from various places, including the Yellow River Basin and the South Western Region of China. The collection has seventy five examples of what are considered to be ‘Tree of Life’ images. These examples were photographed by the author. The interpretation and analysis of the patterns was done via interviewing Interviewee A and the details of this are outlined in Chapter 5. As well as providing a source of imagery for analysis, the photographs provide an important source of inspiration for future designs.

4.11 Summary

Just what information is being looked for will have a direct impact on the type of research approach to be used. This chapter has reviewed the different types of methodological approaches and their characteristics. Literature reviews are appropriate when gathering together information from other published works to provide a context for the research, to help refine the research questions and allow learning from previous theory. These can also show where research fits into the

existing body of knowledge. Literature reviews can also be used to pull existing knowledge together in a way that has not been done previously.

In terms of collecting information from surveys there are two basic types of approach: quantitative and qualitative. The aim of quantitative research is to test theory or hypothesis based on survey data, that is, it is a deductive approach. On the other hand, a process framework of qualitative research focuses on the generation of theories or concepts which emerge from the analysis of data collected by techniques such as interviews and observations (Punch, 1998; Bryman, 2004). That is to say, qualitative research is an inductive approach.

The work in this chapter informs the research methodologies used to gather data as appropriate to the research aims and objectives. How this was done is described in detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

An investigation into the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China

5.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates in detail the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China in response to research objective 3. The importance of tree-worship and tree symbolism in China has been acknowledged in some early literature (Chin, 1994). However there has been little recent investigation into the current worship of trees in China and the current use of tree symbolism in the decorative patterns of traditional textiles. To gain a deep understanding of these issues a series of semi-structured interviews was carried out in China. This method of gathering information was used in preference to a questionnaire which invariably has to consist of mainly closed questions. The semi-structured interview is much more flexible and allows in-depth questioning as required to address the specific issues of the research (Bryman, 2004; Bell 2005). As explained previously in Chapter 4, grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that uses collected data to generate theories. In this research the raw data from the personal interviews was analysed to yield insight and understanding of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China.

The aim was to explore in depth the way people in China consider and experience tree-worship, and how this is related to the ‘Tree of Life’ motif in Chinese textiles. The review of methodology showed that qualitative research is most appropriate for a deep understanding of issues from the participants’ point of view (Bryman, 2004; 20;

287; Neill, 2007). The review of 'Trees of Life' worldwide in Chapter 2 identified the key features for a tree to be considered sacred and this provided a fairly clear focus for a qualitative investigation. Semi-structured interviews were used as they allow specific questions to be asked while allowing enough flexibility for interviewees to expand on areas as they felt appropriate and to allow the author to probe for more information if required.

5.2 The interviewees

For a semi-structured survey key informants have to be identified that are relevant to the research questions. The selection of participants is a critical step in interviewing as it affects any generalisations that can be made from the results (Williams, 2000; Bryman, 2004). As non-probability or purposive sampling is more suitable for qualitative research (Bryman, 2004) than random sampling this research used snowball sampling. This purposive sampling method uses an initial number of identified key informants who then identify further key people to interview. In addition to Interviewee A, the expert in minority Chinese tribes and culture, a further 10 interviewees (nine men and one woman) were interviewed during a six week period from October to November 2007. They all lived in rural villages in Yunnan province in the South Western region of China (see Section 4.9.1 for how the interviewees were identified).

Yunnan province is home to more ethnic minority tribes than any other province of China. Today there are twenty-five different ethnic minorities living in Yunnan province including the Derung, Yao, Yi, Nakhi, Bai, Hani, Zhuang, Dai, Miao and Hui. These tribal people have been settled in their villages in this area of China for many

centuries. Yunnan Province is still an essentially uncivilised area with customs and rituals passed on by word of mouth rather than by being written down.

The ten interviewees (excluding Interviewee A) came from a number of different tribes. All are funded by the Chinese Government to study tribal culture and customs and as such at the time of the study they all worked in Yunnan Academy of Social Science. They have been granted funding as, in addition to speaking the language of their tribe, they all speak Mandarin. Appendix 1 gives details of the interviewees.

5.3 Interview questions

A number of interview questions were generated directly from the results of the literature review in Chapter 2 (questions 1-14). These were with regard to ‘Trees of Life’ and the worship of trees. Others were about ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in textiles in China: what characterises these patterns, their colours etc..

To answer the research question as to what the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China is several questions were identified to form the interview guide.

The first section of the guide dealt with the origin and concept of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China and covered the following areas.

1. Are ‘Trees of Life’ considered special because of shape and size?
2. Does the ‘Tree of Life’ have practical associations in China? Is it a source of power, a source of food or source of materials?
3. Are trees linked to the creation of the world?
4. Are trees linked to ancestor worship?

5. Are trees considered to be manifestations of gods or spirits?
6. Are tree ever considered as the homes of gods or spirits?
7. Are trees associated with protection (against misfortune and evil spirits)?
8. Are trees associated with fertility (human fertility and creation or the fertility of land and growth of crops)?
9. Are trees associated with funeral rites and ceremonies? If people hold mortuary ritual near a sacred tree why is this?
10. Are trees associated with immortality and resurrection?
11. Are trees linked with sacred animals?
12. Are trees linked with legends and folklore?
13. What do you consider is meant by a 'Tree of Life'?
14. Can you think of any other factors that have made a tree sacred?

The second section dealt with the 'Tree of Life' patterns in textiles in China and covered the following areas.

15. What characterises a pattern as being a 'Tree of Life' pattern?
16. Are there particular colours used in the pattern design?
17. Are there any particular trees chosen for the designs?
18. How has the 'Tree of Life' developed over the centuries and been represented in textiles in China?
19. Do the patterns have any special meanings?

In addition Interviewee A was asked about 'Tree of Life' patterns in the Yellow River Basin region of China. The aim was to compare 'Tree of Life' patterns there with those in the South Western region in order to better understand how cultures affect design style.

The Yellow River basin was chosen as is a very different area to the South Western region where Yunnan province is. It is located in the North of China and is the place in China where the earliest evidence of stable agricultural communities can be found. It is where most Chinese dynasties established their capitals and as such is associated with learning and sophisticated civilisations.

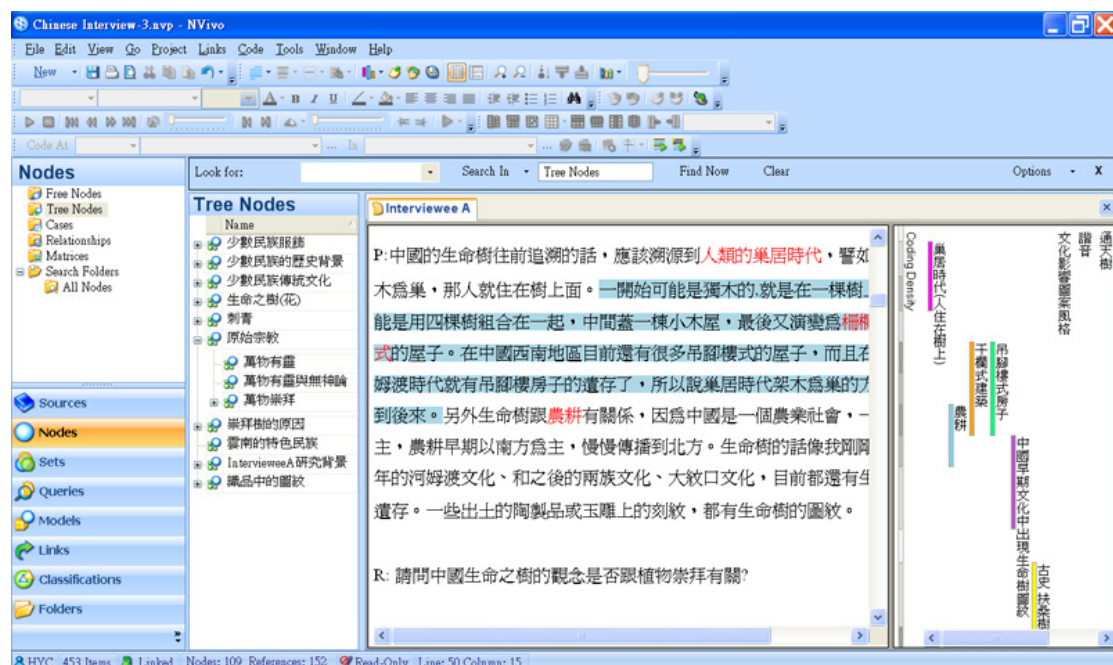
5.4 Data collection procedure

A copy of the interview guide was either emailed or faxed to the interviewees ahead of a face to face meeting. This contact was followed up by a telephone call to make any further necessary arrangements about meeting for the interview. In the interviews, interviewees were asked questions from the guide but in order to keep the conversation flowing without interruption the guide was not followed exactly (Bryman, 2004; Bell, 2005). The interviewees' responses were tape-recorded so that the interviews could be analysed in detail afterwards. All of the interviews were conducted in Chinese and then translated into English. Both the traditional Chinese and English transcriptions have been kept for further data analysis.

5.5 Data analysis

The data were analysed employing grounded theory. The digital recorded interviews were transcribed in a word processing application in order to make them text-based. Bryman (2004) indicates that the coding stage is the key process in grounded theory. The coding process was undertaken with the computer software NVivo (see Fig. 5.1). The transcripts were firstly imported into NVivo documents. The interviews were read through both in printed form and in NVivo documents to secure a sense of the whole story before line-by-line coding. Word coding was used to describe what was

happening in a particular fragment of data. Each similar passage of text was given a code name (free node) in order to generate concepts so that they can be retrieved for further analysis. (The term ‘node’ is used by NVivo for a code). These concepts were subsequently compared and coded with the appropriate label (tree nodes) to generate the categories. The whole process of data analysis was carried out in Chinese and finally presented in English. Bryman (2004) says that there will inevitably be some biases and prejudices in the analysis and interpretation process of textual data that are down to the researcher and their background. In addition the coding approach to qualitative data analysis of data sets (such as interview transcripts) requires the extraction of stretches of text from the data. This method results in fragmentation of data and gives rise to the problem of losing the narrative flow (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).



**Figure 5.1 The actual process of data analysis using NVivo.
(Screen shot from the author’s analysis).**

There were several interesting findings from this process of analysis. This chapter focuses on five categories related to the main emphasis of the study: 1. religion, 2. tree size and shape, 3. sacred trees, deity trees and ‘Trees of Life’, 4. the ‘Tree of Life’ pattern in traditional Chinese textiles, and 5. the current situation with regard to manufacture of traditional Chinese textiles. The findings are described as follows under these five category headings.

5.6 Interview findings

5.6.1 Religion

When the interviewees were asked about religions, most of them stated that in their tribes, only a few people considered themselves Christians or Buddhists; instead, most believed in a primitive religion. One interviewee said, “Primitive religion is a general phenomenon among minority tribes of Yunnan. Different tribes may have different faiths, but all of them believe in primitive religion”. One interviewee summed up his feelings this way:

“Once I got back to the Gongshan (Derung village), I reverted to that kind of thought [primitive religion] at once. I had been educated in the city; people told me that you should not believe in primitive religion, because there are no ghosts and gods, but I still believe it. This concept is hard to change.”

Most interviewees, despite their links with modern culture, still believe in very primitive religions in which all creatures have souls. One interviewee from the Derung tribe said:

“The Derung’s point of view is that everything in the whole universe is thought to have a soul. This idea is represented on our clothes. All things – including the sun, the moon, stars, the stone, the ice, trees, and the rivers – that exist in the world are thought to have souls for the Derung. The soul means they are all living; grass, for example, is thought to be living.”

Many interviewees said that all things in the world are sacred. As such objects such as mountains are still worshipped to this day. They stated that the god (in this case, the mountain) has to be treated with great respect and deference, for if the mountain is unhappy “the harvest will not be plentiful” and “livestock and people will not prosper either”.

5.6.2 Tree size and shape

When asked to explain why particular trees are worshipped, nearly all of the interviewees commented that a particular tree is worshipped due to its appearance and size. They explained the trees they worship are worshipped according to their appearance rather than the type or name of the tree. Many interviewees who were minority people described these trees as “old”, “flourishing”, “dense”, “very big”, “strong”, “firm and solid”, “sturdy”, “strange shape” and “mysterious”. Interviewee A commented that if a tree has a very strange shape the reason it is usually worshipped is because people feel there is a supernatural being that lives inside the tree. This idea is confirmed by another interviewee from the Hani tribe who stated, “We select a particular tree to worship because its shape is very strange. We consider this shape is due to a certain supernatural power controlling the tree, so we have to worship this tree.”

A number of the interviewees said that big or flourishing trees can “protect the village and family” and bring them “happiness”. They emphasised the size of the tree in that a huge tree, especially a luxuriant one, can bless and prosper families. One interviewee said, “A tree growing very well and it looks very luxuriant, I worship and offer sacrifices to it, hoping it bless my family with prosperity.”

Seven interviewees stated that there were very big trees within their villages. In discussing their feelings about the trees, interviewees' comments included: "this tree protects the village," "the tree protects local residents," "everybody regards this tree as a god," "the tree is a tree-god who guards the village". In addition, when describing these trees, some interviewees said that people were forbidden to touch, climb or cut them. One interviewee added that these trees were also called 'Fengshui (wind and water) trees' in China (see Fig. 5.2).



Figure 5.2 'Fengshui (wind and water) tree'.

(Photograph by Interviewee A).

That "the tree was thought to be god" was frequently mentioned by interviewees as one of the key reasons for worshipping trees. For most of the minority people interviewed, particular trees in their villages have been treated as a god and worshipped. One interviewee of the Miao tribe stated:

"There are no Mountain God temples or Taoist Earth God temples (Tudi Temples) in Miao villages, but there are big trees worshipped by residents of the village. The Han tribe attends worship in Mountain God temples, and Miao tribe worship trees."

Another interviewee added, "A sacred tree is often regarded as a god rather than the abode of the god." This finding indicates that many Chinese minority people worship trees due to the fact that they consider the tree itself to be a god.

Most interviewees said that tree-worship is still practiced in their villages. Trees would typically be worshipped “before hunting,” “before cutting down a tree,” and “when a child is ill”. As one interviewee from the Nakhi tribe said:

“If a child is ill and [we] do not know what kind of disease he has got, we will probably worship a tree. The tree we worship is very luxuriant, very strong and very stalwart. We burn joss sticks and then worship. This tradition has been passed on to us and we continue to practise it.”

Another interviewee stated that his villagers have to worship trees before cutting them:

“We think the soul of the tree is a spirit, so if you did not worship the tree before cutting down, the people in the village will fall ill and the village will die out. There was once a village that perished in this way....”

It is interesting to note that most of interviewees, despite being from different tribes, called the tree-worshipping activity ‘Ji Long’ which literally means ‘dragon worship’. According to them, a sorcerer takes charge of the worship, and women and non-local people are not allowed to participate. One interviewee described Ji Long as follows:

“There is a banyan within the village. The tree is very big. In February, when villagers begin to do farm work and hope for a substantial rainfall, they will kill pigs and sheep and then go to the banyan to perform a sacrifice. The Miao nationality holds such a ritual every year.”

One interviewee, from the Dai tribe, stated the peepul tree is regarded as a deity tree in the village, because it is associated with Hinayana Buddhism and mentioned in the Buddhist Scripture. This interviewee said:

“When people, especially old men, see a very big peepul tree, they will kneel down and kowtow because the tree is related to religion, that is, Hinayana Buddhism.”

The talipot palm is considered as sacred due to the fact that it has been frequently used in writing the sutra which are Buddhist texts (see Fig. 5.3, 5.4, 5.5).



Figure 5.3 Carving scripture.

(Photograph by the author from Nationalities Museum of Yunnan).



Figure 5.4 Dai's *pattra-leaf* scriptures.

(Photograph by the author from Nationalities Museum of Yunnan).



Figure 5.5 Detail of *pattra-leaf* scriptures.

(Photograph by the author from Nationalities Museum of Yunnan).

Although a significant number of interviewees mentioned tree worship, one interviewee from the Bai tribe remarked that his tribe have never worshipped trees:

“There is actually a big tree in our village, but nobody burns joss sticks or kowtows before the tree, we never do so.”

The study found that the concept of tree-worship was very frequently linked to ancestor worship in China. One interviewee, a member of the Nakhi tribe, said that a tree named ‘the supernatural tree of the mountain’ grows above ancestral graves, and people have to worship this tree before they worship their ancestors. When asked about the symbolism or meanings of this tree, the interviewee replied that the tree can “bless descendants”, “bring people happiness” and “protect a mountain”. Another interviewee, from the Yao tribe, described his experience in performing worship activity. He stated that thatches are bound together and offered to ancestors, these symbolise that the family is united: “The plant is used to link oneself and one’s ancestor together”.

When interviewees were asked if they hold rituals related to death near trees, Interviewee A suggested that in ancient times Chinese funerals were usually held in the woods and were mainly a simple burial (interment). In contrast, all the interviewees who were minority peoples said it was impossible to hold mortuary rituals near the tree. They said a sacred tree cannot be touched by anyone. People are not allowed to enter the area where the sacred tree is located except on special days of worship.

In this study, the concept of transmigration (the movement of a person's soul to another body or object after death) was found to be common among many Chinese minority cultures. A member of the Hain tribe described his own experience of attending a funeral service:

“... I remember that the spiritual leader in charge of the ritual reminding the dead to reincarnate when they chant scriptures. The dead may be reborn as animal, plant or human. They remind the dead to be reborn as human or animal, but not as a tree. If the dead are reborn as a tree they could be cut down.”

The concept of transmigration is often associated with flower-worship in China. According to one interviewee, the dead can be reincarnated if they get a flower from the ‘flower goddess’ (花靈聖母) who is in the ‘Holy Land of Flower’ (花靈聖關). Some interviewees said trees were frequently worshipped because of this. “This is the idea of ancestor and it has descended to our day”.

It is interesting to note that many interviewees indicated that trees that provide fruits for humans are not to be worshipped or, if they are it is not because they are fruit bearing that they are worshipped. One of the interviewees from the Dai tribe, said coconut palms and arecas are planted in every Dai villages but they are not be worshipped by the villagers. The reasons why people plant such trees are because “it looks lovely” and “its fruits can be eaten”.

Another interviewee from the Hain tribe commented:

“We also worship fruit trees, such as very big nut trees. It is because such trees have a certain meaning for us, so we worship and offer sacrifices to this tree...not because it is a fruit tree.”

When describing the reasons why trees are venerated, interviewees seldom pointed out that the trees were worshipped because they contain seeds. However, one interviewee said a tree is grown from seed and the seeds are worshipped by some minority people in China. ‘The Rice Eating Festival’ (吃新節), for example, refers to a day when the Miao tribe use seeds as offerings in ceremonies worshipping ancestors. One interviewee did talk about seed worship being related to fertility, “A seed functions in the sexual reproduction of a tree. One seed can become a tree and bear many fruits. This is a kind of fertility worship.”

From the interviews it was found that in Yunnan province trees are still worshipped and this is linked to primitive religions or legends. Trees worshipped are considered sacred for a variety of reasons. These include many of the key points identified in Chapter 2 including:

- the size and shape of the tree;
- trees linked to ancestor worship;
- trees considered as manifestations of gods or spirits;
- trees that offered protection (against misfortune and evil spirits);
- trees linked fertility (human fertility and creation or the fertility of land and growth of crops);
- trees linked to the birth and growth of children;
- trees linked to immortality and resurrection;
- trees linked to legends and folklore.

5.6.3 Sacred trees, deity trees and ‘Trees of Life’

Surprisingly, the research discovered that the term the ‘Tree of Life’ is not something the people interviewed understood many minority peoples to understand or use. When describing what comes to mind when they hear the term ‘Tree of Life’, they said, for example, “It is the first time I have heard this term” and “I have not heard before”. Interviewee A gave his own personal account of the difference between sacred tree and the ‘Tree of Life’:

“In general, Chinese people do not say a tree is sacred, [rather] we call it a deity tree. A deity tree ... refers to a particular tree. For example, the Miao tribe mainly worships Maple tree which is a deity tree for them...By contrast, the ‘Tree of Life’ in a broader sense, refers to older trees, or very tall, big and flourishing trees, or the trees have special meaning for a certain tribe.”

Despite this view such deity trees in China are clearly sacred trees and as such given the findings in Chapter 2 can indeed be considered as ‘Trees of Life’. Interviewee A also stated that in China the concept of a ‘Tree of Life’ is related to a tree house which can be traced back to the Youchaoshi (the person of Chinese legend who is considered to have invented the house). Ancient Chinese documents tell of the Youchaoshi using wood to make nests in trees for people to live in (Yang et al., 2005).

In the beginning people lived on a single tree. Then they combined four trees together and built a little wooden nest between (see Fig. 5.6). This interviewee also stated that:

“These wooden nests became Fence-style and Diaolou-style houses which currently can be found in China’s southern west area. The way of building wooden nests has been handed down since Youchaoshi.” (see Fig. 5.7 and 5.8)

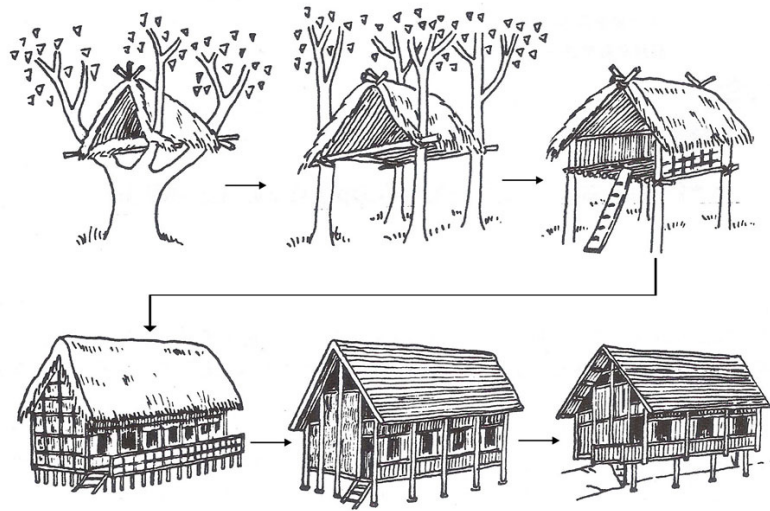


Figure 5.6 The evolution of Diaolou-style houses.
(Illustration given by Interviewee A).



Figure 5.7 and 5.8 The Diaolou-style houses of Dai ethnic minority in Yunnan.
(Photograph by the author).

The following table presents the results of the empirical study as to the main reasons why certain trees are worshipped in China.

Table 5.1 Each Chinese ethnic group that gave certain reasons for tree-worship.

Tribes	Trees	Reasons for worshipping the trees						
		Special shape or great size	Related to religion and legends	World creation	Human fertility and procreation and health of children	Manifestations of gods/spirits	Abundance of seed	Source of power, food, medicine, materials
Bai	No tree-worship							
Dai	Talipot palm		✓					
	Banyan (fig)	✓				✓		
	Peepul (fig)		✓			✓		
Derung	No particular tree type	✓				✓		
Hani	No particular tree type	✓				✓		
Miao	Banyan (fig)	✓				✓		
	Maple			✓				
Nakhi	Pomegranate						✓	
	Other trees	✓			✓	✓		
Yao	Galenical							✓
Zhuang	Breadfruit (Artocarpus altilis)	✓				✓		

5.6.4 The ‘Tree of Life’ pattern in traditional Chinese textiles Traditional patterns still used in the clothing worn by ethnic minorities

The second half of the interviews focused on the patterns in the traditional Chinese textiles found in the minority cultures of the interviewees. When asked about traditional patterns in textile design, “baby’s back towel” and “temple textiles” were most frequently quoted by interviewees.



Figure 5.9 Baby’s back towel.
(Photograph by Interviewee A).

Baby’s back towels are baby carriers made of fabric which securely carry babies on their mothers’ backs. One interviewee stated that baby’s back towels have the most traditional patterns as these will have been used by older brothers and sisters and will have been saved to be used again for younger brothers and sisters (see Fig. 5.9). When parents make these towels, they put a lot of effort into this. Often more effort is put into making these than is put into making dresses.

Another interviewee said the most original traditional patterns can be found in the textiles used as decoration in temples (see Fig. 5.10 and 5.11).



Figure 5.10 A ‘Tree of Life’ motif on handwoven Dai tribal cloth.



Figure 5.11 Traditional Dai tribal woven cloth.

(Photograph by the author from Dai Temple). (Photograph by the author from Dai Temple).

According to this empirical research the traditional patterns on clothes may be classified into five categories.

1. To keep away evil spirits and bring good fortune

The research found that minority peoples often weave into or embroider patterns on clothing in order to keep away evil spirits and to bring good fortune. One interviewee, who is one of the Nakhi people, stated that there are often frog patterns on traditional Nakhi clothing. The Nakhi is a relatively small tribe which lives near larger powerful tribes. To ensure their tribe continues it is important for them to have many children. As frogs lay lots of eggs the frog patterns are considered important in blessing the Nakhi with lots of children. The frog patterns represent a desire for many children and as such are linked to fertility worship.

Another interviewee from the Dai people said that the Dai people weave themes such as Buddhas and sacred plants or animals into fabrics, and then give these fabrics to temples in order to ensure good fortune.

2. As decoration

In contrast, some of those interviewed said the patterns on their clothes were mainly for decoration. They said that the traditional patterns on their clothing have meanings with regard to primitive religious worship, but these are worn now purely for the decorative nature of the patterns rather than any symbolic meaning.

3. To record important events

The traditional patterns embroidered into clothing are sometimes records of important historical events. One Miao interviewee explained: “There are no written words in my culture, so we keep a record of history by using patterns. These patterns have become a kind of national identity.”

Another interviewee from the Yao people stated that there were many symbolic patterns on their traditional clothing. Dots, for example, symbolise water and the dots on their traditional textiles signify that the Yao tribe once lived near water.

Many of the tribes in Yunnan province were once nomadic, that is they moved around the country according to the seasons; following the animals that they hunted and grazing for their herds. Some interviewees reported that the patterns on their traditional clothes showed the migration route of their tribes.

4. To represent everyday life

Some interviewees said that the patterns on their costumes were associated with their everyday lives. For example, one interviewee from the Derung people stated that the most characteristic feature of their costume was patterns consisting of three broad stripes. The stripes come from the three lines on the wild boars that they hunt. Additionally, other colourful striped patterns on Derung clothing imitate the colours of the rainbow. This interviewee stated that “Derung women see a rainbow that appears after rain. A rainbow has a lot of colours. They feel the colours of the rainbow are very beautiful, so they use them in weaving clothing.” (see Fig. 5.12).



Figure 5.12 Traditional woven clothing of the Derung tribe.
(Photograph by the author from Nationalities Museum of Yunnan).

5. To symbolically represent tribes

According to an interviewee from the Nakhi, people there often wear traditional dress with several stars and circles on the back. These patterns symbolise the diligence and hard work of the Nakhi people who get up at sunrise and do not down tools until the

moon rises. This suggests that some patterns on traditional dress may represent tribes. When asked the question “What is the meaning of the patterns for the craftspeople or artisans who make the textiles?” Interviewee A said that the people who make patterns have a deep understanding of them. They feel the more care and attention they take in making a pattern the more they will be blessed from making these. In contrast, however, most of the others interviewed said that people who embroider and weave the patterns may not know the meaning of patterns. They felt that people often learn pattern-making skills without knowing the original meanings of the patterns. Frequently they will be taught to imitate patterns made by their parents. One interviewee shared her experiences of interviewing local people:

“...I interviewed some local elders. Although they weave clothing every day, they knew absolutely nothing [about the meaning behind the patterns] when I interviewed them. They feel the patterns are beautiful and do not have other ideas. They look at how other people weave clothing and they weave clothing like that.”

Plant patterns

While trees are important elements of patterns in Chinese traditional textiles the interviews revealed that plant patterns were also very common with many minority tribes weaving or embroidering representations of local plants on their traditional clothing. The Huayao Dai people, for example, as well as embroidering flame trees and pear trees on their traditional costumes, will often have salvia plants embroidered on to these. Some interviewees pointed out that shapes of the trees and plants in woven patterns may well be different from the real trees and plants. The shapes are changed or transformed by those making the patterns. That is to say, the patterns come from the weaver’s imagination rather than being accurate reproductions.

It was found in these interviews that, as well as tree and plant images, flower images were also frequently used in their traditional clothing. According to one interviewee this may be related to the fact that the weaving of tree patterns is difficult. He noted:

“Tree-worship, for example, five trees of Buddhism have been worshipped by Dai in their daily life, and may be represented in drawing like a mural (see Fig. 5.13 and 5.14). But because of the limitation of the weaving technology they are rarely woven in Dai brocade.”



Figure 5.13 ‘Tree of Life’ patterns on the wall of a Dai Temple.

(Photograph by the author from Dai Temple).



Figure 5.14 ‘Tree of Life’ patterns on the wall of a Dai Temple.

(Photograph by the author from Dai Temple).

This interviewee also mentioned that “the limitations of the weaving process” influences the style of pattern. He said because of this most woven tree and plant patterns are abstract or geometric. “People know it [the pattern] is a flower, but do not know exactly what kind of flower it is”.

When interviewees were asked what types of flowers were used for the floral patterns responses included “Nobody exactly said what sort of flower” “It is very difficult to identify” and “We do not weave particular flowers on the dress”. One interviewee said that traditional Jino clothing reflects their primitive religious ideas. The evidence they cited for this is the flower-like pattern on the back of Jino clothing. The shape of the pattern is like the Sun, that is, there is a circle in the middle of the pattern with many radial lines around the circle. According to local villagers the pattern is called ‘the sun flower’ or ‘the moon flower’ (see Fig. 5.15 and 5.16).



Figure 5.15 and 5.16 Jino tribe ‘the sun (moon) flower’ pattern.
(Photograph by the author from Nationalities Museum of Yunnan).

In contrast, many interviewees stated that some tree and plant images on the clothing are used as purely decorative motifs “The flower does not have meaning for me, it is just beautiful”, “There are many plant patterns on my dress. They are decorative patterns rather than a symbolic representation of plant worships”.

What characterises a pattern as being a ‘Tree of Life’ pattern?

An important finding that came out from these interviews was that most Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns were embroidery, printing or batik rather than weaving.

Interviewee A has a collection of many textiles from minority peoples and the main themes in these textiles are ‘Tree of Life’ and other related patterns. Two of the other interviewees explained that while ‘Tree of Life’ patterns were not widely used in woven textiles, such as Dai brocades, because of the limitations of the weaving process already stated these were however frequently seen in handicrafts such as paper cuts and carvings (see Fig. 5.17 and 5.18).

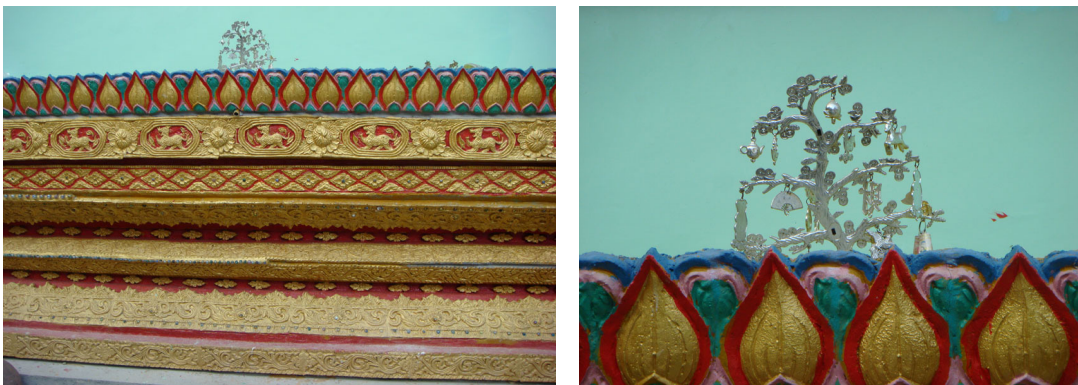


Figure 5.17 and 5.18 The ‘Tree of Life’ is an important element of traditional art and craft in China.

(Photograph by the author from Dai Temple in Xishuang-Banna of Yunnan).

Interviewee A was questioned in depth about Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in textiles and his collection of patterned textiles were photographed by the author. Analysis of the patterns is given later in this chapter and in appendices 3-7. Interviewee A stated that tree patterns appear in many areas of China, including Yun-Nan, Guizhou, Hun-Nan and Guang-Xi. He further stated that the style and colour of the ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in the Yellow River Basin and the South Western Region are very different.

The Yellow Basin area of China is very different to the South Western region of China and Table 5.2 shows the differences in the patterns from the two regions. Interviewee A said that the main influence on the different styles was that “different tribes worship different kind of trees”. Additionally he felt culture was another major influence that makes the style and colour of the patterns different. As he explained:

“Yellow River area is prairie culture. The patterns in this area are rough, masculine, and straight forward... patterns are simpler, that is, people tend to use very simple patterns to express a certain meaning, and often use red as the basic tone. The South Western area belongs to an agricultural culture. Patterns are more modest, feminine, and thoughtful... Basically Southern patterns are multi-meaning, the styles are multiple. Colours are usually green, black and other dark tones.”

Table 5.2 The main differences of the pattern designs between the Yellow River Basin and the South Western Region.

Yellow River Basin	South Western Region
The styles of the ‘Tree of Life’ are mostly symmetrical.	The styles of the ‘Tree of Life’ are mostly circular.
The structure of the pattern of the ‘Tree of Life’ is simple and clear.	The structure of the pattern of the ‘Tree of Life’ is complex (mostly formed by geometric patterns).
Colours used are brighter.	Colours used are stronger and darker.
The woven embroidery base cloth has many colours.	The woven embroidery base cloth is mostly black (forming a strong contrast).








When describing the common features of the ‘Tree of Life’ pattern in these two areas, Interviewee A said that the patterns reveal two significant characteristics which he called ‘synthetic’ and ‘surreal’. Synthetic refers to a mixed style design. That is to say, the ‘Tree of Life’ is combined with humans, sacred animals, and objects such as the sun or vases. The ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in the surreal style are “pomegranates, peaches, and other flowers on the same tree”. He further mentioned that the Chinese









‘Tree of Life’ pattern has become more complex as it has developed. He stated that:

“In the beginning the ‘Tree of Life’ patterns were very simple patterns. The patterns become more and more complex and later other patterns and ideas were added. In the early days most ‘Trees of Life’ were pomegranates, and then peaches and lotus flowers. The patterns that appeared in later times are combined with other patterns related to life.”










When asked about what particular plants and colours were chosen for designs, Interviewee A stated that the plants selected frequently contain many seeds, such as a pomegranate (image 3-03, 3-07, 3-09, 5-13, 5-14, 5-15, 6-03, 6-06, 6-08, 7-12), melon (image 3-01, 3-02, 3-22, 5-09, 6-07, 7-01, 7-06, 7-08, 7-09, 7-13) and lotus flower (image 3-09, 3-21, 7-02, 7-05, 7-07, 7-11, 7-14), or the plants themselves are related to particular meanings such as a chayote (image 3-03, 5-14), cassia (image 7-10), calabash (image 5-15), Chinese date (image 7-10) and peach (image 3-03, 3-19, 5-06, 5-14, 5-15, 6-03, 6-05, 7-03). Based on information from Interviewee A and the analysis of the patterns presented in Appendices 3-7, Table 5.3 summarises the plants and their symbolic meaning in China. This table indicates that eight specific plants are most frequently chosen for the ‘Tree of Life’ design. The interpretation of the images in Table 5.3 is described in detail in Appendices 3-7.

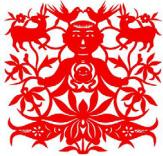







Table 5.3 Plants chosen for ‘Tree of Life’ designs and their symbolic meaning.

Tree/plant	Num.	Patterns	Symbolic Meanings
Cassia	7-10		<p>The Chinese word for Cassia (<i>gui</i> 桂) serves as a pun on the word for ‘noble’ (<i>gui</i> 貴).</p>
Calabash (type of vine)	5-15		<p>Calabash is pronounced like the words for <i>fu</i> 福 (‘blessings’ or ‘happiness’) and <i>Lu</i> 祿 (literally, ‘official salary’).</p>
Chayote	3-03		<p>The name is pronounced like the words for ‘blessings’ or ‘happiness’ (<i>fu</i> 福).</p>
	5-14		
Chinese date	7-10		<p>Date and ‘early’ (<i>zao</i> 早) are near homonyms. The word suggests the expression ‘May you have lovely children’.</p>
Lotus flower	3-09		<p>Lotus flower has a lot of seeds, which symbolises many children.</p>
	3-21		

	7-02		
	7-05		
	7-07		
	7-11		
	7-14		
Melon	3-01		<p>The melon has a lot of seeds.</p> <p><i>Shijing</i> 詩經 (the Book of Songs) mentioned that ‘continuous melon’ means prosperous posterity.</p>
	3-02		
	3-22		

	5-09		
	6-07		
	7-01		
	7-06		
	7-08		
	7-09		
	7-13		
Peach	3-03		Peach is symbolic of long life in Chinese tradition.

	3-19		
	5-06		
	5-14		
	5-15		
	6-03		
	6-05		
	7-03		
Pomegranate	3-03		Pomegranates contain many seeds, which symbolises many children.
	3-07		

3-09		
5-13		
5-14		
5-15		
6-03		
6-06		
6-08		
7-12		

Additionally, Chinese ‘Trees of Life’ can be grouped according to social class. The peony was usually chosen by emperors to symbolise wealth and social position while pomegranates, peaches, chayotes, calabashes, and lotus flowers were chosen by the common people. In terms of specific colours used in the pattern designs, yellow, pink, pink-green or pink-yellow were often used by emperors. Green, white, red, black and yellow which are called the ‘Five Element Colours’ in China, were normally used in folk patterns. In addition, Interviewee A pointed out that red is the colour of blood, which symbolises life, and as such it is the most popular colour used by both the common people and emperors.

The symbol and meaning of ‘Tree of Life’ patterns


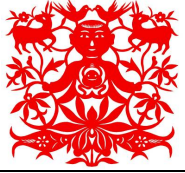








According to Interviewee A, there are two main meanings for Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns. The most important one is to ensure fertility. Plants that contain many seeds are believed to be symbolic of many children and fertility. In addition, a tree is frequently combined with specific objects related to fertility, such as a vase (image 3-06, 3-07, 3-08, 3-11), mouse (image 3-02, 3-15, 7-01), frog (image 3-09, 7-04) or fish (image 3-09, 3-24, 6-05, 7-02, 7-05), to emphasise the importance of productivity. The patterns frequently combined with ‘Trees of Life’ are presented in Table 5.4. This table was developed based on information from Interviewee A and the analysis of his collection of patterns which are shown in full in Appendices 3-7. In all nine specific objects were found to be frequently combined with ‘Trees of Life’ (see Table 5.4).











The second meaning is immortality. The Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ often relates to the worship of life, which generally refers to longevity (long life) and immortality (eternal life). Interviewee A added that Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns may simultaneously represent both fertility worship and immortality.

Table 5.4 Symbols added to the ‘Tree of Life’ pattern.

Symbols	Num.	Patterns	Meanings
Child	3-21		Fertility
	3-22		
	7-05		
	7-07		
	7-09		
	7-10		
	7-14		
Butterfly	3-01		The mother of humankind
	3-19		

	3-26		
	5-10		
	6-01		
	6-02		
	6-08		
	7-01		
	7-06		
	7-15		
Mouse	3-02		God of children; fertility
	3-15		

	7-01		
Fish	3-09		Fertility (fish lay many eggs)
	3-24		
	6-05		
	7-02		
	7-05		
Vase	3-06		The mother's body; fertility
	3-07		
	3-08		
	3-11		

Monkey	7-03		Male
Frog	3-09		Fertility
	7-04		
A pair of birds	3-08		Male and female
	3-17		
	5-07		
	6-03		
Ancient money	3-10		Yin and Yang (the former feminine and negative, the latter masculine and positive); fertility
	3-12		
	3-13		

5.6.5 The current situation with regard to manufacture of traditional Chinese textiles

The minority peoples who participated in the interviews generally reported that traditional textiles and dress are often ignored by local people now. The research uncovered several important factors influencing the heritage of traditional Chinese textiles.

The Han culture and globalisation

The Han Chinese make up 92% of the population of China and are the largest ethnic group in the world. The Han culture itself is very old and is the longest lasting civilization in history. The Han language, commonly referred to as Mandarin Chinese, has been the official language of China since the Qin Dynasty around 221 BCE and is the most widely spoken language in the world.

Many of the interviewees stated that the Han culture has penetrated and influenced their lifestyle and cultures. Clothes were cited as an example with most interviewees saying they wore Western dress, such as jackets, jeans, shirts and leather shoes, in everyday life. Traditional dress is worn only for weddings and special occasions or for dance performances put on for tourists. One interviewee said:

“In my village, some older women may wear traditional clothing. The clothing they wear is the plain, light blue double-breasted jacket. Nowadays, traditional patterned clothes are worn for festivals or when giving a performance, but not every day.”

Another interviewee stated that the patterns which young people have embroidered on their clothing are modern, with phrases such as “I love you”. Another significant change to patterns is colour. Three interviewees stated that there were only a few

colours in traditional patterns because of the limited number of plant dyes that could be used. Nowadays, traditional plant dyes have been replaced by artificial dyes, so there are many more colours in textiles.

In addition, globalisation means that traditional techniques and processes are no longer handed down from generation to generation. The interviewees generally reported that patterns became simplified and geometric. The most likely cause of this change is that the traditional technical skills have not been passed down. The research found that young people's decisions not to learn traditional crafts was that they felt this would be difficult and demanding. One interviewee commented that it is very difficult to earn a living through making traditional things: "This generation is living a very poor life, and so the next generation is unwilling to learn traditional skills".

Tourism

A number of interviewees said tourism has brought about many changes in their lives and cultures. Wool is being substituted for the linen thread traditionally used in order to commercialise traditional textiles. Traditional textiles being sold to tourists may mean that locals are unable to get hold of these. According to some of the interviewees, typical traditional clothing or textiles can not only be found in some very remote districts or in museums such as Nationalities Museum of Yunnan. One interviewee said:

"You could not find typical traditional dress in some local villages. If you ask me, "Where can I find typical traditional clothing in Dali?" I really cannot answer you. Because I am not sure people in Dali can make typical traditional dress..."

In discussing their feelings about the situation that their traditional cultures are affected by the Han culture or tourism, most interviewees said it is very difficult, even impossible, to keep traditional cultures because “cultural integration and cultural change are the inexorable trend”, “this is an irresistible trend of the times”. Also mentioned was “the development of economic need for foreign exchange”. One interviewee suggested:

“In my opinion, it may be good that we pay much attention to some things, but we are unable to change the world development trend. People may misunderstand other national lifestyles and customs if they have no exchange and communication with each other.”

Another interviewee commented that minority cultures could be preserved if they were treated equally. That means the ethnic minority cultures should be regarded as having equal, and autonomous, status as the predominant Han culture. Furthermore, he felt that a culture could not be changed immediately: “We accept global culture, but at the same time we do not forget our cultural traditions.”

One interviewee from the Dai tribe and a manager of the cultural bureau in Yunnan Cultural Institute stated that while the bureau has had a plan to preserve traditional arts and crafts for the last two years, she found local people pay little attention to keeping up their cultures and traditions. She said, “Many local people said they are too busy to collect their traditional handicrafts, only some painters and artists have collected such things”. In addition, young people no longer care about their traditional culture and their knowledge of cultural arts and crafts is poor. This interviewee pointed out that instead young people feel that they need to learn new things and follow current trends in society.

Traditional patterns and contemporary design

In the discussion of traditional patterns used in contemporary design, all the interviewees agreed that there was a need for traditional patterns in modern textile design, because: “people must look back to old cultures”, “it is a way of inheriting traditions”, “traditional patterns combined with fashionable elements will be more valuable patterns”, “new patterns (designs) will have more humanistic and cultural values”, and “the designs can be used for tourism”. Additionally, the research found that traditional cultural elements were rarely used in modern designs in China. One interviewee suggested that:

“The application of traditional elements in designs is very rare now. But I feel this is a very good idea, because minority people have developed over many years, and there are many concepts such as aesthetic standards and perhaps philosophy of life in traditional patterns. New designs will be very innovative if designers incorporate traditional cultural elements into modern designs. The use of traditional elements in designs can be extremely valuable from both a commercial and an academic viewpoint.”

One interviewee described his experience in evaluating architectural design competitions in Xishuangbanna, which asked designers to design buildings with cultural features. He found that young designers can draw modern buildings well, but do not know how to integrate traditional cultural elements into their designs. Some designers had no real understanding of the culture of Xishuangbanna: “They combined cultural elements from other areas into a new building design. The building really looks weird to me”. He suggested that traditional patterns could be compiled into a visual library and used as a reference for designers. When discussing methods of re-creating traditional patterns another interviewee suggested that the designers should have an in-depth understanding of “religion, traditional culture, custom, the history of tribe and the meaning of the pattern”.

Another interviewee suggested that new pattern designs used in modern garments should not use more than 20% traditional elements, with 80% being new ideas. He suggested designers could combine patterns from different regions of China and use multiple techniques, such as mixing embroidery with batik. This interviewee emphasised that new pattern designs should be ‘simple, abstract, interesting or narrative’. He further mentioned that Chinese historical stories and songs could be an inspirational source for designs.

Two interviewees explained that people who are familiar with a culture will know the source of a new design if elements of traditional patterns are used in the new design. One interviewee described his feeling in travelling to a Thai market, which was selling embroidered textiles whose inspiration came from Miao textiles:

“I knew the original patterns when I saw the new designs. I felt very surprised. These are quite common and ordinary things to me, but they become so attractive when altered slightly in Thailand.”

5.7 Summary

This chapter has attempted to investigate in detail the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China to answer the third research objective. Fieldwork in the South Western region of China used semi-structured interviews to gather information about the origin and concept of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China, and the ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in textiles in China.

It was found that most minority tribes in Yunnan province in China still believe in primitive religion. For many tribes all objects are considered to have souls and tree-worship and other rituals are still practiced to this day. The tree-worshipping

activity is called Ji Long (dragon worship) in China and Chinese minority peoples still worship trees before hunting, before cutting down a tree, and when a child is ill. In addition, there are some very big trees within villages which are considered to have magic powers to protect the village and local residents.

The research in China identified several reasons for identifying a tree as sacred or a 'Tree of Life' including: 1. the tree has special shape or great size; 2. the tree is associated with religious legends; 3. the individual tree is considered to be a god; 4. the tree is related to seed worship. One unanticipated finding was that the term 'Tree of Life' was not a term really used by the minority people interviewed. However, one interviewee defined the Chinese 'Tree of Life' as referring to older trees, very tall, big and flourishing trees, or trees that have special meaning for a certain tribe.

The religious idea of tree-worship is represented in traditional Chinese textile and clothing and is related to praying for blessings or for fertility. The 'Tree of Life' pattern is an important theme in traditional Chinese textiles. Chinese 'Tree of Life' patterns are associated with fertility worship, longevity (long life) and immortality (eternal life). They are frequently combined with sacred animals and vases to emphasise the idea of fertility. If a tree has many seeds or if it is linked to immortality then it is considered sacred and as such can be classed as a 'Tree of Life'. The style and colour of the 'Tree of Life' patterns in the Yellow River Basin and the South Western Region are different. However, according to the findings of this study, synthetic and surreal are two common features of the 'Tree of Life' pattern in these two areas.

The research found that apart from traditional Chinese motifs being used in traditional textiles, traditional cultural elements are rarely used. It found that the traditional textiles and dress of the Chinese minority ethnic groups are considered to be gradually disappearing due to globalisation, the subsuming of minority cultures by the dominant Han culture and the development and spread of tourism. It was felt that many minority people do not feel any need to preserve or conserve traditional textiles and clothing. All the interviewees felt that it would be good to use traditional cultural elements in contemporary designs as a way of ensuring traditions continue. It was also felt that traditional patterns could be integrated and reinterpreted into modern designs. The collection of Chinese 'Tree of Life' patterns presented in author's photographs in Appendices 3-7 are considered a good source for ideas for fashion textiles.

CHAPTER 6

An investigation into the use of traditional imagery for the Taiwanese fashion textile market

6.1 Introduction

A key objective of this research is to investigate the potential use of traditional Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market (research objective 4). Chapter 5 established through interviews in the South Western region of mainland China the importance of ‘Tree of Life’ patterns while Chapter 3 established through a literature review how traditional patterns from the past are frequently used to inform contemporary patterns. This chapter investigates through a series of semi-structured interviews carried out in Taiwan whether traditional Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns could be adapted for fashion textile designs for today’s market. Interviewees were first asked about the current fashion and textile industry in Taiwan. As findings suggested a move from mass-production, also investigated was how digital textile printing might be used for translating traditional patterns.

6.2 The interviewees

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for the reasons already outlined in Chapter 5 (see pages 166-167). Again the sample for this fieldwork was chosen purposively rather than randomly to ensure that interviewees would have a good understanding of the research topic.

A total of nineteen semi-structured interviews were carried out from December 2007 to January 2008. Participants were selected on the basis of their experience of working in the fields of fashion and textiles. Participants included three textile designers, six managing directors from textile companies (textile digital printing companies, screen-printing companies and a fashion magazine company), one retailer, and nine educators who lecture on clothing, textiles design and other fashion-related courses in Fu Jen University, Sinjhuang, Taipei County, Taiwan. Fu Jen is a well-established university with a highly regarded art and design faculty. Full details of the interviewees are given in Appendix 1.

6.3 Interview questions

As semi-structured interviews were used one of the first things was to identify a guide as to what particular issues would be covered. The interview guide included 21 main questions. These questions were developed after the literature review which investigated fashion adoption and design process (Chapter 3).

Part I. *What is the current state of and what are the future trends for the Taiwanese fashion industry and market?*

1. What is your view on the current fashion market in Taiwan?
2. In your opinion how has the Taiwanese fashion industry developed and changed?
3. In your opinion, how can the Taiwanese traditional fashion industry be developed in order to enhance its position in a competitive global market?
4. Do you think Taiwanese fashion textiles in concept and style are influenced by Chinese traditional culture?

5. How do you see the Taiwanese fashion and textile industry developing in the future?

Part II. *Can the use of traditional imagery enhance contemporary fashion and textiles?*

6. How do you see tradition and culture affecting the type of fashion textile designs being produced? What other factors affect fashion textile designs?
7. Do you think that traditional Chinese imagery is suitable for modern textile and clothing? Why do you agree or disagree?
8. Do you think there is a market for traditional Chinese imagery in Taiwan?
9. In your opinion, how can elements of traditional imagery best be used?
10. Do you think colour is an important aspect of the fashion textile designs? Why do you agree or disagree?
11. If you were to use traditional imagery to inspire any fashion textile design would you use traditional colours or recolour? Why?
12. Do you think the choice of fabrics is an important aspect of pattern design? Why?
13. Would you express the original meaning of any imagery in any new design?
14. Do you have any further comments?

Part III. *The views of designers and the managers of textile industry on digital textile printing.*

15. Please give your opinions on digital textile printing.
16. What do you consider to be the current situation with regard to digital textile printing in Taiwan?

17. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges for digital textile printing when adapting designs originally produced by traditional textile printing processes? How would you overcome any challenges?
18. What factors do you see as important in influencing the development of digital textile printing in Taiwan?
19. Are you aware of any designers using digital textile printing to produce fashion textile designs featuring traditional Chinese motifs?
20. If traditional imagery is used, what type of products is this mainly used for?
21. Are you aware of any designers/companies mixing digital printing with craft techniques in any way?

6.4 Data collection procedure

Based on the responses of the participants the areas of questioning and the topics were expanded. This ability to question more deeply is one of the advantages of using semi-structured interviews. Such a flexible interview process allowed interview questions to be adjusted as appropriate in response to what the interviewees considered most significant. In addition, the interviewees were allowed to talk about what they felt was important. All of the interviews are conducted in Mandarin, the first language of both the author and the interviewees. The interviews were all tape-recorded to allow responses to be analysed later. The interviews were first of all transcribed in Mandarin, when this was completed the transcriptions were translated into English.

6.5 Data analysis

Grounded theory was used to analyse the data collected from interviews. A clear discussion of the grounded theory approach to the analysis of data, the software used and a step by step account of the data analysis was explained fully in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.5). As stated in Chapter 5 unavoidable bias and prejudices of the researcher will inevitably have a bearing on the way in which textual data is interpreted and analysed (Bryman, 2004). The findings were as follows.

6.6 Current and future trends for the Taiwanese fashion industry

6.6.1 Views on the current fashion market in Taiwan

When the interviewees were asked their views on the current fashion market in Taiwan, the majority of interviewees felt that Taiwan did not have its own fashion style, and followed rather than set trends. One interviewee stated that Taiwan could not become a fashion centre in East Asia because of “the geographical location of Taiwan”. She said “Geographically, Taiwan is in the east of Asia, we are close to two big cities - Tokyo and Beijing. It seems impossible for Taiwan to become a high fashion centre in the East Asia. Taiwan does not have geographic advantage”.

However, one interviewee felt Taiwan did have a style of its own. She thought this was an individualistic style for craft textiles but that this was a small market. Another interviewee held the view that Taiwan’s fashion style was being developed slowly and that it was not mature yet.

In discussing fashion adoption by Taiwanese customers, two interviewees pointed out that Taiwanese people do not easily accept new fashions. One interviewee, a retailer, felt that although Taiwanese people were able to get fashion information quickly, they adopted new fashions slowly. She noted that:

“Most of my customers do not wear clothes in new styles until they see pop stars or many people on the street doing so. I noticed that although consumers like more unusual designs, when making decisions to buy clothes, they are only really willing to buy plain or modest clothes.”

The interviews found that where people lived was a very important factor with regard to fashion adoption in Taiwan. According to most interviewees, people who live in the north of Taiwan get fashion information before those people who live in the middle and southern region of Taiwan. This was felt to be because there are many large department stores in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan which is in the north. These stores promote leading edge fashion trends and provide space for young and innovative designers to show their work. Stores like these are rarely found in the south of Taiwan.

One interviewee also talked about customers from different regions having different spending habits. She said people living in Taipei regularly go to department stores to shop, however, those living in Tainan (in the south) rarely go to department stores except in the holiday sales season: “They go to department stores for window-shopping rather than purchasing”. Another interviewee stated when people from the south visit Taipei they are willing to buy fashion items, because they see the fashion products sold in Taipei as very fashionable products. She said:

“Customers from the south region of Taiwan believed things in Taipei were fashionable. They usually accepted the higher price and did not beat down the price. Consumers living in Taipei have more fashion information and choices, so they are usually good at beating down the prices of products.”

One interviewee who was a fashion retailer said she had started offering clothing at rock-bottom prices. She had found that consumers had become much more inclined to purchase cheaper fashions during the recession.

Other important factors mentioned by interviewees as having an influence on buying habits and preferences included climate, mass media (magazines and TV), educational background, income, age, gender, personality, social class, aesthetic perception, and shop atmosphere. One interviewee even mentioned the constellations as having an impact on buying behaviour.

6.6.2 Developments in the Taiwanese fashion industry

A number of interviewees felt that the industry was now in decline, having been a very important area economically for Taiwan over the past 40 years. One interviewee said:

“I feel the current fashion industry of Taiwan can hardly see a new atmosphere (scene)...Some fashion companies have still sold clothes very well, but I feel the current Taiwanese fashion industry is not progressing compared with the past.”

Just over a third of the interviewees (7/19) mentioned that Taiwanese textile mills manufactured fabrics according to textile samples designed by foreign designers, with most textile and apparel factories having transferred to other countries such as mainland China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. They explained this situation was because the cost of labour in Taiwan was too high, and that the global textile and fashion market was mainly about cheaper products at the lower end of the market. An interviewee who is manager of a textile company said:

“The Taiwanese fashion industry has moved to mainland China or other developing countries, because many low-cost labourers are needed in order to

cope with the demand of developed countries for fashionable but cheap products. They moved their existing equipment to other developing countries and looked for low-cost labourers to mass-produce products for developed countries.”

Several interviewees 42% (8/19) spoke about designers and textile companies having minimal government support and that they had to work extremely hard to keep their businesses viable. They said that Taiwan’s government rarely invested in the fashion industry. One interviewee said:

“Our business could be increased if the government implements large-scale promotions like Thailand or Singapore, to advance the fashion industry. It is a shame that the government does not invest a large sum of money in fashion industry. Most companies attend exhibitions by themselves, and all funding is also borne by themselves.”

Three interviewees pointed out that due to economic constraints, Taiwanese fashion designers usually used existing textile fabrics in their designs: “they do not have enough money to design the textiles they need”.

6.6.3 Positioning the traditional Taiwanese fashion industry in a competitive global market

Textile companies are aware that they cannot compete on price alone and so they have started to invest in design. Approximately 37% (7/19) of interviewees said that many Taiwanese textile companies have started to establish design departments with in-house designers who can offer foreign clients new and original designs. A manager of an embroidery company explained that designs are now developed in Taiwan, but with the production being mass-produced in mainland China. Another interviewee added that most design departments were currently unprofitable, and that these have to be supported by the factories mass-producing other peoples’ designs.

6.6.4 The influence of traditional Chinese culture on Taiwanese fashion textiles

The typical response was “no” or “very little”. Only 10% (2/19) of the interviewees felt that the style of Taiwanese fashion and textiles were influenced by Chinese culture. However about a third of interviewees stated that Japanese fashion has had a great effect on Taiwanese fashion and textile design. The main reason mentioned by interviewees was that “Taiwan was governed by Japan”. One interviewee who is a fashion designer said:

“Taiwanese fashion is inclined to be Japanese in style. Because Taiwan was ruled by Japan, much of what is produced is based on Japanese styles. Most Japanese style designs are modified from western design ideas. That is, the style of clothing is altered somewhat.”

Approximately 42% (8/19) of interviewees reported that European fashion had a significant influence on Taiwanese fashion and textile design. They stated that Taiwanese fashion followed the latest international fashion trends due to “go[ing] abroad”, “the establishment of department stores”, “fashion magazines”, and the “internet”. In addition 21% (4/19) of the interviewees commented that many Taiwanese consumers loved famous European brands such as LV and Burberry. One interviewee stated:

“During the golden age of the economy in Taiwan, many foreign brands were imported. Even average consumers had a chance to learn of those international brands. Many people have enough money to buy those imported, high class branded products.”

6.6.5 The future of the Taiwanese fashion and textiles industry

According to interviewees, a new trend in the current Taiwanese fashion market is towards customisation, small quantities and elaborate products. One interviewee noted that “a small domestic market in Taiwan” and “the import of low-priced merchandise from foreign countries” were important driving factors. She explained that some fashion companies are not able to make profits from mass production, and so instead they were moving to producing small numbers of highly creative products.

Approximately 26% (5/19) of interviewees stated that many Taiwanese textile companies aimed to establish their own brands because they were aware that just manufacturing for other brands was not economically sustainable. A manager of a textile company suggested that the Taiwanese fashion and textile industry had to create own-label products for them to become fashion leaders in the global market. However, one interviewee pointed out that the development of own-label brands required large sums of money to be invested.

It was considered important that any direct imitation of foreign designs should be avoided. One interviewee suggested that:

“Manufacturers in Taiwan should let designers develop their ideas to create a new image for their own-label products rather than imitate foreign designs... I feel some Taiwanese fashion and textile managers who have this idea are willing to make the investment in designing. They give designers ... the opportunity to present their own ideas in order to create company’s own unique brand value in the global market.”

Another interviewee said that own-brand products not only needed developing and designing but also required to be marketed and the process itself needs to be managed. She reported that many textile manufacturers have no idea what consumers want, how

to promote their own-label ranges, how to price their products and even how to distribute the products, due to the fact that they have only mass-produced textiles in the past.

Two of the interviewees gave opinions on marketing strategies for Taiwanese own-label products. They suggested that manufacturers should develop their brands in mainland China rather than Taiwan, because the market in China is much larger, and people on mainland China feel that fashion in Taiwan is ahead of that in China. Taiwanese brands that have a good image and marketing strategy may therefore have a good chance of success in China.

Three interviewees stated that the Taiwanese textile industry should concentrate on developing technical textiles and specialist fibres in order to enhance competitiveness in global markets. One interviewee suggested developing eco-friendly fabrics which fitted in with international trends. He stated although the price of eco-friendly fabrics can be much higher many international fashion designers during the last two years have used new eco-friendly fabrics to help maintain a positive brand image.

One interviewee said Taiwanese textile manufacturers could survive in a competitive global market if they developed global businesses. She noted that:

“I heard many bosses who made speeches in our department. They said that they need studios in Europe, France and England as their guideline for fashion trends. But they need a company in New York which would receive orders. They also need an office in Taiwan to follow their productions. They have different supervisors in charge of the different production teams in different locations.”

Another interviewee who managed an embroidery company, said that the situation is less positive for smaller domestic textile and garment manufacturers and that further development of the Taiwanese textile industry should be based on cooperative groups of textile companies working together along the supply chain. Such integrated operations would benefit all the companies involved and reduce costs. He felt that this is the best way to enhance the international competitiveness of the Taiwanese textile industry.

One interviewee revealed a strong need for industry and university collaboration. She felt that university education is criticised for being too slow to respond to changes in the fashion and textile industry and as such is not meeting the needs of industry. A further criticism is that textile equipment in universities is not as up to date that used by industry. This interviewee thought it would be a good thing if the fashion industry and universities were involved in cooperative activities which would be mutually beneficial, such as factory visits and product development.

One interviewee also noted that the government was beginning to invest more in design as people's living standards improved and design was becoming more important. The government was also focussing on design to promote tourism in Taiwan. Many universities had expanded their design departments to cope with a growing demand for designers because of this. This interviewee also suggested that the future development of the fashion industry in Taiwan should be a tripartite collaboration between industry, academia and government.

6.7 The use of traditional imagery to enhance contemporary fashion and textiles in Taiwan

6.7.1 The affect of tradition and culture on fashion textile designers

The government's development plan for the cultural and creative industry in Taiwan was an important issue raised during the interview sessions. Many interviewees stated that the cultural and creative industry has thrived in recent years in Taiwan with the government making significant investment. According to the interviewees, the plan was to encourage the development of Taiwan's local cultures, such as Taiwanese aboriginal culture (the Taiwan aborigines are the indigenous people of Taiwan) and Hakka culture, and to preserve the Chinese culture and heritage which has been integrated into Taiwanese culture since the 6th century when the Han Chinese emigrated from the south-coast provinces of China to Taiwan. Elements from such cultures can be used to stimulate designers' inspiration to create products with rich cultural connotations.

Some interviewees mentioned that the use of traditional patterns in modern design should be done with an awareness of the market being designed for. One interviewee stated that products with rich cultural connotations were appropriate for the purpose of tourism however, products for sale to fashion markets have to acknowledge the latest fashion trends rather than cultural meaning. She said:

“There are many workshops in Taiwan which are selling products related to aboriginal cultures. The design of the fabric is very simple, but they will tell you that this rhombus pattern is an eye of their ancestors' soul. They might tell you a story. It is okay if this fabric is for tourists. But fabric for the fashion industry needs to have more fashion elements and become more fashionable looking; they are already too far from their original cultures. You cannot create modern fashioned designs unless you set the cultural element apart.”

Six interviewees pointed out that a designer's own cultural background deeply influenced their textile designs. One interviewee emphasised that ideas for an original design must come from the "inner workings of a designer's mind", which relate to their life experience or background. She commented that "I feel that anything that has ever existed in your heart transferred by you into a design is a good design".

When interviewees were asked what factors affected textile design, over half of the interviewees felt that fashion trends influenced the styles of textile designs. They considered textile designers should be aware of the latest fashion trends. Two interviewees considered textile designs as merchandise rather than works of art. One interviewee who managed textile company, noted:

"A buyer selecting your fabric means your design is successful. It is not enough just to create innovative design. If a designer ignores fashion trends, their work is a very artistic and personal style, and such work is what a designer likes rather than what the market or customers like."

Five interviewees felt that it was important to consider the end use of a fabric. One interviewee suggested:

"I think the most important element in pattern design is that a designer needs to know to what kind of products a pattern will be applied. A pattern might look great, but when it is applied in different products, such as clothes, bags or furniture, it will give customers totally different feelings."

Five interviewees said that designers must know the company they are designing for, their budget and place in the market.

6.7.2 Traditional Chinese imagery for modern textiles and clothing

Almost all the interviewees (95%) agreed that traditional Chinese images could be integrated into modern textiles and clothing. There were a variety of reasons cited.

Six interviewees (32%) said that during the past two or three years, many internationally famous brands had added Chinese elements to their designs. Five interviewees strongly supported the application of traditional Taiwanese images in modern textiles and clothing. They felt that the cultural image of Taiwan needed to be promoted in order to evoke and strengthen Taiwan's unique identity. One interviewee suggested that:

“We should put more effort into designing clothes which exhibit the distinctiveness of Taiwanese culture. We should design products which remind consumers of Taiwan. People all over the world can recognize products made in Japan on seeing the products. Japanese kimono and the work of Issey Miyake are good examples.”

The emergence of mainland China as an economic superpower and the fact that the Chinese market was so huge were considered the most important factors in the development of Chinese-style fashions. The Chinese market was also believed to have huge potential for foreign fashion retailers. One interviewee stated that:

“Recently, I attended a conference about ‘design in Eastern styles’. Some speakers stressed the relationship between design styles and the economy. Since China has been a country with a weak economic and political status in the world for 300-400 years, its culture was not noticed by people, and can't compete with European and American cultures. Only when China gets a higher economic and political status in the world, will Chinese-styles of design be visible and attractive.”

Two interviewees said they felt that using Chinese images in modern textiles and clothing was a good idea because traditional Chinese culture had a history of several thousand years and was unique and rich. One interviewee pointed out that Western designers have long developed popular fashion products by adding aesthetic elements from their traditional culture. One interviewee said “I think it is very suitable to use the traditional Chinese images in the modern textiles and clothing. But how to use these images properly needs more people to do research”.

A lecturer in textiles and clothing, stated that the university where she worked had established a Chinese cultural centre which featured collections of clothing from ethnic minorities such as the Miao people and Taiwanese aborigines so that students could use these traditional clothes for design inspiration. Another interviewee suggested that a digital database of Taiwanese traditional images could be established to help designers use Taiwanese cultural elements in new designs.

Two designers who were interviewed felt “every cultural element can be used in new designs” and “anything that can inspire designers can be a design source”. One designer said that designs with cultural characteristics, such as the brightly dyed fabrics from India and Thailand’s golden and silver decorated patterns, are generally accepted by customers. Therefore, traditional Chinese images could be a design source for designers. One interviewee said, “I agree with using traditional elements in modern textile products, but I feel it is still at the initial stage in Taiwan”.

6.7.3 The market for traditional Chinese imagery in Taiwan

In the course of the interviews, many interviewees talked about the current use of traditional Chinese patterns in textiles and clothing in Taiwan. Three interviewees stated that most Chinese-style clothing and textile products are “small amounts” and “made by hand”, and that “embroidery” and “hand dyeing methods” are most frequently used. Some interviewees reported that designers’ brands, such as Shiatzy Chen, Long Deed and Fong-Chih Lu have all used traditional Chinese motifs in textiles and clothing.

Nearly all of the interviewees acknowledged that Taiwanese consumers liked traditional patterns in textiles and clothing. However, 63% (12 out of 19) felt that the market for traditional pattern designs was small. Many interviewees said that for some Chinese-style clothing brands in Taiwan, the target market is more sophisticated mature females.

According to the interviewees, a number of factors influence consumers’ acceptance of Chinese-style textiles and clothing. Three interviewees felt that Taiwanese consumers buy Chinese-style products for particular occasions and festival days such as weddings, Chinese New Year and international meetings. One interviewee indicated Chinese-style products have a highly symbolic significance, that is, cultural identity. Some officers’ wives purchase and wear Chinese-style clothing to attend international meetings in order to show they are Chinese people. This opinion is supported by another interviewee who stated that:

“Most people would not want to buy Chinese-style products unless these products are necessary for them. For example, if there is a Shanghai-style party today, people will put on Chinese-style clothing to attend the party. They wear Chinese-style clothing because of occasions rather than desire. They wear Chinese-style clothes in order to show the culture.”

Three of the interviewees stated that it was customers who knew and approved of Chinese culture that were willing to buy Chinese-style products. One interviewee said that “I do not think Taiwanese customers will accept Chinese pattern designs, unless they prefer Chinese culture or their houses are Chinese-style; then they will buy or use Chinese-style products”. Something to emerge from the interviews was that educational background strongly influenced choice with the more educated having more interest in cultural elements being used.

Approximately 68% of the interviewees stated that identifying the target market is one of the most important things to be considered when designing textiles. According to most interviewees, the style of the patterns has to meet different customers’ needs, that is to say, the style should be varied according to the target market. Customers’ age was the criterion most frequently mentioned by interviewees to identify the target market. One interviewee thought that age reveals consumers’ purchasing power and taste in pattern design.

Many interviewees stated that it was the media and promotion by the government would influence consumers’ acceptance of products with traditional patterns. One interviewee commented that women over 50 often like Chinese-style products whether a style was in fashion or not. However, younger women were unlikely to wear Chinese-influenced clothes unless they saw models wearing them in fashion magazines. Another interviewee commented that an original traditional pattern would not be the preference of Taiwanese customers, because such patterns were “too symbolic”.

Three interviewees expressed their opinions on market strategies for traditional Chinese patterns adopted in the Taiwanese market. They suggested that designs in Chinese-styles will only really be able to influence the market in Taiwan if they can influence Europe and America first. They explained that Chinese-style textiles and clothing may be difficult to sell directly in the Taiwanese market, because the majority of Taiwanese consumers like products from European and American brands. They believed however that some European and American consumers like products in Chinese traditional styles, thus a better marketing strategy would be to promote Chinese-style products in foreign markets, or to cooperate with some famous European and American brands. If Chinese-style products develop in foreign markets successfully and gain a good reputation, it will be easier for these to be adopted as fashionable for Taiwanese market. Another interviewee added that Chinese-style products could be shown and promoted to foreign markets through exhibitions and magazines.

6.7.4 The successful use of elements of traditional imagery

Nearly half of the interviewees emphasised that new pattern designs should be in a modern style. According to the interviewees, it was important to integrate traditional Chinese images and the contemporary art, culture and aesthetic feeling into new pattern design. They stated that Taiwanese customers preferred and would possibly buy designs that mixed modern and traditional elements, rather than pure traditional design.

Nearly 47% of the interviewees said Taiwanese people did not like too traditional, old-fashioned or vulgar pattern designs. One interviewee suggested:

“If you are using traditional Chinese themes in pattern designs, you cannot make it look too traditional, because it will be very old-fashioned. I think you really have to recreate new designs on colours and patterns when you are doing traditional themes.”

Two interviewees stated that patterns could be created by using different design techniques, to make a pattern that was different from traditional designs which customers were familiar with.

It is also worth noting that some interviewees stated that computers could assist in the design of new patterns. They suggested that a traditional pattern can be scanned into a computer and transformed with difficult visual effects and strokes, such as watercolour painting, by using design software. However, one interviewee held an opposing point of view on computer-aided design. She pointed out that a new design created on a computer may lack the “hand-drawn feeling” and “the human thought” although the use of filters offered by computer software can create elaborate effects.

She said:

“If a designer relies heavily on the filter functions provided by Photoshop, at first glance, people may feel that a design is impressive, but after a while people would feel that it is simply composed of existing images, rather than creative ideas. I want a design to have a unique hand-drawn feeling and innovative ideas from a designer.”

Five interviewees suggested designers should transform original patterns into new patterns that are suitable for modern fashion products, rather than directly copy original patterns. The interviewees generally felt patterns must be new and innovative.

One of the interviewees noted that:

“If I make a design, I will break the traditional concept of a pattern. Because everybody dislikes the traditional designs, they want to see innovative designs. So I feel customers do not like traditional designs that they saw before. However, if you insist on copying original traditional patterns in a design, I feel such a design will not be accepted by customers.”

Four of the interviewees considered that Taiwanese people preferred abstract patterns to realistic patterns. They felt most customers preferred imaginative and abstract patterns where they could sense the Chinese-style without it being too obvious and literal.

Seven interviewees commented that unless traditional imagery was re-interpreted incorporating new ideas Chinese imagery could not be in harmony with modern products, could not look modern and would not be purchased by Taiwanese customers. In contrast, three interviewees felt that a traditional pattern has a distinct, original meaning and the idea should not be re-created rather it could be modernised by changing its colour or repeated direction. As one interviewee stated:

“Last time, I used the pattern of the aboriginal hundred-pace snake, and I did not change its original shape at all, I only changed the colours of the pattern, and its repeated direction... I used different strokes, adding some broad and narrow strokes in the design. Thus, you need to look at the design carefully to know it is hundred-pace snake. The snake’s pattern will not be recognised right away.”

Interviewees suggested that a pattern’s design must be simple rather than complex, commenting that Taiwanese choose patterns that are simple and that some traditional Chinese patterns are just too complicated. Seven interviewees commented that the patterns that were too busy were less likely to be accepted. One interviewee noted that:

“At present in Taiwan, no matter the clothes or the designs on fabrics, the pattern is usually only for supporting but it is not a protagonist. Patterns may go with a plain cloth, like a bright red cloth, and then mix a little Chinese pattern, such as the dragon, traditional characters, or some flowers, etc. But if the traditional patterns are fully covered on textile product, usually it will be too showy for consumers to accept.”

6.7.5 Colour and fashion textile designs

Five interviewees stated that colour is often the customer’s first impression when buying clothing and textiles. Only after this will then notice the style and pattern. Thus, colour can be used to catch customers’ attention.

In terms of colour preferences, one interviewee emphasised that the colour should be varied in order to cope with the demand in different regions of Taiwan. She stated that:

“In the past, when I was engaged in fashion design in the southern region of Taiwan, I seldom used grey and black in textiles and clothing. But these colours were frequently used as the interior colours for offices in Taipei (the north region of Taiwan). Some bright colours such as red, yellow and green are rarely seen in Taipei city. Thus, the colours used in textiles and clothing need to be suitable for an area.”

Another interviewee felt that Taiwanese people generally prefer soft colours to strong colours. He stated the fashion trend in Taiwan always follows Europe, but in terms of colour, soft tones are used in preference to strong colours which may popular in Europe.

In addition, research findings suggest that colour is thought to be symbolic of a certain cultures. Two interviewees pointed out that there are many aboriginals in Taiwan, and each tribe has its own colour. For example, red, black and white are

associated with the Ataya. Therefore, they remarked that colour could help a designer to express a certain culture to consumers.

Another interviewee described her experience of transforming Taiwanese aboriginal patterns:

“At the beginning, when I took over the project from the Taiwan Textile Federation, I insisted that I would not use the original colours of aboriginal patterns, because the aboriginal colours are too traditional. If you used these original colours in designs, no matter if you used the best textile designs or even design work by the greatest illustrator, everybody would feel that the design was inspired by an aboriginal culture. Because colour combinations strongly represent a certain culture.”

This statement again reflects the belief that customers may associate particular colours with certain cultures. One interviewee added that the symbolic meaning of colour varies by nations and culture. For instance, red in Chinese culture means good luck; however it signifies danger in Western culture. Thus, she suggested that a designer should take notice of the use of colour in pattern design.

6.7.6 Traditional imagery as an inspiration for colour

Three interviewees stated that they would use traditional colours due to the fact that traditional colours have their own specific meaning; for example, the colour yellow has a traditional association with emperors in China. One interviewee noted that “Basically, I do not change colours. Traditional patterns have their own colours which represent special meanings, and so, traditional colours should not be allowed to change”.

In contrast, five interviewees emphasised the importance of colour in fashion trends for pattern design. They commented that customers' colour preference is based on fashion trends and personal taste, so they would recreate traditional patterns by using fashionable colours in order to accord with customers' preferences and sell well. They did however say that they would use traditional colours if these colours fitted in with fashion trends. As one interviewee said:

“I would use traditional colours if they were popular. For example, the tone of Chinese pure red was a fashionable colour in 2008. Perhaps I have to pick Chinese pure red for designs in order to use Chinese images. But in 2009 I started to change the colour. I added a little bit of grey tone, or gold and silver tones on pure red. The main point is that I have to follow fashion trends instead of cultures.”

Three interviewees suggested that traditional colours were necessary when traditional images were the source for new designs, but at the same time, fashion colours should also be taken into consideration in order to increase market acceptance, express a new visual effect and avoid looking old-fashioned. One interviewee stated:

“In my opinion, traditional colours and fashionable colours need to match each other when using traditional images as inspiration in textile design. With regard to colour matching, I think the best mix is 70 percent traditional colours and 30 percent fashion colours in a new design. If a design uses all traditional colours, it may give customers an old-fashioned feeling.”

Some interviewees stated that they would use traditional colours when designs were aimed at tourists. However, fashion colours would be selected when designs are for the fashion market. In addition, one interviewee suggested that a designer can try different colours in new designs, including “colours you want”, “colours the market needs” and “colours you expect”.

6.7.7 Choice of fabrics

Almost all interviewees said the choice of fabric was important as the effect of the pattern on the fabric also had to be considered. One interviewee said that texture influenced the impression of pattern designs; the pattern and the material needed to coordinate properly. The interviewees suggested delicate fabrics such as silk were suitable for elegant patterns. On the other hand, a rough textile such as linen may be more appropriate for a simple pattern. One interviewee said:

“Suppose I want to print out a graphic with rendering or layered effects. If the fabrics I pick do not have the correct qualities, paint or pigment will not achieve the effects that I expected. So fabrics and patterns should be considered together.”

6.7.8 The original meaning of any imagery

When asked about this three interviewees stated that a designer needed to understand the socio-cultural background of a traditional pattern, such as its origin, symbols and meaning, in order to take and make use of the pattern’s characteristics and spirit in new designs. They suggested that in showing traditional culture, instead of using all elements, designers should apply the quintessential features. For example, instead of using all the elements of traditional patterns, designers should take and make use of the spirit. One interviewee said that:

“A designer should understand the concept of the pattern, namely, the origin of the pattern and the colour ... then re-create it anew. A designer has to apply the spirit of the pattern in the new design and to express the meaning of the pattern, rather than to express patterns identically.”

It was felt that understanding a culture was very important. Another interviewee suggested that designers should work with native people when using their traditional patterns for designs.

Three interviewees stated that the meaning of a pattern is likely to be ignored by designers from different cultural backgrounds. For example, Western designers would not really know the meaning of patterns they use. One interviewee stated that “Western designers just treat Chinese dragons as a graphic when they are using them. Will they consider whether this dragon has five claws or four claws, which relate to the symbols of different emperors? They do not really care”.

In contrast to the above findings, however, four interviewees stated that they would not emphasise the meaning of the pattern in new designs, because “the pattern is a traditional pattern, its meaning is known by everybody”, “when consumers see the new pattern, they can interpret the meaning of it in their own way”, “customers may be unlike past people who believed that patterns could bring fortunes to them”, and “what I want to express is new fashion trends not traditional meanings”. They highlighted that new visual effects and new fashion trends were more important than the original meaning of the patterns.

6.7.9 Further comments

Two interviewees felt that pattern design could enhance the beauty and value of textile products. However, one interviewee had entirely different views. She thought that colour was more important than pattern when customers make fashion and textile purchases and that many people preferred plain clothing.

Two interviewees indicated that the importance of understanding customers’ lifestyles is crucial for textile designers. They felt that textile designers needed to get knowledge about customers’ lifestyles through market research and by observing the target market, in order to respond to customers’ needs.

Other important factors affecting pattern design mentioned by the interviewees include “the layout of a pattern on fabric”, “the choice of clothes’ style”, “taboo patterns”, “the environment of the fabric used” and “technique limitations”.

According to the interviewees, customers could be helped to understand the origin, symbols and meaning of a new pattern design through information given in booklets, through the media and from salespeople. One interviewee suggested each new design could have a booklet attached which explained to customers the background of the designer, how the new design was created, the story of the pattern and the symbols and meaning of the pattern. She noted:

“I suggest that there is a booklet for a textile product which lets consumers know the story of a pattern and the meaning of its blessing. Consumers giving this textile as a present to friends can at the same time give this blessing.”

Another interviewee commented that advertising in magazines and the press could be a useful way to convey the original meaning of a pattern, and the ideas behind a design to consumers. In addition to advertising, salespeople could communicate the background and meaning of a design pattern to customers.

One interviewee suggested that new designs have to integrate with modern language and symbols instead of traditional symbols. As she noted: “Some traditional patterns such as flowers combined with butterflies represent blessing and happiness, but ... nowadays happiness can be expressed in many ways, such as ... warm colours”.

Three interviewees pointed out the main difficulty in developing the cultural and creative industries in Taiwan was that there was no real connection of these with the fashion and textile industries; no fashion textile manufacturers were producing

designs inspired by traditional Taiwanese cultures. One interviewee described her experience in designing textiles based on traditional imagery:

“I cooperated with the Taiwan Textile Federation to develop some aboriginal patterns for use in contemporary interior textiles. I felt this design concept was fine. After finishing the project, everybody felt that the new designs were very special, but the project was not developed further.”

Manufacturers were not willing to produce traditional designs as Taiwanese customers prefer to buy imported fashion products, according to the current fashion trend. This idea was confirmed by a manager of an embroidery company who also felt that the main priority of any manufacturer was marketability. He considered that it was “difficult to produce cultural products due to the fact that the degree of acceptance of such products in Taiwan is still low”. He said that the current market for cultural products in Taiwan is mainly tourists.

6.8 Digital printing in the fashion and textile industry

6.8.1 Opinions on digital textile printing

Digital textile printing can be used to achieve many different visual effects and allows a designer to print designs directly from the computer. This process would appear to be ideal for meeting increasing market demand for customisation, small quantities and unique products in Taiwan.

Several advantages in using digital printing in preference to screen or engraved roller printing were cited by the interviewees. Digital printing does not require screens or rollers to be made and it is not labour intensive. Because of this it can be cheaper and much faster than traditional textile screen-printing for short production runs. One interviewee, a manager of a textile printing company, said:

“There is a situation when a manufacturer does not have enough time for making printing plates, they will choose digital printing in order to give textile samples to clients on time. It usually takes two weeks to draw drafts and make printing plates. But if a manufacturer has image files, five yards of sample can be done in two days by using digital print.”

Two interviewees pointed out that digital textile printing provided the capability to create unique patterns and made it easier for designers to edit or modify a design at any time on a computer.

Four interviewees talked about the fact there were no real limitations with respect to colour. While traditional textile designs were constrained to a maximum of six or twelve colours digital textile printing enabled a designer to create designs without worrying about colour constraints.

“Gradual-layer colour effects” was also something emphasised by these interviewees as a benefit of digital printing. As one interviewee said, “I saw that some people had used digital textile printing in designs; their design works really looked beautiful. They were made with different layers of different colours.” Similarly, a designer who was interviewed stated that the reason she chose digital textile printing was because it offered many colours and layer effects. She noted:

“I have to spend money on a fee for each screen if using screen-printing. I have to use six screens if a graphic has six colours. With digital textile printing it only needs to be printed once. So I will choose digital textile printing when making products in small quantities.”

Three interviewees pointed out that a disadvantage of digital textile printing was that digitally printed patterns always look flat compared to screen printed patterns. They felt that digital patterns or images directly printed onto fabric were not as vivid and

multi-layered as patterns made using screen-printing. In addition, two interviewees felt that digital textile printing lacked a hand crafted quality. One interviewee stated:

“In the past, whether fashion or textile, design in Taiwan was very delicate. For example, some Taiwanese designers used the Chinese brush-pen to create patterns which looked very delicate and vivid. Digital textile printing can probably simulate Chinese brush effects now, however, it is still unlike the hand-made effects that are so vivid.”

Although many interviewees cited the practically limitless colours digital printing, three interviewees felt that the ultimate colours of digitally printed patterns were not as bright as screen-printed patterns. One interviewee explained that colours in digitally printed patterns could become lighter and less saturated after washing if the pre-treatment and after-treatment of the fabric are not dealt with very carefully.

6.8.2 Digital textile printing in Taiwan

Two interviewees, managers of digital textile printing companies, stated that some textile manufacturers in Taiwan wanted to establish their own brands and to do this were setting up design departments with digital textile print machinery in order to produce exclusive fabrics in small quantities. One manager felt that the amount of digital printing being carried out in Taiwan was increasing yearly. It was however felt that many Taiwanese textile companies were conservative and very cautious in investing in digital print.

Many interviewees mentioned the Taiwan Textile Research Institute which has established a department to specifically research and develop fabrics suitable for digital textile printing. The Institute also produces digital designs to show what can be achieved with digital print technology. Some interviewees pointed out the designs

they used could be more creative and impressive. One interviewee expressed her feeling as follows:

“I ... felt disappointed when I saw the products of the Textile Taiwan Textile Research Institute in TITAS (Taipei Innovative Textile Application Show). I did not feel that they were high-end designs for clothing. They just printed pictures on umbrellas and pillows. I felt it was a pity that they did not try to make their products more fashionable. If they tried to work harder on it, they would attract a lot of people.”

Those interviewed all agreed that, currently in Taiwan, digital textile printing is mainly used for sampling or for short print runs for items manufactured in small quantities rather than for any mass-production.

6.8.3 The challenges in adapting designs for digital textile printing

For most of those interviewed the choice of fabric for printing on is very important for print design. The use of digital textile printing has limited designers' choice of materials and as most fabrics have to be pre-treated they are more expensive. Accurate colour-matching can also be a problem with one designer interviewed describing her experience of using a digital printer as difficult “colours of the image did not show up clearly on jersey”.

The cost of ink and fabric was considered to be an important factor affecting the development of digital textile printing in Taiwan. Screen-printing was still used by Taiwanese textile manufacturers for mass production as screen-printing for quantities it is relatively cheaper than digital. One interviewee noted:

“I feel that although digital textile printing will be a development direction in the future, currently one yard of digital textile costs N.T.1000 to N.T.1500 dollars in Taiwan, so it is difficult to produce a great quantity of digital textiles.”

Five interviewees pointed out that the speed of digital textile printing was too slow for mass production. However this is changing and it may soon be possible to digitally print fabrics as quickly as they can be printed by more conventional methods.

Five interviewees felt that one of the greatest challenges of using digital printing was with colour matching and the colour of digitally printed samples was often different from the screen printed production. One interviewee who managed a textile printing company felt there was still a very big difference in quality between digital printing and traditional screen or roller printing.

6.8.4 Factors influencing the development of digital textile printing in Taiwan

An important factor influencing the development of digital textile printing was considered to be the pattern design. Six interviewees emphasised that as the cost of digital textile printing was high, it was essential to produce designs for the upper end of the market as this would earn more profit. They believed that digitally printed textiles would not sell well without good designs.

Three people interviewed suggested that for the future development of digital textile printing in Taiwan manufacturers should cooperate with famous designer brands and aim at the high-end market. While the cost of digital textile printing is high, it can produce specific designs which meet designers' needs, thus it is more suitable for high-class clothing lines such as designer brands.

One interviewee suggested that department stores could digitally print patterns on jeans and other clothing in store. He said:

“In my opinion, digital textile printing machines can be put in department stores. Consumers will directly select patterns from digital databases before they are printed on clothes. Then, these printed clothes will be put in an oven to fix colours for about 30 minutes. The consumers will get their clothes later. In this way, the fashion market in Taiwan will become very individualised in the future.”

6.8.5 Designers using digital textile printing to produce fashion textile designs featuring traditional Chinese motifs

A majority of interviewees felt that while some Taiwanese designers use Chinese traditional patterns they hardly use digital printing.

6.8.6 Products using traditional imagery

The textile products that were mentioned by the interviewees as having traditional designs were curtains, scarves, sofas, T-shirts, glasses cases, and business card cases.

6.8.7 Digital printing with craft techniques

While most responses to this question were “I do not know”, “I am not sure if designers or companies do this” most interviewees liked the idea of combining digital printing with craft techniques. They thought this could make flat digital patterns have a three-dimensional look and layered effects could be created. One interviewee who managed a digital textile printing company stated that his company once cooperated with the fashion designer, Chiu-I Hsu, to design clothes that mixed digital printing with embroidery, searing and gilding.

However, two interviewees pointed out that designers and companies were not willing to mix digital printing with craft techniques because the cost was too high. One manager of an embroidery company stated:

“I developed a technique that combined digital printing with traditional printing, gilding and flocking on a sample, and then added embroidery. Thus, each part of a pattern is made by different special methods. In the European exhibition, everyone wanted to order it when they saw it. However, the problem is that such fabric design is totally fine in the sample, but I didn't consider mass production because the cost of such a method is too high.”

6.9 Summary

This chapter aimed to investigate research objective 4 - the potential use of traditional Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ patterns as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market. The findings from the semi-structured interviews have shown that in the past most textiles and apparel manufacturing in Taiwan was directed towards mass-production orders. However due to lower labour costs much of this manufacturing has transferred overseas with Taiwanese manufacturers striving to be more design-led with a move towards customisation, small quantities and more unique products. Taiwanese manufacturers want to expand their markets and China with its huge population is considered an important potential importer of Taiwanese fashion textiles.

It was generally felt by those interviewed that Chinese culture and traditional patterns could be a rich source for designers and are suitable for adaption into contemporary fashion textile designs. This fits in with the Taiwanese Government’s drive to preserve Taiwanese aboriginal and Chinese culture. A Chinese cultural centre has already been set up at Fu Jen University. This features traditional textiles and clothing and is being used by students for design inspiration. One interviewee suggested working with native people to adapt and modernise patterns and another suggested the setting up of a digital database of designs.

Suggestions as to how traditional Chinese patterns could be transformed included scanning traditional patterns digitally and using computer software to manipulate these. It was felt that any adaption of existing designs had to be done very carefully and sensitively with the cultural spirit of any design kept. The resultant design should not be too complex, and that a hand drawn look was important. Colour was considered to be key in ensuring a modern and contemporary feel and while it was important to follow fashion trends there was a feeling that for the Taiwanese market colours should, in general, be softer. One interviewee suggested that research was needed to investigate how traditional patterns could most effectively be modernised. From the interviews it was clear that digital printing was the preferred choice of printing due to the fact that it is more economical for the shorter runs required by the new design-led companies and there are no limitations with number of the colours as with screen printing.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion, discussion, recommendations and further research

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter discusses the findings from the literature reviews and both Chinese and Taiwanese interviews. The aim is to consolidate the research findings and to suggest how traditional Chinese patterns may be re-interpreted for the contemporary Taiwanese market. The subsequent sections examine how the research has contributed to knowledge, discuss the limitations of this study and suggest a number of recommendations for further work.

This study has reviewed the richness of the history of the ‘Tree of Life’, and its symbolism throughout different cultures and societies around the world. The literature has revealed that trees are worshipped throughout the world, that sacred trees can be considered to be trees that are worshipped and that the terms sacred tree and ‘Tree of Life’ are essentially synonymous. The key factors for identifying a tree as sacred, or as being a ‘Tree of Life’, are listed in Table 2.3. This and the other tables in Chapter 2 add to the understanding of sacred trees worldwide. The findings from the literature review of the ‘Tree of Life’ were used as a basis for questions for the semi-structured interviews in China.

7.2 A comparison of the findings from the literature review of the ‘Tree of Life’ and from the research in China

7.2.1 Special shape or great size

As can be seen in Section 5.6.2 and Table 5.1, a tree’s physical characteristics are the most common reasons mentioned by the interviewees in China for it being considered sacred. A flowering or huge tree is frequently regarded as having protective power for a village, bringing good fortune and prosperity. For this reason, such trees have particularly been worshipped in China. In addition, the evidence from the interviews shows that a tree with a strange appearance is believed to have magic powers. Such trees were venerated and worshipped by tribes such as the Hani. It can be concluded that tree characteristics, such as height and appearance, are important in the establishment of a sacred tree, as these characters have a direct effect on people’s feelings and emotions. This corroborates Marett’s (1909) pre-animistic theory which claimed that inanimate objects with specific or unusual characteristics were regarded as being alive. The theory is that primitive people perceived these objects as sacred due to feelings of awe and wonder. These findings are consistent with other work that shows that trees were venerated as sacred due to their great size and unusual appearance (see Section 2.2.4).

7.2.2 Source of power (firewood)

According to the literature review the fact that trees provide firewood is one of the reasons why people worship the tree (Blankenship, 1996; Altman, 2000; Ennos, 2001; Crews, 2003; Logan, 2005). This reason was not however mentioned by interviewees in China.

7.2.3 Source of food (fruit)

In many cultures (see Table 2.3) an individual tree was considered to be sacred if its fruits were plentiful and could be eaten by humans (Li, 1963; Ennos, 2001). However, as described in Chapter 5 the fieldwork in China did not find this to be the case. The interviewees said that particular trees were more likely to be worshipped by minority ethnic peoples in China because of their religious meaning rather than for any practical function. There may however be a link between these aspects in that the religious meaning may originally have come from a tree's fruitfulness.

7.2.4 Source of materials (for tools and construction)

Evidence from the interviews in Section 5.6.3 shows that trees were important in ancient Chinese life and that some Chinese 'Trees of Life' were associated with tree houses. The interviews in China and pictorial evidence found shows that in South-west China there are wooden buildings (Diaolou-style houses), which evolved from tree houses (see Fig. 5.7 and 5.8). Some ethnic minorities still live in these types of houses which are constructed on upright wooden pillars. This provides support for the statement in Section 2.3, that sacred trees have been strongly associated with materials important for human life since early historic times. The findings indicate that the origin of the Chinese 'Tree of Life' is frequently related to practical value: that trees have a long history of providing Chinese people with useful materials for building shelters and homes.

7.2.5 World creation

In many cultures (see Table 2.3) an individual tree was believed to be sacred because it was related to a particular creation story, sometimes with the actual tree itself being considered as the true ancestor of mankind. As shown in images 4-03 and 4-04 in

Appendix 4, traditional Miao textiles reflect the creation myth of the Miao people that believes that mankind was created from a maple tree. This evidence confirms that the concept of a Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ often has strong associations with the creation story.

7.2.6 Manifestations of gods/spirits

As described in Section 5.6.2, big trees called Fengshui (wind and water) trees, located in villages of South-west China, are considered as manifestations of gods and these gods are thought to offer protection for local residents and villages. These findings are consistent with the term community tree that has been found in the literature; this describes the community tree as a protector for the tribe (Li, 1963) (see Section 2.3). All the evidence found from the interviews in China supports the idea that trees are frequently recognised by Chinese ethnic minorities as gods.

7.2.7 Homes of gods/spirits

A common reason for tree worship, (see Section 2.2.1), is that trees are where gods live. However, the research found this may not be a reason for tree worship in China. Many minority ethnic peoples in China believe that trees, particularly those that are very big or strangely shaped, are actually themselves gods, rather than where gods live (Section 5.6.2). Although this finding does not support Tylor’s theory of animism (Tylor, 1871), which assumed that tree worship originated because spirit beings were believed to inhabit trees, it is consistent with the theory of pre-animism provided by Marett (1909). Marett highlighted the unity of soul and body in primitive religion; that is, primitive man did not distinguish a spirit as being separate from the physical being to which it was related (see Section 2.2.1). This finding indicates that the concept of Chinese tree worship is related to pre-animism.

7.2.8 Protection against evil spirits

As discussed earlier in Section 5.6.2 big trees within Chinese minorities' villages serve as protectors who guard residents and villages against evil spirits. This is consistent with the findings from the literature review detailed in Chapter 2.

7.2.9 Human fertility and procreation

The review of the reasons for tree worship in Chapter 2 demonstrated that trees with an abundance of fruit or seed were believed to have the power of ensuring fertility. Although this reason was not mentioned directly by most of the interviewees, Chinese seed worship has a close association with fertility worship as can be seen in the fertility rites of the Miao tribe. Their Rice Eating Festival (吃新節) refers to seed worship (see Section 5.6.2). While the primary reason for the festival is ancestor worship it is also considered as being important to ensure prosperity for the community and as such is directly linked to fertility. This suggests that seeds are frequently symbolic of fertility and prosperity in China. Interviewee A, in Section 5.6.4 talks about the fact that a tree or plant containing many seeds is often represented in designs. As shown in the design in images 3-22 and 7-08, seeds are exaggerated and displayed in a cut open melon alongside a child. This further demonstrates the significance of the relationship between seeds and fertility in China.

7.2.10 Fertility of land and growth of crops

The interview evidence in Section 5.6.2 shows that banyan trees within villages are worshipped by Miao people, with prayers for rain being held near the tree. The banyan is believed to have the power of encouraging rain to help ensure a plentiful harvest. From this evidence Chinese tree worship is associated with the growth of crops. This finding corroborates the ideas of Smith (1889) who suggested that some

trees were believed to have special supernatural powers that could ensure the success of crops (see Section 2.2.1).

7.2.11 Birth and growth of children

The idea of trees being linked with a child's birth and growth is an aspect of 'Trees of Life' in many countries (Section 2.4.2). Nothing however could be found in the literature as to whether this was the case in China. This study has found through the interviews carried out in China that there is a traditional ritual practiced by the Nakhi tribe in Yunnan where a luxuriant and strong tree is worshipped when a child is ill (see Section 5.6.2). In addition, as shown in textiles from the South Western Region of China (image 4-07 in Appendix 4), flower and tree patterns appear in traditional Zhuang textiles reflecting the religious idea that babies' souls are entrusted to flowering trees after birth. Picture evidence from the Yellow River Basin shows children being born on a 'Tree of Life' (image 3-21, 7-05, 7-07, 7-09 and 7-14 in Table 5.4). These findings show that trees had, and in some areas still have, a strong association with the birth and growth of children in China.

7.2.12 Funeral rites and ceremonies

With regard to trees and links with death, two interviewees held opposing views. One interviewee described Chinese people holding death rituals in the woods in ancient times; however, the other argued that trees that were thought to be sacred could not be touched by anyone in the villages and so it was impossible for Chinese people to hold mortuary rituals near trees (see Section 5.6.2). This could be considered to show that while ceremonies and rituals related to death and funerals are frequently linked with trees and woods they are not linked to special trees that are considered sacred.

7.2.13 Immortality and resurrection

The findings from the research in China indicate that the symbolism of the Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ often relates to longevity and immortality (see Section 5.6.4). This finding is in line with the findings from the literature review of Chapter 2 which found that the idea of immortality was commonly linked to ‘Trees of Life’.

Evidence in Section 5.6.2 shows that while the Hain tribe believes in reincarnation they would not expect anyone to come back as a tree. The interviewee who talked about this said this was because, as a tree “they would be cut down”. This is at odds with the findings from the literature review in Chapter 2, which found that the dead are considered to become trees or inhabit trees for eternity in China (Philpot, 1897; Warner, 1989) (see Section 2.5.1). It would appear that for many Chinese people trees are spiritual beings, rather than the homes of souls or the dead reincarnated.

7.2.14 Sacred animals

The review of Mesopotamian and Celtic ‘Trees of Life’ in Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.9 shows that the ‘Trees of Life’ are often connected to sacred animal patterns. The close correlation between the ‘Tree of Life’ and sacred animals is mainly due to mythology and religion (Griggs, 1989; Meehan, 1995). Indus seals depict that some sacred trees, such as the peepal and acacia, are frequently combined with sacred animal patterns (see Section 2.2.2). An explanation for this might be that sacred animals serve as a protector to guard the ‘Tree of Life’ from demons (James, 1966). As noted in Section 5.6.4, the Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ pattern is frequently combined with sacred animals such as mice, frog and fish; these animals are related to fertility in traditional Chinese culture (see Table 5.4). This finding differs from the results from the literature review in Chapter 2 which suggested that animal patterns were connected with ‘Trees of Life’

because the animals were thought to protect the trees, although it is consistent with the findings that the concept of ‘Tree of Life’ has a strong correlation with fertility worship.

The interviews show that most minority people in China still believe in primitive religion. They believe that all objects have souls, and therefore some rituals, such as tree worship, are still performed among ethnic minority groups of China (see Section 5.6.1). This echoes the idea of Marett (1909), who defined the term pre-animism as treating objects as having a life, energy or spirits. This also accords with Chin’s (1994) argument that the origin of tree worship is associated with the human belief that “all things on the earth have souls” (see Section 2.2.1).

7.2.15 Ancestor worship

The earlier review in Section 2.2.1 shows that tree worship has a close association with ancestor worship (Spencer, 1873; Allen, 1892; Philpot, 1897). A finding of the research in China shows that a flourishing tree planted above ancestral graves is seen as ‘the supernatural tree of the mountain’ and worshipped by the Nakhi tribe. Such a tree is believed to bless descendants and protect the mountain (see Section 5.6.2). The picture evidence (see image 6-04 in Appendix 6) shows scenes of ancestor worship are combined with ‘Trees of Life’ depicted in Miao embroidery. These results suggest that Chinese tree worship is rooted in the theory of pre-animism and ancestor worship.

The interview evidence in Section 5.6.1 shows that primitive religion is deeply rooted in the minds of Chinese minority people. So deeply in fact that their religious beliefs have not been changed by contact with other cultures and religions. The implication of this finding is significant: it helps account for the reason why trees are still

worshipped in today's China. It can be seen from Section 5.6.2 that tree worship is called Ji Long (dragon worship) among the tribes in South-west China. Johnston (1910) pointed out that dragon tree (jiulong pine tree) worship is found in Northern China (Section 2.2.2). The results imply, therefore, that worshipping a tree called Ji Long (worship of the dragon) occurs in both South-west and Northern China. Similarities and differences between tree worship in South-west and Northern China could be investigated in future studies. The picture evidence (see Appendices 3-7) shows that the concept of tree worship is embodied in traditional Chinese textiles and that 'Tree of Life' patterns have been used by many ethnic minority groups. Tree imagery is still one of the most popular and important patterns in traditional Chinese textiles.

7.3 Using elements of traditional Chinese imagery in modern fashion textile designs

Having concluded that tree imagery was still important in traditional Chinese textiles whether or not such traditional imagery could be used in contemporary fashion textile designs was then investigated. It was found that throughout history there was evidence to show that traditional and historical patterns have frequently been used to inspire contemporary designs (see Section 3.9.2 and 3.9.3). Fashion adoption theories were investigated through a literature review to get a better understanding of how certain styles and patterns became fashion (Chapter 3).

The findings from the interviews that were carried out in Taiwan (Chapter 6) showed that traditional Chinese images were considered to be suitable for use in designs for

the modern Taiwanese fashion market. Chinese design styles and imagery have frequently been adopted by international designers and several examples are cited in Chapter 6. With China's rapid economic growth and its huge market and manufacturing base, it is considered that the influence that China has on the rest of the world will only increase. As such Chinese patterns and imagery will continue to have an influence on global fashion and this influence is likely to increase. In addition the Chinese market is a vast market that Taiwanese manufacturers can potentially tap into.

The findings also showed that the Taiwanese fashion industry has started to become much more design-focused and is now striving to produce original, small volume fashion products, rather than mass-produced products made to the customers' specifications, in order to enhance its position in a competitive global market. The interviews also revealed that for the shorter runs that are required digital printing is being explored by many manufacturers in Taiwan as a method of production.

The cultural and creative industry is currently being encouraged and developed by the Taiwanese Government. The Government is also keen to preserve both Taiwanese aboriginal culture and Chinese culture. Contemporary original designs inspired by traditional Chinese patterns will help both in the development of the Taiwanese creative industry as well preserving links to valued traditions and cultures. In addition such designs are considered to be important in enhancing the competitiveness of Taiwanese manufacturers in international markets.

Some Taiwanese designers have successfully used traditional Chinese motifs with embroidery and hand-dyeing for textiles and clothing and many are experimenting with mixing digital printing with craft techniques to achieve layering and more

unusual effects in fabrics. However, the interview evidence in Sections 6.8.7 indicates the cost of mixing digital printing with craft techniques can be very high and such designs are difficult to mass-produce with consistent quality. These findings suggest that the products which mix digitally printed patterns with craft techniques are more suitable for small quantity products, rather than mass-produced products. The interviews in Taiwan also found that the major market for Chinese-influenced fashion in Taiwan was considered to be more mature and wealthy women.

An outcome from the interviews in Taiwan was a series of recommendations and suggestions as to how traditional textiles might be taken through into contemporary fashion textile designs. It was felt that adapting patterns had to be done carefully and while these could be scanned and transformed via CAD this had to be done sensitively. Designs should not be complex and the retention of the hand drawn qualities of many traditional patterns was important. With regard to colour, it was felt that fashion trends had to be considered and that the best approach would be for traditional colours to be adjusted or blended with fashion colours in order to increase customers' levels of acceptance; combining traditional patterns with fashionable colours was considered to avoid patterns looking old-fashioned.

7.3.1 Design process

Chapter 3 included an investigation into design processes. The design process model that follows (see Fig. 7.1) was developed from this investigation and is discussed with regard to the interview findings

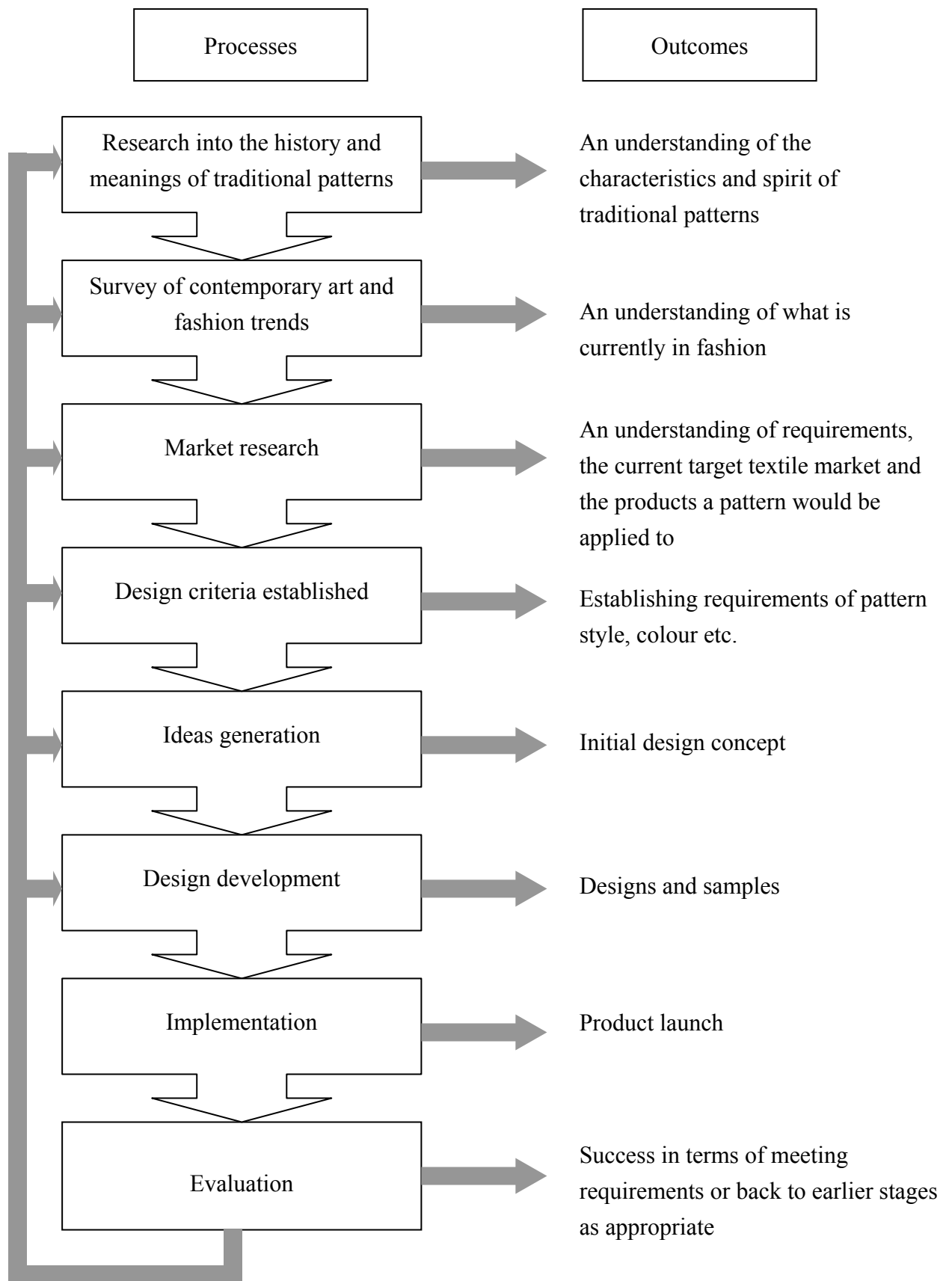


Figure 7.1 A design process for the reinterpretation of traditional images for contemporary fashion textile designs.

The first stage of this process is to research the history and meaning of traditional patterns. In terms of the methods used to develop traditional patterns and imagery through into contemporary textiles, the findings from the interviews suggest that a designer should make an in-depth study of the origins, symbols and meanings of traditional patterns in order to fully grasp and make use of the design characteristics and spirit for his or her new designs. This finding is consistent with that of Lin (2007) who suggests that the first step of the research methods of culture product design model is analysis and identification of key features of the original cultural object, including appearance, function and cultural meaning (see Section 3.10.7). The characteristics and spirit of traditional patterns as suggested by Lin (2007) could be presented in a list, table or mind map.

The second stage of the process is a survey of contemporary art and fashion trends. The interview evidence in Section 6.7.4 shows that contemporary art and aesthetic feelings should be integrated into traditional patterns. This would allow for traditionally based patterns with a more contemporary feel that would be more acceptable for customers. A possible explanation for this might be that fashion trends and art movements affect consumers' perceptions of beauty (Sproles, 1985) and therefore contemporary aesthetics also should be considered (see Chapter 3).

At the market research stage, the designer should consider the factors that will influence the ultimate design, such as the requirements of the target market, the present condition of the target textile market, and the products a pattern would be applied to. This stage corresponds to DeJonge's (1984) design situation explored stage, Watkins's (1988) analyse stage, Lamb and Kallal's (1992) problem identification stage and Wilson's (2001) research stage. After market research, design criteria will

be established for use in design development. Budgets and any constraints such as making capabilities in terms of manufacturing plant available would also have to be considered.

The review of fashion and textile design processes revealed that the stages of ideas generation, design development, implementation and evaluation were common in all the design processes studied. A number of initial ideas would be generated with some of these being selected for further development as design solution proposals that would meet the initial requirements. The implementation stage is when designers put their chosen ideas to new products. Finally, the new designs are evaluated on their success in meeting criteria established in previous stages, including the requirements of the target market and technical and economic criteria.

It is important to note that iterative loops from evaluation are needed at most stages. The results of the literature review showed that return loops were required throughout the design process in order to refine the design to meet the criteria (see Chapter 3).

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

The principle strength of this study lies in the research into the ‘Tree of Life’, and its symbolism throughout different cultures and societies around the world (research objectives 1 and 2). Several reasons for identifying a tree as sacred, or as being a ‘Tree of Life’, are listed in Table 2.3, which therefore assists in the understanding of the existence of reasons for the establishment of sacred trees worldwide. Additionally, specific trees for geographic locations that are regarded as sacred or as being a ‘Tree of Life’ are presented in Table 2.2. These tables have made an original contribution to knowledge.

As stated in the introduction 1.2.1 previous research had found that while tree imagery was found in a lot of folk art and patterns worldwide there was little information about current ideas and thinking in China. This study contributes to the understanding of the concepts, images and symbolism of the Chinese ‘Tree of Life’ pattern (research objective 3) through fieldwork in the South Western Region of China. The study empirically investigates Chinese minority people’s perceptions of tree worship and how this concept is reflected in traditional textiles. Based on the evidence from the study most Chinese minority tribes believe in primitive religion, with the worship of sacred trees was found to still prevail in many country villages. The concept of tree worship is reflected in many traditional textiles and is still one of the most popular and important patterns in traditional Chinese textiles. In addition, this study has contributed to knowledge by identifying factors that mark a tree as sacred or as being a ‘Tree of Life’ in China, and discussing these factors compared to those found in the literature.

With regard to the potential use of elements of Chinese patterns, such as the ‘Tree of Life’ patterns, in contemporary fashion for the Taiwanese market (research objective 4), this study has explored the potential market for Chinese-style fashion products in Taiwan. Preference in Taiwan for choosing traditional images in modern textiles and clothing has also been investigated in this study. This study has provided some guidelines for reinterpreting traditional images for the contemporary fashion market.

7.5 Limitations of the research

There are several limitations that need to be acknowledged regarding this research: firstly, the generalisability of these research findings is limited because they were generated in an exploratory, qualitative inquiry. Due to time and budget constraints, while this research was able to access textile patterns from both the South Western and the Yellow River Basin regions, interviews were only able to be conducted in the South Western Region. More studies are needed to verify the findings of this study.

The relatively small sample sizes are another limitation of the work. The use of an expert for interview was employed to enhance the validity of the research findings from the Chinese semi-structured interviews. There were only 11 participants who participated in the fieldwork study in China, and most participants were knowledgeable people of minority tribes. An increased sample size is needed to provide more reliable data concerning factors for identifying trees as sacred trees in China, from different viewpoints of minority tribes and to discuss these factors in relation to the motif of the 'Tree of Life' in Chinese textiles.

The 19 participants who were selected for interview in Taiwan were all involved in textiles and fashion in some way. Time constraints prevented a survey of the general public. If more people had been surveyed during the data-collection stage of the fieldwork in Taiwan, views from a different perspective could have been gathered and it would have been interesting to compare these with those involved in textiles and fashion.

The translation from Chinese to English ideally should have been double-checked. Again this was due to limitations with time and resources. The translation process may inevitably have some bias. Cross-checking the interview data would have ensured the interviewees' quotations in the study could have been more precisely expressed in English.

A multi-strategy approach may have been helpful to cross-check research findings and enhance the validity of results (Bryman, 2004). However with funding and time limitations this approach was not employed for this study.

7.6 Recommendations for further research

This research has investigated the potential for the use of traditional 'Tree of Life' patterns being used as inspiration by the Taiwanese textile industry for printed fashion textiles for use both in their home market and for export to China and Europe. There are many areas for further work and research that can be identified.

7.6.1 Further studies on 'Trees of Life' in China

The findings of this research show that there are a large number of 'Tree of Life' patterns to be found in textiles and clothing in the Yellow River Basin region of China. A study there similar to that carried out in the South Western region could be undertaken to understand the concept of tree worship and the cultural symbolism of the 'Tree of Life' there. The same semi-structured interview guides could be used and the findings discussed and compared with the findings from the South Western Region detailed in this study. Similar studies could also be carried out in other areas of China.

7.6.2 Further market research in Taiwan

Another area for further research would be to survey the Taiwanese public with regard to their views on Chinese traditional patterns in modern fashion textiles. As previously stated a limitation of this research is that interviews in Taiwan were only with people involved in the fashion and textile industry. Consumer focus groups and further questionnaires could be used to test the findings of this research and identify suitable markets. This would help by cross-checking findings and so enhance the validity of the findings of this study.

7.6.3 Adapting traditional designs for future fashion textiles

This research identifies important factors to be considered when taking traditional pattern designs and reinterpreting these for the contemporary Taiwanese market. A portfolio of designs based on the collection of patterns in Appendices 3-7 could be developed with consideration of some of the factors thought to be important for pattern adaption that were identified from the interviews in Taiwan (see Section 6.7.4). The resulting designs could be taken out to Taiwan and shown to manufacturers and target customers to gauge the response of the Taiwanese market.

A suggestion by an interviewee in Taiwan was that work could be done to develop traditional patterns in conjunction with the native people in China (see Section 6.7.8).

Further work could look at the patterns in Appendices 3-7 to see how best these could be taken through into fashion textile designs in terms of repeat structures. This might involve taking a number of designs and developing each one in a number of different ways and through focus groups evaluating their appeal.

7.7 Conclusions

This research has attempted to examine the meaning, image, symbolism and importance of the 'Tree of Life' in China and investigate the potential use of traditional Chinese 'Tree of Life' patterns as a basis for contemporary fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market.

A literature review identified the 'Tree of Life' as a cross-cultural symbol frequently related to religion and myths. According to the literature, the idea of the 'Tree of Life' is related to the worship of trees; nourishment, regeneration, fertility and immortality are all often related to the 'Tree of Life'.

The findings from the Chinese interviews provide evidence of tree-worship in China. Chinese traditional textiles reflect religious ideas and important recurring motifs are what can be considered to be 'Trees of Life'. The findings from the Taiwanese interviews show that traditional Chinese pattern is considered by those questioned as being suitable for modern fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market.

With fieldwork carried out in both China and Taiwan and an investigation into fashion adoption and design processes the research concludes that the 'Tree of Life' can be re-created and adapted in different ways for fashion textile designs for the Taiwanese market. Traditional patterns are potentially a rich and important source of creative ideas for Taiwanese fashion textile industry.

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APPENDIX 1: List of interviewees

Part 1: Interviewees in China

Interviewee A	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Han
Working Experience	Manager of Totem- Empire Company (www.china56n.com)
Interview date	October 7, 2007
Interviewee B	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Hani
Working Experience	Assistant Director of Yunnan Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Interview date	November 2, 2007
Interviewee C	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Miao
Working Experience	Vice-director of History Institute of Yunnan Academy of Social Science Vice-dean of Centre of South-east China Cultural Studies Vice-president of Yunnan Institute for Miao Nationality
Interview date	November 15, 2007
Interviewee D	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Derung
Working Experience	Vive- director of Institute of Minority Nationality Literature Studies Vice-Superintendent of Yunnan Academy of Social Science
Interview date	November 15, 2007

Interviewee E	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Han
Interview date	November 15, 2007
Interviewee F	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Han
Interview date	November 21, 2007
Interviewee G	
Gender	Female
Nationality	Dai
Working Experience	Manager of cultural bureau
Interview date	November 22, 2007
Interviewee H	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Yao
Working Experience	Assistant director of Ethnic Nationalities Research Institute of Honghe Prefecture
Interview date	November 24, 2007
Interviewee I	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Bai
Working Experience	Member of Translators Association of China
Interview date	November 26, 2007
Interviewee J	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Zhuang
Interview date	November 26, 2007
Interviewee K	
Gender	Male
Nationality	Nakhi
Working Experience	Assistant Director of Yunnan Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Interview date	November 27, 2007

Part 2: Interviewees in Taiwan

Interviewee A	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Woven Designer Lecture in Fu Jen Catholic University
Interview date	December 1, 2007
Interviewee B	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Director of Taipei Costume Cultural Center Vice Professor of Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising / Shih Chien University
Interview date	December 2, 2007
Interviewee C	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	Managing Director of BEBE Cotton Knitting Co.,Ltd
Interview date	December 11, 2007
Interviewee D	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	Director of fashion magazine (<i>Phoebes</i>)
Interview date	December 14, 2007
Interviewee E	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Associate Professor of Department of Textiles and Clothing / Fu Jen Catholic University Consultant of Totem- Empire Company (www.china56n.com)
Interview date	December 20, 2007
Interviewee F	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Lecture in Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising / Shih Chien University
Interview date	December 24, 2007

Interviewee G	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	Advisor of Textile Company Associate Professor/ CEO of Textile Design Section of FU JEN University
Interview date	December 26, 2007
Interviewee H	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Director of Chinese Clothing Cultural Center of Fu Jen University Graduate Institute of Textiles & Clothing The Lecturer in Department of Textiles & Clothing of Fu Jen University
Interview date	December 26, 2007
Interviewee I	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	The owner of four retail shops The owner of 'L'aime La Vie'
Interview date	January 6, 2008
Interviewee J	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Lecturer in the fashion design department at Shih Chien University
Interview date	January 9, 2008
Interviewee K	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	Course leader in National Pingtung University of Science & Technology
Interview date	January 10, 2008
Interviewee L	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Lecturer in National Pingtung University of Science & Technology
Interview date	January 10, 2008

Interviewee M	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	Manager of Chih Yi Embroidery Co., Ltd.
Interview date	January 11, 2008
Interviewee N	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Manager of Browzwear (Taiwan) V-Stitcher The Lecturer in Department of Textiles & Clothing of Fu Jen University
Interview date	January 16, 2008
Interviewee O	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	Fashion designer of Y.B.S Company
Interview date	January 16, 2008
Interviewee P	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	The Lecturer in Department of Textiles & Clothing of Fu Jen University
Interview date	January 22, 2008
Interviewee Q	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	The President of Vision Scientific Company (In 1997, the first company of Taiwan introduced digital textile printing systems form overseas and sold to Taiwan Textile Research Institute)
Interview date	January 23, 2008
Interviewee R	
Gender	Male
Working Experience	Manager of Chang-Tai Printing Co., Ltd
Interview date	January 23, 2008
Interviewee S	
Gender	Female
Working Experience	The purchase assistant in CK men's clothing department; Textile designer in Taiwan Textile Federation; The professional marketing researcher of Nan Yang Group
Interview date	January 26, 2008

APPENDIX 2: Semi-structured interview guides

Interview guide of surveying the ‘Tree of Life’ in China

Date of interview:

Venue:

Name of interviewee:

M or F:

Section 1: The origin and concept of the ‘Tree of Life’ in China.

1. Are ‘Trees of Life’ considered special because of shape and size?
2. Does the ‘Tree of Life’ have practical associations in China? Is it a source of power, a source of food or source of materials?
3. Are trees linked to the creation of the world?
4. Are trees linked to ancestor worship?
5. Are trees considered to be manifestations of gods or spirits?
6. Are tree ever considered as the homes of gods or spirits?
7. Are trees associated with protection (against misfortune and evil spirits)?
8. Are trees associated with fertility (human fertility and creation or the fertility of land and growth of crops)?
9. Are trees associated with funeral rites and ceremonies? If people hold mortuary ritual near a sacred tree why is this?
10. Are trees associated with immortality and resurrection?
11. Are trees linked with sacred animals?
12. Are trees linked with legends and folklore?
13. What do you consider is meant by a ‘Tree of Life’?
14. Can you think of any other factors that have made a tree sacred?

Section 2: The ‘Tree of Life’ patterns in textiles in China.

15. What characterises a pattern as being a ‘Tree of Life’ pattern?
16. Are there particular colours used in the pattern design?
17. Are there any particular trees chosen for the designs?
18. How has the ‘Tree of Life’ developed over the centuries and been represented in textiles in China?
19. Do the patterns have any special meanings?

Interview guide of surveying the market in Taiwan for fashion textiles using traditional imagery

Date of interview:

Venue:

Name of interviewee:

M or F:

Working Experience:

Part I. What is the current state of and what are the future trends for the Taiwanese fashion industry and market?

1. What is your view on the current fashion market in Taiwan?
2. In your opinion how has the Taiwanese fashion industry developed and changed?
3. In your opinion, how can the Taiwanese traditional fashion industry be developed in order to enhance its position in a competitive global market?
4. Do you think Taiwanese fashion textiles in concept and style are influenced by Chinese traditional culture?
5. How do you see the Taiwanese fashion and textile industry developing in the future?

Part II. Can the use of traditional imagery enhance contemporary fashion and textiles?

6. How do you see tradition and culture affecting the type of fashion textile designs being produced? What other factors affect fashion textile designs?
7. Do you think that traditional Chinese imagery is suitable for modern textile and clothing? Why do you agree or disagree?
8. Do you think there is a market for traditional Chinese imagery in Taiwan?
9. In your opinion, how can elements of traditional imagery best be used?
10. Do you think colour is an important aspect of the fashion textile designs? Why do you agree or disagree?
11. If you were to use traditional imagery to inspire any fashion textile design would you use traditional colours or recolour? Why?
12. Do you think the choice of fabrics is an important aspect of pattern design? Why?
13. Would you express the original meaning of any imagery in any new design?
14. Do you have any further comments?





Part III. The views of designers and the managers of textile industry on digital textile printing.






15. Please give your opinions on digital textile printing.
16. What do you consider to be the current situation with regard to digital textile printing in Taiwan?
17. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges for digital textile





printing when adapting designs originally produced by traditional textile printing processes? How would you overcome any challenges?









18. What factors do you see as important in influencing the development of digital textile printing in Taiwan?
19. Are you aware of any designers using digital textile printing to produce fashion textile designs featuring traditional Chinese motifs?
20. If traditional imagery is used, what type of products is this mainly used for?
21. Are you aware of any designers/companies mixing digital printing with craft techniques in any way?





APPENDIX 3: Analysis of the style of 'Tree of Life' patterns in textiles and cut paper from the Yellow River Basin.






Num.	Collective Place and Purposes	Pattern	Motif	Explanation
3-01	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Continuous Melon	The melon is displayed in profile, combined with a butterfly below. The melon is circled by dots, which symbolise reproduction.
3-02	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Mouse Eats Melon	Displayed in perspective, the mouse, which symbolises the God of Children is eating a melon inside. It combines with a pair of mice above it.
3-03	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Many (San Duo)	This pattern is a combination of pomegranate, peach, and chayote. They are called 'San Duo', which represents being full of children, having a long life, and luck.
3-04	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Flower of Life	The center is a flower which symbolises a woman, combined with birds which symbolise men. Males and females combine in this pattern; it is used as a wedding flower pattern.

3-05	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Magpie Peony	This pattern has similar meaning as the previous one. It is also used as a wedding flower pattern.
3-06	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Flower of Life	A 'Flower of Life' is growing from a vase. It is combined with a pair of tigers.
3-07	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Flower of Life	A pomegranate is growing from a water vase. It echoes with butterflies. Besides it there are a pair of birds and tree branches, expressing their life energy.
3-08	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Flower of Life	A 'Flower of Life' is appearing from a water vase, which symbolises women's bodies. A flower, which also represents a female, is inside the vase. A pair of Yin-Yang birds are outside of the vase.
3-09	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Lotus Produce Children	A 'Grasping Hair Doll' is wearing a Dudou with a frog (Nu Wa) pattern. There is a pair of birds representing men on his head. He is holding a pomegranate. Below there is a fish playing within a lotus. The whole pattern represents fertility worship.





3-10	Tianjin Province Paper-cut		Money Shaking Tree	'Money shaking tree', from Han Dynasty. The 'Money shaking tree' is the transformation of Tree of Life-Fuso and Fu wood.
3-11	Tianjin Province Paper-cut		Money Gathering Vase	'Money gathering vase' is the transformation of water vase. Hanging money and gold ingot are both life symbols.
3-12	Tianjin Province Paper-cut		Money Delivery Child	'Money delivery child' is based on the Money shaking tree. It means making big money.
3-13	Tianjin Province Paper-cut		Money God	There are two 'Money shaking trees', behind Money God. One has hanging money and another one is growing gold ingots.




3-14	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut			Tree of Life	'Tree of Life' is rising up into the air. It expresses a very strong energy and liquidity.
3-15	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut			Tree of Life	The left pattern is a combination of 'Tree of Life' and Children God - a pair of mice. The right pattern is combined with two children who represent strong reproductive ability and a 'Tree of Life' in the centre.
3-16	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut			Flower of Life	The two patterns are full of images. Both of them have a flower in the centre, which make the trees full of life.
3-17	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut			Tree of Life	The 'Tree of Life' is very vivid and full of detail. A pair of birds on the two sides make it energetic.

Num.	Collective Place and Purposes	Pattern	Motif	Explanation
3-18	Shaanxi Province Child's Bib		Flower of Life	<p>The whole pattern is based on a flower.</p> <p>There are 'Flower of Life' patterns on the five petals.</p>
3-19	Shaanxi Province Child's Bib		Continuous Melon	<p>The whole pattern is based on a peach (Gua). A pair of flowers are on the upper portion, shown with smooth lines. On the lower portion there is a pair of butterflies. In the center there is a 'Flower of Life'.</p>
3-20	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Many Children and Luck	<p>An exaggerated <i>Sechium edule</i> and several leaves are used as a 'Tree of Life'. On the <i>Sechium edule</i> there are three big seeds which represent a lot of children and luck.</p>
3-21	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Lotus Produce Children	<p>The shape of the lotus is simple and bright. On the flower there is a child who is holding a Sheng (an instrument); below there is a lotus.</p>





3-22	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Continuous Melon	The open melon shows its seeds. It exaggerates melon and human ratios. It combines with butterfly shaped flowers. A vivid vine makes it full of energy.
3-23	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Tree of Life	A lion's head and tail are combined with the 'Tree of Life'. The shape is very interesting.
3-24	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Fish Play with Lotus	The fish's tail is made of three leaves. The fish carrying a leaf represents its divinity.
3-25	Shaanxi Province Bellyband		Flower of Life	The front flowers and stamen represent a lot of children, using embroidery.
3-26	Shaanxi Province Shoe-pads		Butterfly Love Flower	This pattern combines flowers and butterflies. Male and female produce all the creatures of the life.



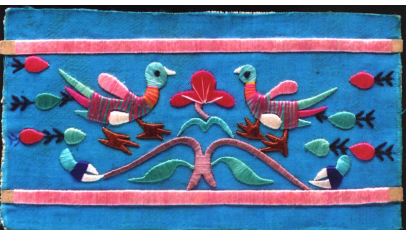
APPENDIX 4: Analysis of 'Tree of Life' patterned textiles relating to the worship of trees, from the South Western Region of China.





Num.	Collective Place and Purposes	Pattern	Motif	Explanation
4-01	Guizhou Province Dong People Baby's back towel		Flower Spirit Worship	Dong people think that humans are created from 'Flower Saint Mother' who lives in flower trees.
4-02	Guizhou Province Dong People Baby's back towel		Banyan Tree Worship	In the middle is the 'sun' flower, and surrounding it is a simplified banyan tree. The white patterns are four tree trunks, and the rows of small round shapes are leaves.
4-03	Guizhou Province Miao women's embroidered Baby's back towel		Worship of Maple	The Miao Tribe mythology: the origin of mankind is from maple. The maple gives birth to the butterfly mother and in turn it gives birth to animals like dragons, dogs and snakes.
4-04	Guizhou Province Miao People A detail of an apron		Maple Tree Worship	Miao people's legend (same as above): Inside the square is a maple tree's profile. The four corners are butterfly mothers.



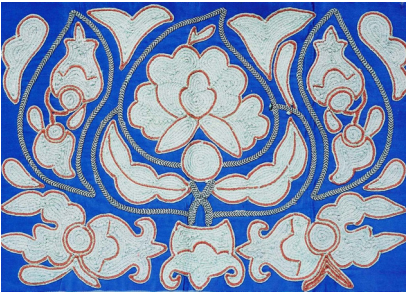

<p>4-05</p>	<p>Guizhou Province Miao people An detail of an apron</p>		<p>Flower Spirit Worship</p>	<p>Many races in the southern part of China still preserve the worship of flower spirit. They feel that flowers are the source of life for mankind. The soul of mankind is the soul of flowers. They like to utilize 'light' around flowers, to emphasise its decorative effect.</p>
<p>4-06</p>	<p>Guizhou Province Mao-Nan People A detail of a baby's back towel</p>		<p>Flower Spirit Worship</p>	<p>Both Mao-Nan people and Dong people think that humans are created by 'Flower Saint Mother' who lives in the flower trees. Therefore they both worship the Flower Spirit.</p>
<p>4-07</p>	<p>Yunnan province Zhuang People A detail of a baby's back towel</p>		<p>Flower Spirit Worship</p>	<p>When Zhuang women are giving birth, they have to set up a 'Flower Spirit Grandmother' God cabinet at home. They will also serve a bunch of flowers in order to worship Flower Spirit Grandmother and Flower Spirit. After babies are born, people will plant a flower tree to sustain babies' flower souls.</p>

APPENDIX 5: Analysis of the style of 'Tree of Life' patterned textiles from the South Western Region of China.




Num.	Collective Place and Purposes	Pattern	Motif	Explanation
5-01	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Tree of Life	<p>The entire pattern is formed by long and short curves, and its style has a sense of rhythm, especially the skill used in the white leaf shapes, which is most unique.</p> <p>The phoenix wings and tail are made with curved lines, showing that the flower and bird can be harmonized.</p>
5-02	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Tree of Life	<p>A curly blue stem runs through the whole picture. It makes the bold flower leaves unified.</p>
5-03	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Tree of Life	<p>Embroidery of the 'Tree of Life' with colourful flowers and leaves; it is really beautiful. In the upper left corner there is a flying bird shape that is brisk and natural, with abundant meaning and interest.</p>
5-04	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Tree of Life	<p>The flower in the centre is shaped like a sun, and inside the pistil is a curled-up bird.</p>



5-05	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Sun deity bird Tree of Life	<p>In between the split composition of the orange-coloured flower stem, there is a highly deformed phoenix perching on the flower branch. The wing tail has the form of three rings with the same centre, twisting upwards.</p> <p>The tip of the phoenix tail has a small red sun, showing the concept of the ancient 'sun deity bird'.</p>
5-06	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Flower of Life	<p>Peaches are hidden inside flowers.</p> <p>Between peaches there are birds sitting on tree bark. Among the flowers there are blue, red, and pink lines which create a loose image. The whole picture makes an interesting mix of real and unreal images.</p>
5-07	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Flower Tree and a Pair of Phoenix	<p>Birds' tail patterns are shown on the right and left sides, which become visual symbols. The whole picture has an innocent playful element.</p>




5-08	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Tree of Life	This strong flower tree is not only the worship ideal of the Miao People's ancestor, but also girls' emotional sustenance. The image is bold and wild.
5-09	Guizhou Province Shuei People Baby's back towel		Continuous Melon Flower of Life	The upper part is 'Continuous Melon'; the lower part is 'Flower of Life'.
5-10	Guizhou Province Bu-Yi People Baby's back towel		Flower of Life	The main element is made from four white diamonds, with 'butterfly love flowers' inside them. The upper block line has flowers, birds and butterflies.
5-11	Guizhou Province Bu-Yi People Baby's back towel		Flower of Life	The main element is made from four white diamonds with black cotton line birds, butterflies, fish, and 'Flower of Life'. The upper horizontal block has flowers, birds and butterflies inside it.

5-12	Yunnan Province Dai Tribe Hand-woven cloth		Tree of Life	This is a form which combines the tree of life with horses. With the heaven access symbol, the images vitality is enhanced.
5-13	Guizhou Province Miao People Detail of Baby's back towel		Continuous Melon	Square abstract butterflies and a central pomegranate are combined together. It represents 'Continuous Melon'.
5-14	Guizhou Province Miao People Detail of a sleeve of woman's splendid attire		Many (San Duo)	The central main pattern is a peach. Outside are pomegranates and chayotes. It represents 'Much luck, long life, and many children'.
5-15	Guizhou Province Miao People Detail of a sleeve of woman's splendid attire		Continuous Melon	Peach and calabash grow on the 'Tree of Life' at the same time. On the leaves, there is also the pomegranate line that echoes with the butterfly on the upper part, meaning 'continuous melon'.




APPENDIX 6: Analysis of 'Tree of Life' patterned textiles relating to the fertility, from the South Western Region of China.



Num.	Collective Place and Purposes	Pattern	Motif	Explanation
6-01	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidere detail of an apron		Tree of Life	This is a broken branch flower. The large flower in the middle is shaped like a sun. Inside the pistil is a transformed 'mother butterfly nursing her baby', expressing that the butterfly mother is the ancestral spirit of Miao Tribe.
6-02	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron		Butterfly Loves Flower	The pattern uses parallel orange and blue butterfly antennae to divide the whole picture into a balanced pattern. Below, arcs create a butterfly. The butterfly's antennae evolves into a stem which runs through flowers. It symbolises reproduction.
6-03	Guizhou Province Miao Tribe An detail of woman's upper garment		Bird and Peony	The bird represents masculinity, and combines with peony which represents femininity. At the same time, on the 'Tree of Life' there are peaches and pomegranates representing many children, that obviously express reproduction worship.



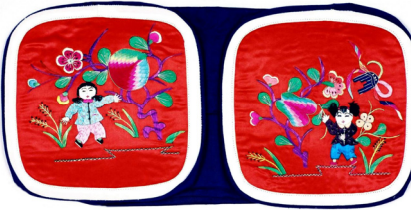

<p>6-04</p>	<p>Guizhou Province Miao Tribe Embroidered detail of an apron</p>		<p>Miao People and Ancestor Worship</p> <p>This is a typical 'Miao people's ancestor worship picture'. This picture shows a scene where ancestors (Yiang Grandfather and Yiang Grandmother) are beating a wooden drum and preparing for the Guzang festival. The ancestors' hands are feather shaped. This is how Miao People express their ancestors' spirits. Yiang Grandfather and Yiang Grandmother are sitting on tall chairs on each side, and beating the drum. A 'Tree of Life' is in the background.</p>
<p>6-05</p>	<p>Guizhou Province Miao Tribe An detail of woman's upper garment</p>		<p>Fish peach lines</p> <p>The peach of the 'Tree of Life' combines with the fish abdomen with many eggs, emphasising the reproductive power of fish. In addition, the fish represents femininity, and inside the peach there are dragon lines representing masculinity, giving the meaning of change.</p>





6-06	<p>Guizhou Province Shuei People A detail of baby's back towel</p>		<p>Money and Pomegranate</p>	<p>'Money and Pomegranate' uses money itself as a shape to split the image into five portions. In the centre is a pomegranate which represents a lot of children. Other portions are decorated by pairs of melons and birds. Birds are male and melons are female. It combines male and female, and creates all the creatures of life.</p>
6-07	<p>Guizhou Province Shuei People A detail of baby's back towel</p>		<p>Continuous Melon</p>	<p>'Continuous melon' is an open pumpkin which represents the female body. There are three layers coming from inside. The interior layer has a bird which represents the male. The middle and outer layers have a pair of butterflies on either side. At the bottom of the pumpkin, there is another butterfly. It has the meaning of reproduction.</p>
6-08	<p>Guizhou Province Miao People head cloth</p>		<p>Continuous Melon</p>	<p>A square-shaped butterfly's body is a pomegranate which means 'Continuous melon'. In the centre there is a pomegranate flower which represents females.</p>

APPENDIX 7: Analysis of 'Tree of Life' patterned textiles and cut paper relating to the fertility, from the Yellow River Basin Region of China.

Num.	Collective Place and Purposes	Pattern	Motif	Explanation
7-01	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Mouse Eat Melon	The 'Tree of Life' produces melons. It is combined with butterflies, representing 'continuous melon'. Beside the melon are two God of Children Mice. Apparently it has the meaning of fertility worship.
7-02	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Fish Play with Lotus	The fish represents male and the lotus represents female. The paper cutting of fish going through the lotus represents the marriage of male and female. It also represents a new life being born.
7-03	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Monkey Stealing the Peach	Monkey is a masculine symbol and peach is a feminine symbol; the crossing of yin and yang will become all things on earth. 'Monkey Stealing the Peach' also has the meaning of longevity.

7-04	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Tree of Life	'Tree of Life' combined with frogs that symbolise many children and expresses the proliferation of life and vigorous vitality.
7-05	Shaanxi Province Paper-cut		Fish Play with Lotus; Lotus Produce Children	Fish play with a lotus, which produces children, emphasising fertility.
7-06	Shaanxi Province Embroidered pouch (for carrying money and odds and		Continuous Melon	The form of the pouch is 'melon' and the lower part is a pair of butterflies meaning 'continuous melon'. The upper part is the 'Flower of Life'. The overall meaning is fertility worship.
7-07	Shaanxi Province An undergarment protecting the abdomen		Lotus Produce Children	A child is standing on a lively lotus, which means 'Lotus produces children'. It also exaggerates the combination of female lotus and Chinese word 'Wen'. The whole structure is full of life.

7-08	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Tree of Life	(Left picture) The size of the melon is exaggerated with respect to the human figure. Also, it uses an open melon to show its seeds, which represents the 'Tree of Life'.
7-09	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		Tree of Life	(Left picture) A child is born from an open melon, which represents a very energetic 'Tree of Life'.
7-10	Shaanxi Province Pillowcase		A Blessed Baby Soon	(Right picture) Jujubes are exaggeratedly growing from a tree. The upper right side is Sheng (an instrument). On the left side of the child are yellow laurels, which represents 'A Blessed Baby Soon'.
7-11	Shaanxi Province Child's Bib		Flower of Life	Abstract lotus: The theme is the lotus which emphasise on lotus seeds. On the petals there are 'Flower of Life' patterns.

7-12	Shaanxi Province Child's Bib		Flower of Life	The picture is a flower shape; on the five petals there are the 'Flower of Life' patterns. Within there are flowers and pomegranates which represent a lot of children. It shows the meaning of reproduction.
7-13	Shaanxi Province An undergarment protecting the abdomen (boy)		Continuous Melon	There is a hole under the dudou; this is for a young boy. This dudou's shape is like a gourd. The lower portion is a combination of flowers and melons. In addition, the melon, which represents a female, looks like a butterfly. The upper portion is a lion which represents a male. This pattern is a combination of male and female. The meaning of reproduction is very apparent here.
7-14	Shaanxi Province An undergarment protecting the abdomen (girl)		Lotus Produce Children	Under the dudou is a round shape. This dudou is for young girls, and is a gourd shape. The upper portion is a 'Flower of Life'. The lower portion is 'Lotus produces children'.
7-15	Shaanxi Province Shoe-pads		Butterfly Love Flower	Butterflies which represent males, and flowers which represent females combine together. The meaning of reproduction is very apparent here.