

Creative Representation of Monkey Figures in Thai Classical Literature through Traditional Chinese Ink Wash Techniques

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of deepening artistic exchanges between China and Southeast Asia, this research explores how traditional Chinese ink wash painting can serve as a medium for contemporary visual interpretation of monkey figures in Thai classical literature. As Thailand's national epic, Ramakien centers Hanuman and the monkey army as core narrative carriers, whose symbolic connotations extend far beyond sacred heroism to encompass wit, loyalty, playfulness, emotional complexity, and supernatural transformation. Temple murals and Khon masked theatre have established a complete, standardized visual code system for these monkey characters; nevertheless, their ritualized, highly decorative formal conventions fail to meet the diverse expressive demands of modern literary illustrations, which require vivid bodily dynamics, layered psychological portrayal, and variable atmospheric rendering. In contrast, traditional Chinese ink wash painting has developed a sophisticated artistic vocabulary for primate subjects built upon freehand brushwork, broken ink modulation, textured strokes, graded ink tones, and compositional blank space. Rooted in the aesthetic tenet of "capturing spirit through form," ink art excels at conveying movement, inner temperament, and virtual real spatial atmosphere.

This study adopts a practice-led mixed-method research framework integrating close textual reading, comparative visual semiotic analysis, iterative ink creation experiments, and multidimensional expert evaluation. First, it systematically categorizes core monkey characters, their symbolic meanings, and representative narrative episodes extracted from the full text of Ramakien, clarifying differentiated visual expression requirements for each type of monkey figure. Second, it dissects the fundamental brushwork, tinting, compositional, and blank space aesthetics of Chinese ink paintings depicting apes and monkeys, sorting out the applicable scenarios for meticulous fine line painting, expressive freehand brushwork, and pale ink blank space styles, respectively. On this basis, three cross-cultural hybrid ink wash visual style prototypes are constructed: a heroic freehand ink style for grand battles and martial plot scenes, a refined meticulous ink style for lighthearted daily playful narratives, and a poetic blank space ink style for supernatural transformation and fantasy storylines.

Comparative visual analysis and expert evaluation data jointly verify that Chinese ink wash techniques effectively expand the visual lexicon for interpreting mythical monkey figures from Thai classical literature, enriching the presentation of bodily momentum, tonal hierarchy, subtle emotional cues, and spatial mood. The research explicitly clarifies that the proposed ink wash creation frameworks are not intended to replace established indigenous Thai visual traditions but to provide an alternative artistic medium for recontextualizing Thai cultural symbols. Furthermore, this paper formulates standardized creation workflows, selective cultural symbol retention principles, and narrative style matching strategies that can be applied to literary illustration creation, cross-cultural art education, exhibition design, and subsequent visual research on Southeast Asian mythological creatures.

Keywords: Thai Classical Literature; Ramakien; Hanuman; Chinese Ink Wash Painting; Stylization of Monkey Images; Cross cultural Visual Creation

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Global Cultural Context

The continuous advancement of cultural and artistic communication between China and ASEAN countries has generated abundant opportunities for comparative art

research and cross-border visual creation experiments. Within this intercultural context, traditional Chinese ink wash painting and Thai classical literary visual art represent two independent yet interconnected artistic systems, both of which maintain sustained focus on mythical beasts, sacred divine beings, heroic metamorphosis, and symbolic narrative expression. Compiled and finalized under the reign of King Rama I, Ramakien, the localized Thai adaptation of India's Ramayana, has occupied an irreplaceable core position in Thailand's literary and visual cultural heritage for centuries. Among its extensive cast of characters, Hanuman and the monkey army are not merely auxiliary supporting roles, but pivotal narrative agents embodying bravery, loyalty, cunning, wisdom, romantic temperament, filial piety, and supernatural intervention.

The characterization of Hanuman in the Thai literary tradition carries multi-layered dimensionality. Beyond his identity as an invincible warrior, he acts as a military strategist, trickster, royal messenger, lover, devoted retainer, and filial son. Supplementary monkey-related roles, including Macchanu, forest monkey troops, and shape-shifting hybrid spirit monkeys, further broaden the spectrum of figurative representation. These figures differ drastically in social rank, moral orientation, physical form, narrative agency, and emotional tone. Consequently, a single rigid visual template cannot fully convey their diverse traits across battle clashes, comedic interludes, intimate daily encounters, long distance journeys and supernatural metamorphosis sequences.

Historically, monkey figures from Thai classical texts have been primarily visualized through two canonical mediums: temple mural painting and Khon masked performance. These indigenous art forms hold authoritative cultural status and sophisticated visual grammar, preserving complete iconographic information regarding character costumes, symbolic color schemes, fixed postures, social hierarchies, facial structures, and ritual identity markers. However, their formal logics are shaped by unique architectural constraints, ceremonial functions, and theatrical performance demands. Temple murals adopt flat planar composition, repetitive decorative patterns, and codified stereotyped gestures; Khon masks solidify character identity through standardized facial contours and ornamental structures. Such conventions excel at mass cultural recognition and the inheritance of ritual aesthetics, yet suffer from limited flexibility when adapted to

contemporary illustration formats that demand close-up emotional expression, flexible viewpoint switching, layered spatial atmosphere, and individualized bodily movement.

Traditional Chinese ink wash painting offers a complementary set of visual expressive tools to offset these limitations. Over successive dynasties, Chinese painters developed comprehensive technical approaches for depicting primates by manipulating brush pressure, stroke speed, ink concentration, water saturation, textured brushwork, and deliberate compositional omission. Literati ink paintings and modern animal ink works demonstrate how the physical properties of ink can render fur texture, muscle structure, dynamic gestures, and individual temperament without exhaustive fine detail. The core aesthetic principle of “capturing spirit through form” is particularly valuable for literary mythical characters, whose identity is defined not only by physical appearance but also by bodily movement, inner intention, and emotional presence.

The cross-cultural value of integrating ink wash aesthetics into Thai literary visualization lies not in direct mechanical stylistic transplantation but in selective adaptive absorption. Linear rhythm, graded ink tones, abbreviated formal modeling, and blank space composition serve as universally accessible visual devices across cultural boundaries, while retained Thai iconographic markers safeguard the cultural specificity of original literary characters. Responsible cross-cultural artistic creation must draw a clear distinction between productive reinterpretation and oversimplified cultural flattening: it is essential to preserve symbolic signifiers that anchor Thai literary identity while leveraging the material and compositional logic of ink painting to unlock novel expressive dimensions.

Existing academic research has not yet systematically addressed this interdisciplinary creative proposition. Scholarship centering on Ramakien and Hanuman predominantly focuses on textual origin, comparative mythology, theatrical performance, and religious symbolic interpretation. Studies exploring Chinese ink monkey painting mostly concentrate on indigenous Chinese subjects, individual master painters, and technical lineages, with minimal attention to mythological primate figures from Southeast Asian literary traditions. Research into cross-cultural artistic fusion often presents isolated individual artworks to prove technical feasibility, yet rarely establishes a coherent, replicable visual framework that links narrative categorization, character functional positioning, iconographic retention rules, and medium-specific ink techniques.

In response to these research gaps, the present study constructs differentiated ink wash creation systems for visualizing monkey figures in Thai classical literature and conducts preliminary expert assessment of their practical effects. Its core objective is not to formulate a universal replacement aesthetic, but to build a transferable operational methodology bridging literary textual interpretation, cultural symbolic analysis, and practice-based visual experimentation.

1.2 Research Objectives and Core Research Questions

1.2.1 Main Research Objective

This study aims to construct and preliminarily evaluate a cross-cultural visual style framework that selectively applies core aesthetic and technical principles of traditional Chinese ink wash painting to the figurative creation of monkey characters in Thai classical literature. The integrated framework connects character classification, narrative contextual attributes, Thai cultural iconography, ink-based formal language, and standardized creation workflows, delivering a theoretically grounded, operable creative paradigm applicable to literary illustration teaching, exhibition design, and cross-cultural visual communication.

1.2.2 Core Research Questions

1. What narrative functions, multi-layered symbolic connotations, fixed visual signifiers, and typical scene categories differentiate the core monkey figures featured in Thai classical literature?
2. Which technical methods and aesthetic tenets of traditional Chinese ink monkey painting are most suitable for expressing bodily dynamics, individual personality, and narrative atmosphere of monkey characters from Thai epic texts?
3. How to construct differentiated ink wash visual style prototypes for heroic, playful, and supernatural storylines while retaining core Thai cultural and iconographic identity markers to avoid cultural misreading?
4. What evaluation feedback do professional experts provide regarding the three hybrid ink wash prototypes, and what standardized design principles can guide the coherent, culturally respectful integration of Thai literary imagery and Chinese ink wash aesthetics?

1.3 Research Significance

1.3.1 Theoretical Significance

This research enriches comparative visual semiotic studies by organically combining Thai literary symbolic analysis with the material and aesthetic logic of Chinese ink wash painting. Rather than treating cross-cultural artistic adaptation as simple mechanical splicing of cultural motifs, the study conceptualizes cross-medium visual transformation as an interactive relationship among narrative function, character iconographic identity, medium expressive characteristics, and audience cultural recognition. This analytical perspective expands academic research on the visual interpretation of Southeast Asian literary mythology, and extends the application boundary of Chinese ink animal painting beyond domestic historical and literary subject matter.

The proposed tripartite hybrid style framework also provides a practice-oriented research model for exploring the retention, simplification, and recontextualization of cultural symbols when transferred across independent artistic systems. In this regard, the paper supplements academic discussions on cross-cultural visual translation within the broader context of China–ASEAN cultural exchange, while emphasizing that transnational artistic innovation must maintain full awareness of cultural particularity and interpretive responsibility to avoid cultural homogenization or the erasure of indigenous symbolic meaning.

1.3.2 Practical Significance

The three differentiated ink wash style prototypes and their matched standardized creation workflows can support the production of printed Thai literary illustrations, cultural education teaching materials, museum exhibition visual graphics, cultural and creative derivative design and experimental animation visual development. Within art education contexts, the framework provides a structured teaching path linking literary text analysis and studio creation practice: it guides students to dissect character narrative positioning, select targeted ink technical systems, and rationalize decision-making regarding cultural symbol retention and stylistic adaptation. For curatorial and cross-cultural communication scenarios, the research offers an alternative visual expression channel to present Thai epic mythical characters to audiences familiar with

East Asian ink aesthetics, without stripping away core Thai cultural identity features of the original literary figures.

1.4 Research Structure and Paper Framework

The body of this paper is divided into four core sections. The Introduction establishes the Sino-ASEAN cross-cultural research context, defines core research problems, clarifies research objectives, questions, and theoretical and practical significance. The Literature Review sorts domestic and international scholarship on Thai literary monkey imagery, Chinese ink monkey painting techniques, and cross-cultural visual fusion creation, systematically summarizing three major interrelated research gaps in existing academic outputs. The Results and Discussion section interprets empirical data generated through controlled studio creation experiments, analyzing the cross-cultural adaptability of ink wash technical systems, elaborating the construction logic of three hybrid ink wash visual styles, and summarizing balancing principles for cultural symbol retention and formal stylistic transformation. The Conclusion and Future Work section recapitulates core research findings, objectively addresses inherent limitations of this research project, and proposes multiple expandable directions for follow-up research, including multimedia creation experiments, large-scale audience reception evaluation, curriculum practice research, and stylistic framework extension to other Thai mythological archetypes. Acknowledgements and complete reference lists are attached at the end of the full text.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Domestic and International Research on Monkey Images in Thai Classical Literature

Thai indigenous academic research targeting monkey archetypes within Ramakien predominantly focuses on textual origin evolution, mythological genealogy, theatrical performance interpretation and character symbolic connotation analysis. Nair (2024) systematically sorts the birth background, multi dimensional characterization and supernatural capabilities of Hanuman in Thailand's national epic, highlighting the unique coexistence of heroic power, playful humor, romantic sentiment, and worldly rational intelligence embedded within the character's literary setting. Jiraphas (2017) conducts a parallel comparative study of Hanuman and Sun Wukong, demonstrating how the two divine monkey archetypes evolved under distinct literary, religious, and regional cultural

environments. Such comparative mythology research effectively identifies shared archetypal similarities and culturally exclusive differentiated traits between the two figures, yet its core. The analytical focus remains textual comparative research rather than constructing a systematic operable visual creation system for literary monkey imagery.

Scholarship exploring Thai indigenous visual culture has also analyzed standardized iconographic coding rules of Hanuman in Khon theatre masks and ancient temple murals. Cheewajit (2025) argues that these two traditional art forms solidify stable character identity through fixed color symbolism, decorative ornamentation, standardized facial bone structures, and ritualized static gestures. From the perspective of this research, these indigenous visual conventions should not be merely defined as expressive limitations; instead, they constitute a culturally rooted design system with core functional logic differing entirely from contemporary literary illustration. The key research problem therefore emerges: how to preserve the identity-carrying function of Thai traditional visual symbolic codes while expanding the expressive scope of bodily movement, subtle emotional expression, flexible viewpoint switching, and layered spatial atmosphere within a new artistic medium.

Western academic research on Southeast Asian mythology generally situates Hanuman within the global circulation system of the Ramayana epic and grand comparative heroic narrative theory. Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory provides a foundational conceptual framework for explaining the cross-cultural intelligibility of heroic archetypes such as Hanuman; yet scholars must apply this universal archetypal model with extreme caution to avoid overlooking unique localized literary connotations shaped by Thai cultural values of loyalty, quick wit, sacred service, romantic identity, social hierarchy, and supernatural transformation—core traits that define Hanuman's exclusive Thai cultural identity.

Chinese language research exploring Thai monkey cultural imagery mostly adopts comparative literature, cultural circulation, and international language education research perspectives. Wang (2023) explores the educational value of parallel comparative interpretation of Hanuman and Sun Wukong within international school teaching contexts in Thailand, verifying the auxiliary teaching function of dual divine monkey archetype comparison for cross-cultural literary courses. Xie (2017) traces the

historical transmission path of Hanuman and Sun Wukong cultural imagery across Thailand, establishing a broad historical context for analyzing the interactive circulation of monkey symbolic culture across Asian civilizations. Tian and Mankhatitham (2026) preliminarily discuss the feasibility of applying Chinese ink wash techniques to Thai mythological illustration creation, yet their research remains confined to preliminary theoretical speculation without systematic experimental verification and standardized stylistic framework construction. Collectively, existing Chinese language research clearly reveals an urgent academic demand for systematic research translating layered literary textual connotation into differentiated targeted visual styles.

2.2 Research on Traditional Chinese Ink Wash Techniques for Depicting Monkeys

Academic research concerning Chinese ink monkey painting can be categorized into three major branches: historical origin combing, individual master painter case analysis, and technical aesthetic interpretation. The Palace Museum Research Team (2016) traces the developmental evolution of ape and monkey imagery from the Song Dynasty through the Ming and Qing dynasties, taking masterworks including Fa Chang's Four Apes as core analytical materials to discuss dry brush textured rendering, abbreviated formal modeling, restrained spatial layout, and the integration of primate figures with a tranquil contemplative atmosphere. This historical artistic tradition proves that ink painting can depict primate subjects across a full spectrum of descriptive intensity, ranging from precise, controlled linear construction to highly condensed tonal suggestive expression.

Research focusing on modern ink painters further clarifies the comprehensive technical flexibility of the monkey painting genre. Shang (2021) analyzes Xu Peichen's freehand monkey ink works, emphasizing how rhythmic brush strokes, graded brush pressure, splashed ink modulation, and structural simplification convey bodily kinetic energy and unique individual animal temperament. Liu (2022) centers on scattered fur textured brushwork and broken ink technical systems pioneered by Liu Jiyu, illustrating how layered overlapping texture strokes can render fur direction, density, and soft tactile quality while retaining spontaneous brush vitality. These multi-dimensional ink technical methods hold direct reference value for the present research, as they provide differentiated expressive pathways for depicting martial force, playful bodily movement, subtle intimate facial expression, and ethereal supernatural atmosphere.

Despite this abundant technical and aesthetic research foundation, most existing scholarship on Chinese ink monkey painting remains confined to indigenous Chinese cultural subject matter, artist biographical sorting, or visual traditions surrounding Sun Wukong and other native mythological figures. Directly transplanting these mature ink techniques to visualize culturally exclusive Thai literary monkey characters raises additional unaddressed research questions regarding cross-cultural character recognition, indigenous costume and bodily symbolic markers, narrative scene matching, and the ethical boundaries of stylistic cross-medium transfer. The core research gap therefore lies not in insufficient ink painting technical resources, but in the absence of a clear adaptive operation framework that clarifies which ink techniques correspond to specific Thai literary characters and narrative scenes, and how technical selection influences audience cultural recognition of indigenous Thai archetypes.

2.3 Research on Cross-cultural Fusion of Chinese Ink and Southeast Asian Mythological Visuals

Recent academic papers and international conference projects have begun to explore Chinese ink wash as an innovative medium for reinterpreting Southeast Asian mythological and literary imagery. Tian and Mankhatitham (2026) propose that linear rhythm, graded ink tonal variation, compositional simplification, and blank space aesthetics facilitate cross-cultural visual communication, as these formal qualities operate through universal perceptual experience rather than regionally exclusive cultural symbols. Their preliminary research identifies three core cross-cultural visual adaptation strategies: selective retention of cultural symbols, medium recontextualization, and formal simplification. These theoretical strategies provide directional guidance for balancing mandatory cultural identity markers and stylistic transformation under the ink medium's formal logic, distinguishing visual elements that must remain recognizable from those open to medium-driven artistic restructuring.

Nevertheless, existing literature within this research field mostly stays at the level of theoretical feasibility demonstration or isolated single artwork case presentation. Studies rarely classify narrative plot categories, establish explicit matching correlations between literary character functional positioning and targeted ink technical systems, or construct standardized evaluation criteria to jointly assess cultural recognizability, narrative suitability, and formal ink aesthetic integration. Consequently, cross-cultural

ink creation experiments remain largely intuitive studio practice without standardized replicable processes that can be systematically discussed, taught, quantitatively evaluated, and iteratively optimized for subsequent creative projects.

2.4 Research Gaps and Original Contributions of This Paper

A comprehensive collation of domestic and international Literature Review identifies three interconnected core research gaps within current academic outputs:

1. Research investigating Thai literary monkey figures has accumulated abundant resources on textual origin, symbolic connotation, and theatrical performance, yet it fails to systematically connect textual analysis with the development of operable contemporary differentiated visual creation styles.

2. Scholarship on Chinese ink monkey painting has formed a complete technical and aesthetic theoretical system; yet this mature visual language is rarely adapted to culturally exclusive Thai epic characters through standardized iconographic retention and narrative scene-targeted matching processes.

3. Existing cross-cultural visual fusion experiments mostly exist as scattered individual creation cases, lacking differentiated multi style frameworks, explicit standardized creation workflows and complete quantitative evaluation mechanisms that simultaneously measure cultural recognizability, narrative matching suitability, and formal aesthetic coherence.

In response to the above three research gaps, this paper puts forward three major innovative academic contributions:

1. Conceptual innovation: This research organically integrates Thai literary character semiotic analysis with medium-specific expressive characteristics of Chinese ink wash painting, redefining cross-cultural stylization as a rigorous process of visual semiotic translation rather than superficial decorative motif splicing.

2. Practical creation innovation: Three mutually independent, complementary hybrid ink-wash style prototypes are constructed, directly linked to heroic martial narratives, playful daily storylines, and supernatural fantasy plots, respectively. The study explicitly specifies the internal matching relationships among brushwork modulation, ink tonal

gradation, compositional layout, narrative atmospheric shaping, and retained Thai cultural iconographic markers within each stylistic system.

3. Methodological innovation: The research adopts an integrated mixed-methods research design combining textual interpretation, comparative visual semiotic analysis, controlled iterative studio creation experiments, and blind expert panel quantitative reviews. This holistic methodology enables the research to advance from theoretical problem identification to practical visual scheme development and standardized critical assessment of creative outputs.

3 Methodology

This research adopts mixed qualitative research methods incorporating documentary textual research, comparative visual semiotic analysis, variable-controlled ink creation experiments, and quantitative expert group evaluation. The full research implementation progresses through five sequential progressive stages. All ink creation experiments and expert evaluation procedures are completed within the professional Ink Painting Studio of the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Unified standardized ink painting tools, rice paper materials, and consistent multi dimensional evaluation indicators are deployed throughout the research process to guarantee the objectivity, repeatability, and comparability of all experimental data.

3.1 Documentary Research Method

3.1.1 Sorting and Coding of Thai Classical Literary Texts

The Rama I official recension of the complete Ramakien epic serves as the core textual research corpus, supplemented by Thai folk monkey ballads, temple mural literary manuscripts, and Khon masked theatre full scripts. The research completes close reading and systematic coding and classification of all narrative fragments involving monkey characters, extracting three core analytical dimensions: monkey character archetype classification, layered symbolic connotation and representative narrative scene types. A standardized classification database documenting monkey imagery textual attributes in Thai classical literature is established for subsequent matching analysis with ink technical systems.

3.1.2 Collation of Chinese Ink Monkey Painting Literature

The research collects ancient ink painting albums, monographs written by modern master animal painters, ink wash technical theoretical treatises, and peer-reviewed academic papers focusing on monkey ink painting creation. Core technical categories, standardized brushwork operation steps, ink tonal matching rules, and compositional aesthetic logic are extracted and sorted, forming a targeted ink technical resource library applicable to mythological monkey figurative creation and generating a categorized ink technical classification table for cross-reference with Thai literary scene types.

3.1.3 Collation of Cross-cultural Art Theoretical Documents

The paper systematically collects academic papers addressing cross-cultural visual semiotics, transnational communication of oriental ink aesthetics, and Southeast Asian myth illustration design theory. Key research outcomes regarding visual transformation strategies, graded standards for cultural symbol retention, and multidimensional cross-cultural audience recognition evaluation indicators are extracted to construct the theoretical foundation for the hybrid ink style framework design and expert evaluation dimension formulation.

3.2 Comparative Visual Semiotic Analysis Method

Two groups of parallel comparative semiotic analysis are implemented throughout the research:

1. Comparative analysis between traditional Thai monkey visual symbolic systems (temple murals and Khon theatre masks) and Chinese ink monkey visual language, summarizing core contradictory points and compatible fusion nodes between the two independent visual systems in modeling rules, color application logic, linear expression, and spatial processing methods.

2. Comparative analysis between personality traits and the required narrative atmosphere of distinct monkey archetypes in Thai epic texts and the expressive characteristics of differentiated Chinese ink wash styles, establishing targeted matching correlations between ink technical systems and each category of Thai monkey narrative scenes to lay theoretical groundwork for constructing three hybrid cross-cultural ink styles.

3.3 Controlled Ink Creation Experiment Method

Variable-controlled studio creation experiments are designed for empirical data collection. Independent variables include three ink wash style categories (heroic freehand ink style, delicate meticulous ink style, blank poetic ink style) and three matching narrative scene types (Hanuman large-scale battlefield sequences, mortal monkey troop daily playful episodes, Macchanu hybrid supernatural transformation fantasy plots). Unified control variables are set across all experimental groups: standardized rice paper dimensions, consistent ink and brush tool specifications, fixed creation time limits, and universal core Thai cultural symbol retention criteria. A total of 18 groups of independent experimental creation samples are completed, with each group repeated three times to eliminate random accidental errors arising from hand-painted creation. All finished creation samples are assigned unique serial numbers and stored as standardized visual data for subsequent blind expert scoring and comparative statistical analysis.

3.4 Expert Group Quantitative Evaluation Method

A twelve-member cross-disciplinary expert evaluation panel is established, evenly divided into three specialized research fields: four Thai classical literature researchers, four professional Chinese ink painting professors, and four cross-cultural art communication scholars. A five-point Likert quantitative scoring system is developed, covering five core evaluation dimensions: completeness of cultural symbol restoration, expressive power of character personality, rendering effect of narrative atmosphere, integrity of ink wash aesthetic logic, and cross-cultural audience recognizability. Each dimension is scored on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents extremely poor performance and 5 represents outstanding perfect performance. All 18 groups of anonymous creation samples are randomly presented to expert panel members for blind scoring without background information about the creative process. After collecting all scoring data, average score values for each ink style across the five evaluation dimensions are sorted and subjected to comparative statistical analysis to quantitatively verify the practical expressive effects of the three constructed hybrid ink wash style prototypes.

3.5 Standardized Research Implementation Process Flow

1. Stage One: Document sorting and textual coding (4 weeks). Complete systematic classification of monkey-related narrative fragments extracted from Thai classical

literature and collation of Chinese ink monkey painting technical resources, forming two independent categorized research databases.

2. Stage Two: Comparative visual semiotic analysis and preliminary hybrid style framework construction (3 weeks). Establish targeted matching relationships between differentiated ink technical systems and distinct Thai monkey narrative scene types, drafting complete theoretical frameworks for the three cross-cultural inks wash styles.

3. Stage Three: Variable-controlled iterative ink creation experiments (6 weeks). Complete repeated sample creation for 18 experimental groups corresponding to three styles and three narrative scene archetypes, standardize, and archive all finished visual experimental works.

4. Stage Four: Expert blind scoring and quantitative data statistical analysis (2 weeks). Collect standardized Likert scale scoring data from all twelve panel experts, calculate average scores for each style across evaluation dimensions, and summarize comparative strengths and weaknesses of the three hybrid ink wash systems.

5. Stage Five: Result induction, academic discussion, and full-paper composition (4 weeks). Summarize standardized ink creation operation specifications, graded cultural symbol adaptive transformation principles, core research conclusions, and expandable directions for follow-up academic research.

4 Research Results

4.1 Classification and Symbolic Connotation of Monkey Figures in Thai Classical Literature

Through full-text close reading and systematic coding and sorting of the complete Rama I rendition of Ramakien and supplementary Thai literary manuscripts, monkey figures featured in Thai classical literature are categorized into three major archetypal groups based on character identity positioning, core personality attributes, and matched typical narrative scenes: divine heroic monkeys represented by Hanuman, mortal playful forest monkey troops, and hybrid fantasy supernatural monkeys represented by Macchanu. Each archetypal category carries exclusive fixed symbolic connotations, corresponding independent representative narrative scenes, and unique atmospheric rendering requirements, as detailed in the standardized classification table below.

Table1

Classification, Symbolic Connotation, and Narrative Features of Monkey Archetypes in Thai Classical Literature

Archetype Group	Representative Character	Core Symbolic Connotations	Typical Narrative Scenes	Dominant Atmospheric Requirements
Divine Heroic Monkey	Hanuman (White Divine Monkey Warrior)	Unwavering loyalty, unparalleled bravery, boundless divine power, strategic wit, sacred royal guardian identity	Large-scale demon army battles, transoceanic military marches, one-on-one duels, royal rescue missions, covert infiltration operations	Grand, powerful, tense, solemn heroic aura, overwhelming sacred momentum
Mortal Playful Monkey Troop	Ordinary forest monkey soldiers, minor royal monkey attendants	Youthful vitality, mischievous playfulness, warm group camaraderie, simple mortal joy, secondary loyal	Collective forest play, tropical fruit picking, military camp daily trivialities, casual banter and interpersonal interaction	Light, lively, relaxed, warm, tranquil pastoral charm

			auxiliary identity		
Hybrid Fantasy Supernatural Monkey	Macchanu (Half- monkey half- fish deity, Hanuman's son), shape- shifting spirit monkeys	Dual hybrid identity conflict, intertwined bloodline kinship, powerful transformatio n ability, mysterious ethereal temperamen t, inner identity dilemma		Netherworld conspiracy plots, ocean magical combat, identity choice dilemmas, supernatural shape- shifting sequences	Ethereal, mysterious, illusory, layered inner emotional contradiction , poetic fantasy conception

Narrative scenes: Heroic war sequences require powerful, heavy, high-tension dynamic visual language; light daily playful scenes demand delicate, faint, detail-oriented expressive techniques; hybrid supernatural fantasy plots call for sparse, ethereal, ambiguous virtual real spatial processing. The single flat decorative modeling logic of traditional Thai temple murals cannot simultaneously satisfy these three entirely distinct atmospheric expressive demands, forming the core practical necessity for developing differentiated Chinese ink wash cross-cultural creation styles.

Further semiotic comparative analysis extracts mandatory core cultural symbolic markers that must be fully retained during ink wash visualization of Thai literary monkey figures—key visual signifiers that prevent cross-cultural audience misreading of character identity:

1. Exclusive morphological markers of Hanuman: Full body white fur coat, ultra-long elastic flexible tail, prominent protruding monkey jaw structure, sharp clawed limbs, sacred golden divine armor, and ceremonial accessories.

2. Exclusive hybrid identity markers of Macchanu: a humanoid monkey upper torso combined with a fish lower body, dual water-land divine power symbolic contour lines;

3. Universal shared Thai monkey cultural environment symbols: Banana forest clusters, sacred lotus ponds, Thai ritual banyan trees, simplified Khon style divine crown decorations, miniature traditional Thai cold weapons including kris daggers and ceremonial battle spears.

These core cultural symbolic markers are strictly preserved across all three hybrid ink wash styles, while brushwork modulation, ink tonal gradation, and compositional layout adopt native Chinese ink expressive logic. This dual design mechanism achieves balanced artistic output that retains authentic Thai cultural character identity while innovating visual presentation through Chinese ink wash aesthetic language.

4.2 Core Technical Classification of Traditional Chinese Ink Wash Painting for Depicting Monkeys

By systematically sorting ancient and modern theoretical documents, master painting albums, and technical monographs focused on ink monkey creation, core ink wash techniques applicable to visualizing Thai literary monkey figures are divided into four complete technical systems: brushwork shaping techniques, ink color layering modulation techniques, dynamic narrative compositional techniques, and blank space artistic conception construction techniques. Each technical system contains multiple operable specific sub-techniques with clear defined aesthetic expressive functions and targeted matching narrative scene archetypes.

Table2

Core Technical System of Chinese Ink Wash for Primate Figure Depiction

Technical Category	Specific Operational Sub-techniques	Core Aesthetic Expressive Function	Priority Application Scene

Brushwork Shaping System	1.	Split-tip scattered-fur brush for layered fur texture	Controls bodily dynamic tension, layered fur texture	Applicable to all three scene types, with sub- technique weight
	2.	Powerful thick concentrated ink outlines for bone structure tension	presentation and subtle facial emotion carving	adjusted by stylistic positioning
	3.	Ultra-fine gossamer light ink lines for micro-facial expression detail		
	4.	Dry rubbing texture for coarse skin tactile quality		
Ink Layering System	1.	Large-area thick splashed ink for overwhelming martial momentum	Builds multi-layer picture depth, adjusts atmospheric intensity, distinguishes	Heroic battle scenes prioritize thick splashed ink; supernatural plots prioritize pale diluted ink
	2.	Wet broken ink blending for fluffy fur gradient transitions	divine/mortal/fant asy character attributes	
	3.	Ultra-diluted pale ink for ethereal fantasy atmosphere		
	4.	Subtle		

		cinnabar/ochre mineral tinting without heavy solid color filling		
Dynamic Composition System		1. Diagonal tension layout for combat movement impact 2. Scattered group composition for lively daily troop interaction 3. Centralized single-focal layout for divine protagonist identity	Controls overall picture rhythmic flow, clarifies narrative visual focal point	War sequences use diagonal tension; daily scenes use scattered group layout; fantasy plots use single-focal framing
Blank Artistic Conception System	Space	1. Large-area surrounding blank for vast sacred spatial atmosphere 2. Segmented partial blank for layered picture separation 3. Dense near-full layout with minimal blank for oppressive	Regulates virtual-real interplay rhythm, shapes exclusive narrative emotional mood	Fantasy plots utilize large-area blank; battlefield scenes adopt dense full layout with limited partial blank

battlefield

tension

The integrated four-part ink technical system forms a complete operable technical tool library for constructing differentiated cross-cultural hybrid ink wash styles. Each of the three proposed visual styles assigns distinct priority weights to the four major technical systems, generating targeted visual language precisely matched to the three categorized Thai literary monkey narrative scene archetypes.

4.3 Construction of Three Hybrid Chinese Ink Wash Creative Styles for Thai Literary Monkey Figures

Combining the categorized monkey archetype system extracted from Thai classical literature and the comprehensive Chinese ink wash technical resource library, this research constructs three mutually independent yet complementary cross-cultural hybrid ink wash creative styles. Each stylistic prototype possesses a clear defined applicable narrative scene scope, prioritized matching ink technical systems, standardized cross-cultural symbol fusion rules, and replicable step-by-step creation workflows.

4.3.1 Style One: Heroic Freehand Ink Style (For Hanuman Divine Monkey, Battle Narrative Scenes)

4.3.1.1 Applicable Scope

All large-scale warfare, long-distance military marches, single combat duels, royal rescue missions, and grand heroic narrative sequences centered on Hanuman, the white divine monkey warrior, corresponding to the first category of divine heroic monkey archetypes listed in Table 1.

4.3.1.2 Core Prioritized Ink Technical Allocation

1. Brushwork system: Prioritize powerful thick outline strokes and scattered fur dry brush texture rendering; reduce or abandon delicate fine gossamer lines entirely, adopting rough forceful brush modulation to amplify warrior martial momentum and bodily tension.

2. Ink color modulation system: Prioritize thick splashed ink and wet broken ink layering; retain clean blank rice paper as the base tone for Hanuman's all-white divine fur as specified in literary texts; deploy heavy concentrated black ink to render demon troop masses and an oppressive dark battlefield atmosphere; apply faint ochre mineral tinting to outline golden divine armor symbolic accessories.

3. Compositional layout system: Diagonal tension full-dense layout with minimal partial segmented blank space; dense overlapping ink smudging techniques construct the oppressive grand tense atmosphere of large-scale epic warfare.

4. Blank space allocation logic: Only tiny localized blank intervals are reserved to separate Hanuman's bodily contour edges from background ink masses; the overall dense ink layout reinforces the overwhelming heroic momentum of large-scale battle narratives.

4.3.1.3 Cross-cultural Symbol Fusion Rules

1. Mandatory retained Thai cultural symbolic markers: Hanuman's exclusive white bodily morphological characteristics, a long elastic flexible tail, Thai sacred divine armor structure, and traditional Thai ceremonial battle weapons.

2. Chinese ink medium adaptive transformation processing: Replace flat single solid color block filling used in traditional Thai temple murals with layered scattered fur dry brush texture rendering to express the tactile quality of Hanuman's white monkey fur; substitute static horizontal and vertical decorative outline lines of mural art with dynamic diagonal thick ink strokes to convey combat movement tension; simplify redundant complex secondary Thai decorative patterns, only retaining core identity-bearing symbolic accessories to avoid visual clutter within the unrestrained freehand brushwork aesthetic.

4.3.1.4 Standardized Step-by-Step Creation Operation Workflow

Step 1: Sketch Hanuman's diagonal dynamic battle bone structural framework with thick, heavy ink rough outline strokes, highlighting S-shaped tension curves of limbs and extended tail to amplify combat kinetic energy.

Step 2: Take natural blank rice paper as the base tone, representing the divine white monkey's fur coat, and use split scattered fur dry brushes to scratch layered fur texture along limb and tail contour edges.

Step 3: Adopt wet broken ink modulation to smudge multi-layered muscle shadow gradation, trace thin outline lines of divine armor decorative structures with minimal diluted ochre light tinting.

Step 4: Draw surrounding demon soldier groups, battlefield smoke clouds, and rocky mountain background scenery with large areas of thick splashed ink, forming a stark black-and-white ink tonal contrast to visually elevate Hanuman's protagonist status against the dark battlefield backdrop.

Step 5: Add tiny localized segmented blank dividing lines at junction points between Hanuman's bodily form and background ink masses to guarantee unobstructed visual identification of the central heroic protagonist.

Step 6: Fine-tune brush stroke thickness and ink concentration contrast across the entire canvas to amplify unified bodily movement and overwhelming heroic momentum of the complete battle composition.

4.3.2 Style Two: Delicate Meticulous Ink Style (For Mortal Monkey Troop Daily Play Narrative Scenes)

4.3.2.1 Applicable Scope

Forest collective playful interaction, tropical fruit picking, trivial military camp daily trivialities, and other lighthearted tranquil mortal narrative sequences featuring ordinary forest monkey soldiers, corresponding to the second category of mortal playful monkey troop archetypes recorded in Table 1.

4.3.2.2 Core Prioritized Ink Technical Allocation

1. Brushwork system: Prioritize delicate, fine gossamer double hook lines and mild low-tension scattered fur texture brushes; continuous ultra-thin light ink strokes depict subtle micro facial emotional expressions and soft, playful limb movements of small monkey figures.

2. Ink color modulation system: Prioritize medium concentration light gradient ink layering and multiple rounds of subtle diluted mineral tinting; deploy light brown, pale green, and soft yellow tinting to render Thai tropical forest background elements, including banana trees and ripe fruits, adopting gentle multi-layer ink gradients without heavy concentrated black ink blocks.

3. Compositional layout system: Loose group, scattered, decentralized composition with multiple small monkey figures distributed sparsely across the canvas, moderate overall picture density with scattered small blank intervals separating individual monkey clusters.

4. Blank space allocation logic: Fragmented tiny segmented blank spaces interspersed between character groups and plant background elements; no large area extensive blank layout, maintaining a warm, lively, tranquil pastoral atmosphere throughout the frame.



Figure 1: Ink painting of a little monkey source: Researchers

4.3.2.3 Cross-cultural Symbol Fusion Rules

1. Mandatory retained Thai cultural symbolic markers: Thai tropical banana forest clusters, sacred ritual banyan tree branches, native tropical fruit motifs, and simple cloth accessories worn by minor mortal monkey attendants.

2. Chinese ink medium adaptive transformation processing: Adopt meticulous double-hook fine line outline techniques to replace single flat solid color blocks characteristic of Thai temple murals; utilize multi-layer light gradient ink modulation to express the light and shadow spatial layering of tropical plant foliage; preserve the lively group interactive traits of monkey troops described in Thai literary texts, leveraging

meticulous fine ink detail processing to carve distinct individualized playful facial expressions for each minor monkey character.

4.3.2.4 Standardized Step-by-Step Creation Operation Workflow

Step 1: Sketch scattered independent dynamic bone frameworks for multiple small monkey figures using ultra-thin diluted light ink gossamer lines, assigning differentiated playful bodily postures and interactive gestures to each individual monkey character.

Step 2: Render monkey fur texture with mild low-tension scattered fur brushes and pale brown light ink, carefully carving laughing, mischievous, curious subtle micro-facial emotional expressions for each monkey figure.

Step 3: Draw Thai banana tree trunks, banyan leaf branches, and tropical fruit clusters with precise double-hook fine lines, applying diluted pale green and soft yellow minor mineral tinting to construct multi-layer plant color gradation.

Step 4: Arrange fragmented small segmented blank intervals between monkey clusters and tropical plant foliage to prevent visual congestion and clutter within the delicate meticulous frame.

Step 5: Adjust the light-dark ink gradient and contrast to establish a clear front-back spatial depth hierarchy of monkey troop groups distributed across the forest background.

Step 6: Supplement tiny trivial interactive narrative details, including fruit grabbing, tree climbing, and playful physical tussling, to enrich the warm, lively, and pastoral atmosphere of the complete composition.

4.3.3 Style Three: Blank Poetic Ink Style (For Hybrid Fantasy Monkey Magical Narrative Scenes)

4.3.3.1 Applicable Scope

Narrative sequences featuring Macchanu's half-monkey, half-fish hybrid bodily identity, netherworld fantasy conspiracy plots, supernatural shape-shifting transformations, and dual bloodline identity dilemmas, corresponding to the third category of hybrid fantasy monkey archetypes detailed in Table 1.

4.3.3.2 Core Prioritized Ink Technical Allocation

1. Brushwork system: Balanced allocation of thick structural outline strokes and delicate fine gossamer lines; utilize medium-thick ink lines to sketch the overall hybrid bodily skeleton framework, and deploy ultra-thin pale light ink strokes to depict fuzzy transitional boundary texture between the monkey's upper torso and fish tail lower body.

2. Ink color modulation system: Prioritize ultra-highly diluted faint pale ink rendering with localized thick ink focal contrast; most canvas space adopts translucent faint ink smudging to construct an illusory misty fantasy atmosphere; only core character facial emotional contours and hybrid identity boundary lines utilize localized concentrated thick ink to anchor visual focal points.

3. Compositional layout system: Centralized single focal composition with Macchanu positioned as the absolute central protagonist of the frame; background scenery simplified to vague abstract ink blocks representing sea water and netherworld mist fog without redundant decorative detail.

4. Blank space allocation logic: Extensive large area surrounding blank layout surrounding the central character figure; abundant reserved paper blank utilized to visualize mist fog, boundless seawater, and the ethereal illusory spatial quality of the netherworld, forming the traditional Chinese ink poetic aesthetic conception of alternating virtual blank space and solid ink form.

4.3.3.3 Cross-cultural Symbol Fusion Rules

1. Mandatory retained Thai cultural symbolic markers: Macchanu's exclusive half-monkey half-fish hybrid bodily structural form, Thai sacred sea lotus motifs, and standardized netherworld mist fog symbolic contour lines.

2. Chinese ink medium adaptive transformation processing: Replace fully dense continuous decorative background patterns of traditional Thai temple murals with large area reserved blank space; utilize translucent faint ink gradient smudging to render the misty illusory fantasy atmosphere of netherworld supernatural sequences; visualize Macchanu's inner dual identity conflict through graded transitions between pale faint ink and localized concentrated thick ink; integrate the core Chinese ink aesthetic tenet of "spirit emerging from virtual blankness" into Thai supernatural fantasy myth narrative expression.

4.3.3.4 Standardized Step-by-Step Creation Operation Workflow

Step 1: Sketch Macchanu's complete hybrid bodily structural framework with medium-concentration thick ink outline strokes, clearly demarcating the structural transition boundary between the humanoid monkey upper torso and scaled fish tail lower body.

Step 2: Smudge large areas of ultra-diluted faint pale ink background layers to construct vague overlapping mist, fog, and seawater spatial gradation, reserving abundant unmarked blank paper space surrounding the central character figure.

Step 3: Alternate scattered fur textured brushes and delicate fine gossamer lines to render monkey fur texture and fish scale surface details, respectively, applying faint pale blue diluted mineral tinting to the fish tail segment for subtle color differentiation.

Step 4: Dot localized concentrated thick ink strokes to carve Macchanu's tangled, conflicted facial emotional contours, highlighting the inner psychological contradiction arising from dual hybrid bloodline identity.

Step 5: Simplify background environmental elements to abstract indistinct ink mist, fog, and clusters, and a minimal quantity of sacred sea lotus motifs, removing redundant decorative patterns that would disrupt the ethereal blank poetic aesthetic conception.

Step 6: Adjust the proportional balance between reserved blank paper space and solid ink painted blocks to secure a unified overall ethereal, mysterious, illusory supernatural fantasy narrative atmosphere throughout the composition.

4.4 Controlled Creation Experiment Sample Output and Expert Panel Quantitative Evaluation Data Analysis

After completing 18 groups of repeated variable-controlled ink creation samples covering three stylistic prototypes matched with three categorized narrative scene archetypes, the twelve-member cross-disciplinary expert panel implemented blind quantitative scoring based on the standardized five-point Likert evaluation scale. Average scoring values of each hybrid ink-wash style across the five core evaluation dimensions are summarized in the quantitative statistical table below.

Table3

**Expert Panel Average Scoring Results of Three Hybrid Ink Wash Creative Styles
(Full Score = 5 Points)**

Evaluation Dimension	Heroic Freehand Ink Style	Delicate Meticulous Style	Blank Poetic Ink Style
Cultural Symbol	4.62	4.58	4.71
Restoration Degree			
Character Personality	4.75	4.69	4.83
Expressive Power			
Narrative Atmosphere	4.81	4.72	4.86
Rendering Effect			
Ink Aesthetic	4.68	4.65	4.77
Formal Integrity			
Cross-cultural Audience	4.59	4.54	4.67
Recognizability			
Total Comprehensive Average Score	4.69	4.64	4.77

All three cross-cultural hybrid ink wash styles achieve comprehensive average scores exceeding 4.5 out of 5 full points, empirically verifying that traditional Chinese ink wash technical systems can effectively implement differentiated visual stylization of Thai classical literary monkey figures, with outstanding performance in cultural symbol identity retention, multi-layered character emotional expression, and cross-cultural intergroup visual communication efficiency. Horizontal comparative analysis of quantitative scoring data yields three core experimental research conclusions:

1. The blank poetic ink style attains the highest overall comprehensive average score, holding prominent comparative advantages in rendering an ethereal supernatural fantasy atmosphere and expressing complex inner contradictory emotions of hybrid dual-identity mythical characters. Chinese ink's unique blank space aesthetic perfectly

remedies the flat, single-layered spatial processing limitations inherent to traditional Thai temple murals when visualizing supernatural fantasy mythological plots.

2. The heroic freehand ink style ranks second in overall comprehensive average score, recording the highest single dimension score within the narrative atmosphere rendering evaluation index for epic battlefield sequences. Thick splashed ink modulation and dynamic diagonal tension compositional layout far surpass the static stereotyped decorative modeling of Khon theatre masks in conveying the overwhelming heroic martial momentum of Hanuman's large-scale war narratives.

3. Although the delicate meticulous ink style achieves a slightly lower total comprehensive average score compared to the other two prototypes, it possesses irreplaceable exclusive strengths in depicting lively group trivial daily interaction sequences of mortal forest monkey troops. Precise fine line detail processing restores abundant subtle playful plot micro-details extracted from Thai literary texts that cannot be fully visualized within the large format flat decorative logic of traditional Thai temple murals.

In addition to quantitative Likert scale scoring, all participating experts delivered unified consistent feedback during open-ended post-evaluation interview sessions: compared with the single-layer flat solid color filling visual mode of indigenous Thai traditional art forms, the three constructed Chinese ink hybrid styles generate multi-level ink dry-wet contrast, graded tonal depth, and virtual real spatial rhythmic shifts, capable of clearly distinguishing divergent personality traits among the three categorized archetypal monkey figures and precisely matching the entirely distinct atmospheric expressive demands of different narrative plot types. This research outcome resolves the long-standing disconnect between the rich layered textual connotation of Thai classical epic literature and the limited single-dimensional expressive capacity of traditional indigenous Thai visual art forms.

4.5 Comparative Visual Effect Analysis between Hybrid Ink Wash Styles and Traditional Thai Monkey Visual Forms

This research establishes a parallel comparative analysis group consisting of monkey figure imagery extracted from traditional Thai temple murals and Khon theatre mask modeling systems, contrasting them against the three hybrid ink wash stylistic

prototypes across four core analytical dimensions: figurative modeling logic, color presentation rules, spatial construction mode, and inner emotional expressive capacity. Systematic comparative textual analysis of the divergent visual effects is summarized as follows:

1. Monkey figures in traditional Thai temple murals: Flat, equal proportion, static modeling, and single solid color block filling without multi-layer tonal gradation, absent front-back spatial depth hierarchy, unified fixed stereotyped facial expressions; only capable of displaying external sacred cultural symbolic accessories, unable to convey layered inner character emotional temperament.

2. Khon theatre mask depictions of Hanuman: Rigid, solidified, static facial symbolic contour structures, limited to single static fixed bodily postures, complete absence of dynamic bodily tension; fully adapted for stage ceremonial performance transmission yet unsuitable for multi-scene continuous literary narrative illustration creation.

3. Heroic Freehand Ink Style Hanuman: Dynamic S-shaped bone structural modeling, stark black-and-white contrast between thick and thin ink tonal layers, distinct front-back spatial depth hierarchy, fierce, powerful warrior emotional tension radiating from bodily movement; perfectly suited for grand epic battle literary narrative sequences.

4. Delicate Meticulous Ink Style Mortal Monkey Troops: Diversified individualized small-scale dynamic bodily postures, multi-layer soft light gradient ink tonal variation, scattered layered group spatial distribution, abundant subtle differentiated playful micro-facial emotional expressions; ideal for tranquil trivial daily literary narrative episodes centered on minor monkey characters.

5. Blank Poetic Ink Style Macchanu Hybrid Monkey: Fuzzy transitional hybrid bodily contour modeling, ultra-faint translucent pale ink modulation paired with extensive reserved blank space, illusory fantasy spatial rhythm constructed through alternating virtual blank and solid ink form, complex tangled inner contradictory emotional expression; fully matching the visual expressive requirements of supernatural shape-shifting fantasy mythological plots.

Supplementary technical hierarchical sample analysis further presents partial enlarged technical detail specimens of each hybrid ink wash style, intuitively

demonstrating differentiated core technical logic across the three creative systems: scattered fur dry brush fur texture rendering of freehand style warrior monkey figures, ultra-fine gossamer line micro facial detail carving of meticulous style small mortal monkeys, and translucent faint ink large area blank space layout of poetic fantasy hybrid monkey figures paired with misty seawater background ink layers. The sample contrast materials provide tangible visual evidence supporting the differentiated technical matching framework proposed within this research.



Figure 2: Hanuman fights

Source: <https://www.meipian.cn/58bice1q>

5 Discussion

5.1 Cross-cultural Adaptive Capacity of Chinese Ink Wash Technical Systems

Practice-based comparative experimental data verifies that selectively applied traditional Chinese ink wash technical systems can be successfully adapted to visualize monkey figures from Thai classical epic literature, provided ink techniques are positioned as flexible supplementary expressive resources rather than rigid culturally dominant aesthetic templates. This cross-cultural adaptive capacity manifests across three distinct dimensions: shared primate figurative representational characteristics across Chinese and Thai divine monkey traditions, the multidimensional expressive flexibility inherent to ink wash as an artistic medium, and the balanced retention of Thai indigenous cultural symbolic signifiers within an alternative visual medium framework.

First, Chinese and Thai divine monkey literary archetypes share broad overlapping figurative and temperamental traits, including physical agility, strategic intelligence, playful humor, supernatural shape-shifting capability, martial combat prowess, and the coexistence of sacred divine authority alongside worldly mortal behavioral characteristics. These shared archetypal similarities do not imply cultural interchangeability between Hanuman and Sun Wukong; instead, they provide a limited foundational formal reference basis for adapting mature ink wash technical methods to render primate bodily gesture, dynamic movement, fur texture, and internal temperament. The exclusive literary and cultural connotations of Thai mythical monkey characters remain the core determinant of their costume design, bodily posturing, individual personality, and narrative functional positioning throughout all cross-cultural adaptation processes.

Second, ink wash painting possesses variable multi-level visual expressive intensity through adjustable manipulation of line weight, brush stroke speed, water saturation, ink concentration, textured brushwork, and deliberate compositional blank space. These variable formal qualities align perfectly with the diverse emotional and dramatic functional positioning of monkey figures within Ramakien, which span solemn grand battle clashes, lighthearted comedic interludes, intimate character interaction scenes, and ethereal supernatural transformation sequences. Forceful heavy brushwork and dense concentrated ink modulation effectively convey heroic combat momentum and intense dramatic conflict; controlled delicate fine lines and layered soft ink texture rendering enable detailed presentation of playful interpersonal interaction and subtle micro-emotional expression; simplified abbreviated figurative modeling paired with expanded blank space composition constructs an ambiguous poetic atmosphere suitable for supernatural metamorphosis and ethereal fantasy narrative plots. Consequently, Chinese ink wash aesthetics significantly expand the scope of available visual expressive possibilities for Thai literary illustration without replacing or overriding indigenous Thai traditional artistic heritage.

Third, the visual economy of ink wash painting facilitates effective cross-cultural audience recognition when formal simplification is guided by clear iconographic priority ranking. Iterative studio creation experiments demonstrate that reducing redundant secondary decorative ornamentation strengthens narrative focal points and bodily

dynamic expression; by contrast, excessive, unregulated simplification risks erasing core Thai cultural identity markers and triggering cross-cultural audience misreading. Essential identity-bearing visual features, including Hanuman's full white fur coat, distinctive facial bone contours, and ceremonial armor accessories, Macchanu's unique monkey-fish hybrid bodily structure, and context specific Thai tropical environmental motifs must remain clearly recognizable in all ink wash adaptation works. Successful cross-cultural visual communication does not rely on eliminating cultural differences between artistic traditions but on establishing a clear visual symbolic hierarchy that enables audiences to accurately interpret retained indigenous Thai cultural identity markers within the new ink wash medium aesthetic framework.

5.2 Guiding Principles for Culturally Responsible Cross-Cultural Visual Integration

The iterative development and preliminary expert evaluation of the three hybrid ink wash style prototypes generated three universal guiding adaptive principles for cross-cultural visual creation. These standardized principles address two core risks present within transnational artistic fusion practice: excessive Sinicization that dilutes authentic Thai cultural character identity, and rigid retention of redundant decorative ornamentation that restricts the coherent formal expressive logic of the ink wash medium. The three principles function as flexible adjustable evaluation criteria rather than unchangeable rigid formulaic rules.

1. Selective graded retention of identity-bearing cultural symbolic markers: Cultural visual elements are retained according to their hierarchical importance for character identity recognition and core narrative symbolic connotation. Non-negotiable mandatory retained markers include Hanuman's white bodily fur trait, exclusive facial and ceremonial costume structural features, Macchanu's integrated monkey-fish hybrid anatomical form, and contextually relevant Thai tropical environmental motifs. Secondary decorative ornamental patterns may be appropriately simplified or omitted, provided that core character identity, social hierarchical positioning, and indigenous Thai literary narrative context remain fully legible to cross-cultural audiences.

2. Medium led formal stylistic transformation: Brushwork modulation, ink tonal gradation, textured surface rendering, contour edge processing, and blank space compositional layout must collectively organize the complete image as a coherent, unified ink wash painting. Retained Thai cultural symbolic markers cannot be merely

mechanically pasted as isolated decorative add-ons; instead, all indigenous visual motifs must be reinterpreted and reconstructed through the inherent formal aesthetic logic of Chinese ink wash painting. Nevertheless, all medium-driven stylistic transformations must maintain faithful correspondence with the original Thai literary textual source material and cannot overwrite or distort the exclusive indigenous cultural symbolic connotations embedded within the visualized mythical characters.

3. Narrative priority technical matching principle: The selection and proportional allocation of ink wash technical sub-systems must directly correspond to the core narrative functional positioning and dominant emotional atmospheric tone of each individual story scene. Grand heroic battle sequences require an entirely distinct brush rhythm, ink concentration density, and spatial compositional logic compared to lighthearted playful daily interaction episodes or ethereal supernatural transformation fantasy plots. This core principle ensures that the three hybrid ink wash stylistic prototypes remain firmly grounded in rigorous literary textual interpretation rather than degenerating into arbitrary superficial aesthetic classification without narrative theoretical support.

5.3 Inherent Research Limitations

Several objective limitations must be acknowledged when interpreting the empirical research conclusions generated within this study, establishing clear boundaries for the generalizability of the proposed hybrid ink wash creation framework.

First, all controlled studio creation experiments exclusively utilize traditional hand-painting materials, including rice Xuan paper, solid ink sticks, and animal hair writing brushes. The standardized stylistic framework developed within this research has not undergone systematic verification and adaptive testing across digital ink painting software, mixed-media composite creation, Thai indigenous mineral pigment integration, printmaking art forms, or animated visual production pipelines. Divergent artistic mediums generate distinct differences in linear texture quality, ink color blending interaction, multi-layer tonal lamination, correction adjustment processes, and mass reproduction efficiency. Subsequent supplementary research is required to assess the adaptive applicability of the three stylistic prototypes within contemporary commercial digital illustration and cultural creative product production environments.

Second, the preliminary expert quantitative evaluation stage exclusively relies on professional scholars specializing in Thai classical literature, Chinese ink painting, and cross-cultural art communication. Although this expert panel possesses authoritative professional capacity to assess iconographic cultural accuracy, formal ink aesthetic coherence, and narrative scene matching suitability, their specialized academic judgments cannot fully represent the reception perspective of broad general audience groups. Mass demographic cohorts, including ordinary Thai readers, Thai art students, Chinese domestic general audiences, and non-Asian international viewers were not incorporated into systematic large-scale reception evaluation research. Consequently, all research conclusions regarding cross-cultural visual recognizability and universal audience acceptance remain provisional preliminary judgments requiring follow-up large-scale public audience verification.

Third, the research scope focuses exclusively on a limited selection of representative monkey archetypes and three categorized narrative scene archetypes extracted from Ramakien. The complete text of Thailand's national epic contains far more diverse secondary minor characters, distinctive environmental settings, and complex dramatic plot sequences that cannot be comprehensively covered by the three simplified hybrid ink wash stylistic prototypes constructed within this paper. Follow-up extended research must test the adaptability of the current creation framework against a broader corpus of Thai literary textual materials and diversified mythical character types.

6 Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

6.1 Core Research Conclusions

This research systematically categorizes three primary visual narrative archetypal groups of monkey figures featured within Thai classical epic literature: sacred heroic divine monkey characters represented predominantly by Hanuman, mortal playful social monkey troop clusters, and hybrid supernatural fantasy monkey archetypes exemplified by Macchanu. The three categorized archetypes are not absolute, mutually exclusive divisions, as individual core characters may simultaneously undertake heroic martial missions, comedic playful interaction, intimate emotional exchange, and supernatural transformation plot functions across different story episodes within the full epic text. Even so, the three-part classification system provides a practical operable theoretical

foundation for linking rigorous literary textual analysis with targeted cross-cultural visual illustration design.

Comprehensive technical analysis of traditional Chinese ink wash monkey painting verifies that rhythmic brush line modulation, graded brush pressure, multi-layer ink tonal lamination, broken ink blending techniques, textured surface stroke rendering, abbreviated simplified figurative modeling, and blank space compositional aesthetic construction collectively form a flexible, multi-dimensional visual expressive vocabulary capable of conveying bodily dynamic momentum, layered fur texture, unique individual temperament, subtle inner emotional expression, and variable narrative atmospheric mood. When selectively and culturally responsibly adapted to Thai literary visual creation, these mature ink wash technical resources significantly expand the contemporary visual interpretation potential of Thai epic mythical monkey figures. The core contribution of Chinese ink wash aesthetics lies in providing supplementary diversified material and compositional expressive possibilities, rather than replacing or surpassing indigenous Thai traditional visual artistic heritage.

Based on integrated textual research, comparative visual semiotic analysis, and iterative studio creation experimental data, this paper constructs three mutually complementary cross-cultural hybrid ink wash visual style prototypes: heroic freehand ink style for martial combat and action-centered epic narrative sequences, refined delicate meticulous ink style for lighthearted playful intimate character interaction episodes, and poetic blank space ink style for ethereal supernatural transformation fantasy plotlines. Each stylistic prototype establishes clear, fixed matching correlations between core narrative functional positioning and specific deployments of brush line modulation, ink tonal gradation, textured surface rendering, compositional density control, and mandatory retained Thai cultural iconographic symbolic markers. The three stylistic frameworks function as flexible adjustable creation templates that can be partially combined and recombined according to the unique expressive demands of individual complex narrative scenes.

Preliminary quantitative blind evaluation feedback from the twelve-member cross-disciplinary expert panel delivers uniformly positive assessment outcomes across all five core evaluation dimensions, including cultural symbolic recognizability, character emotional expressive power, narrative atmospheric rendering suitability, and integrated

ink formal aesthetic coherence. Comparative scoring data confirms the differentiated comparative strengths of each prototype: the blank poetic ink style demonstrates superior expressive performance for supernatural fantasy plot sequences, the heroic freehand ink style excels at conveying overwhelming kinetic energy within large-scale combat conflict scenes, and the delicate meticulous ink style holds irreplaceable advantages for depicting close-range subtle interpersonal playful interaction details. Nevertheless, all evaluation results represent preliminary professional academic expert assessments rather than definitive universal conclusions regarding mass audience reception and cross-cultural public visual acceptance.

Ultimately, this research formulates three standardized guiding principles for culturally responsible cross-cultural artistic adaptation: selective graded retention of Thai indigenous identity bearing symbolic markers, unified formal visual organization guided by ink wash medium aesthetic logic, and consistent matching between visual stylistic technical selection and core narrative functional positioning. Collectively, these three distinguishing principles enable academic researchers and creative practitioners to clearly differentiate meaningful culturally respectful cross-cultural artistic reinterpretation from superficial cultural homogenization or indigenous symbolic erasure, establishing a unified evaluative reference standard for literary illustration creation, cross-cultural art education teaching, exhibition curatorial design, and subsequent visual research focusing on Southeast Asian mythological archetypes.

6.2 Expandable Directions for Future Follow-up Research

1. Subsequent comparative experimental research can conduct parallel contrast analysis between traditional hand-painted ink wash creation and digital ink painting, mixed-media composite creation techniques, and the integrated fusion of Chinese ink modulation with Thai indigenous mineral pigment color systems. Supplementary research can explore divergent variation in linear texture quality, ink color blending interaction, spatial depth lamination, mass reproduction suitability, and targeted expressive performance for illustration, animated short film design, and cultural creative derivative product development across multiple artistic medium platforms.

2. Large-scale broad-audience reception evaluation research must be implemented to supplement the current expert-only assessment data. Follow-up research can incorporate stratified research cohorts including Thai local students and ordinary general

readers, Chinese domestic art audiences, and non-Asian international cross-cultural viewers. Comprehensive research tools, including standardized visual perception questionnaires

Semi-structured audience interviews, visual style preference selection tasks and cross cultural symbolic interpretation exercises can distinguish between professional expert judgments of formal artistic quality and mass public audience indicators, including cultural recognizability, emotional resonance, and potential cross-cultural symbolic misinterpretation risks.

3. The established three-part hybrid ink wash stylistic framework can be extended and adapted to visualize other core mythological archetypes featured in Thai classical epic literature, including Naga serpent deities, Garuda divine bird figures, demon antagonists, and diverse hybrid supernatural creature characters. Comparative adaptive application research can clarify which core technical modules of the current framework possess universal cross-archetype transferable value, and which stylistic components require targeted redesign and adjustment according to divergent bodily morphological structures, unique symbolic connotations, and exclusive religious cultural contextual positioning of alternative mythical figures.

4. The three hybrid ink wash creative prototypes can be integrated into undergraduate and postgraduate professional art education curricula in both Thailand and China. Teaching practice-based research can track the progressive learning trajectory of art students advancing through sequential stages, including literary textual symbolic analysis, core cultural marker screening, preliminary sketch layout design, ink medium technical experimentation, peer group critical review, and finalized finished artwork creation. Student creative outputs and reflective learning journals can provide empirical evidence verifying the pedagogical practicability and teaching value of the cross-cultural ink wash visual framework.

5. Exhibition-oriented applied research can investigate the cross-national cultural communication effect of ink wash reinterpretations of Thai literary monkey figures within transnational museum and art gallery exhibition contexts. Curatorial practice research incorporating bilingual exhibition explanatory text design, artist public lecture activities, and visitor response feedback collection can systematically assess whether the hybrid

ink wash visual works facilitate deeper audience engagement with the textual connotation of Ramakien epic literature and promote comprehensive public understanding of the interactive complementary relationship between Thai indigenous literary cultural identity and traditional Chinese ink wash aesthetic language.

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