

Making of a mosaic patterned Manchu bow



Wen Chieh with his traditional gear, a mix of new and antique, on a lifeless horse. Which he stuffed himself!

By Peter Dekker, October 23, 2014

Recreating a Qing style *baogong*

Inspired by photographs and measurements of my antique Qing dynasty [mosaic patterned *baogong*](#), Wen Chieh Huang started to work out for to do this pattern and make a traditional Manchu composite bow with a similar pattern. When done, he proudly proclaimed it "his best" so far. Here some pictures of the process.



The bow before decoration. He made it to high precision standards, and with high quality white horn bellies.



Birch bark is painted in the colors of the bow. A lot of thought went into re-working the technique.



It is then cut to strips, eventually to be glued to the surface in an offset manner.



A similar technique was used to make the strips that are to be used at the inside of the knees. These have three colors, with yellow added.



Glueing the strips to the inside of the knee.



Inside of one knee done.





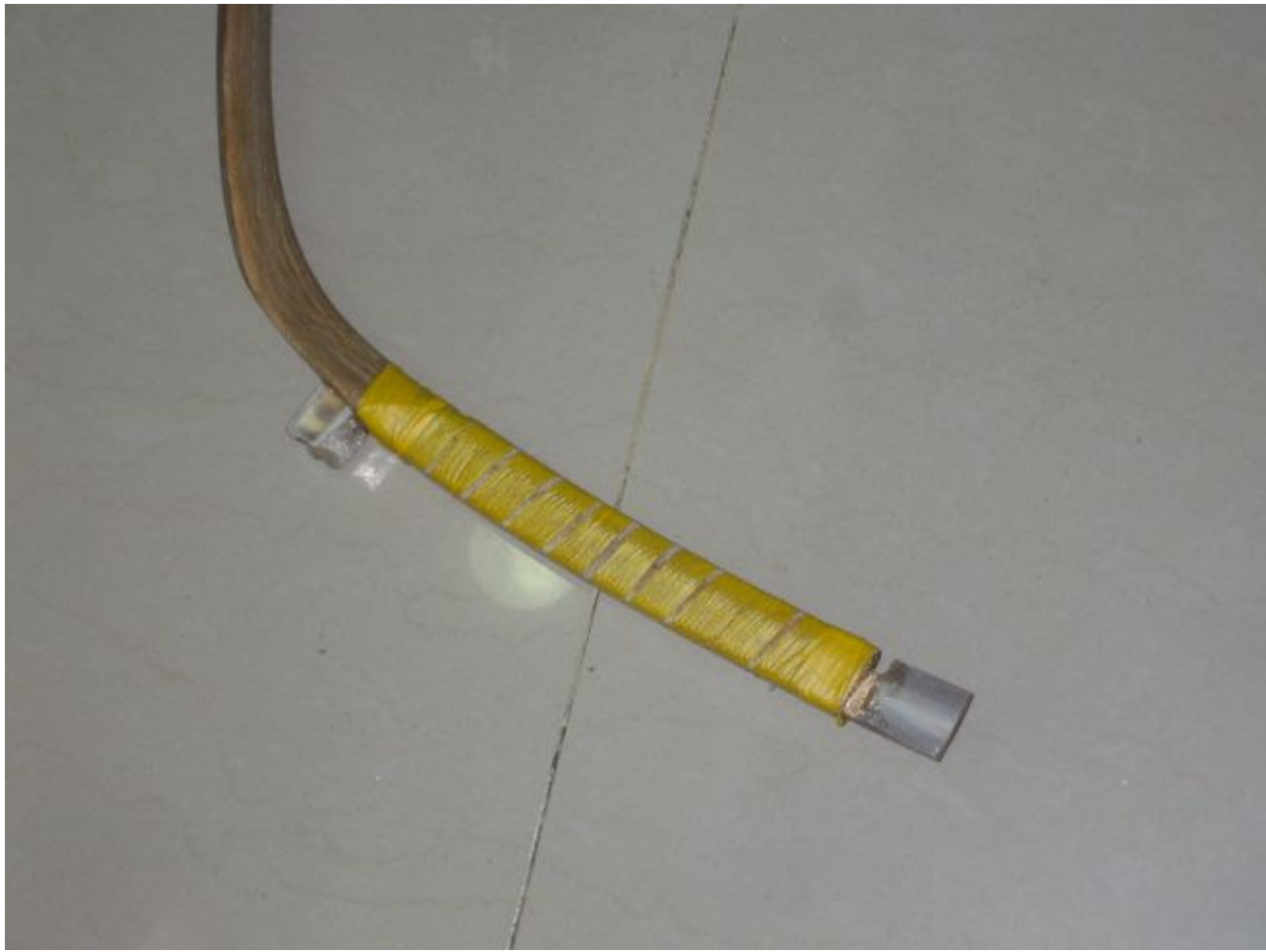
Glueing the decoration on the main limb.



Finished the intricate patterns. Only the connecting patches remain.



Working limb done.



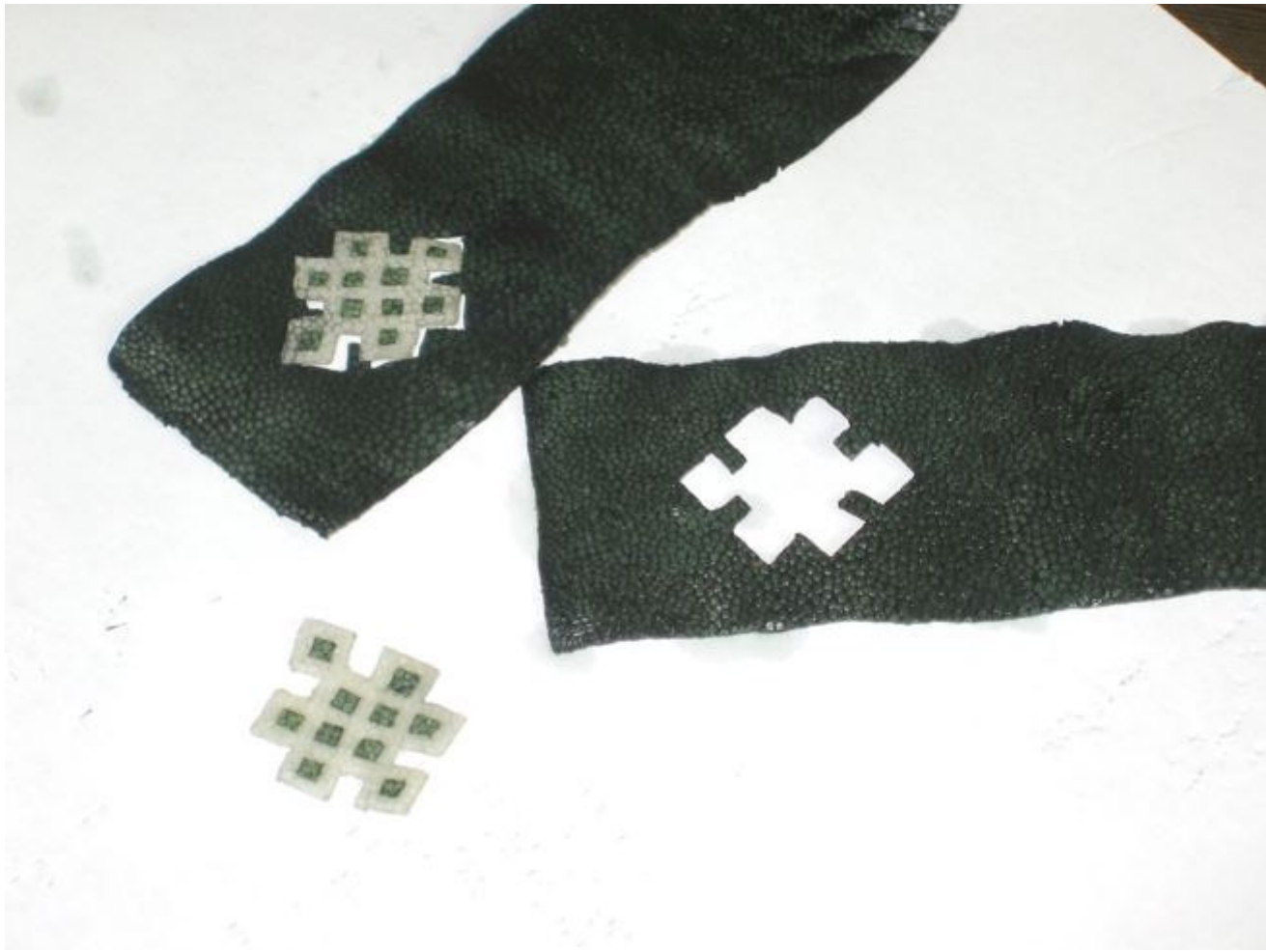
Covering the ear with white ray skin.



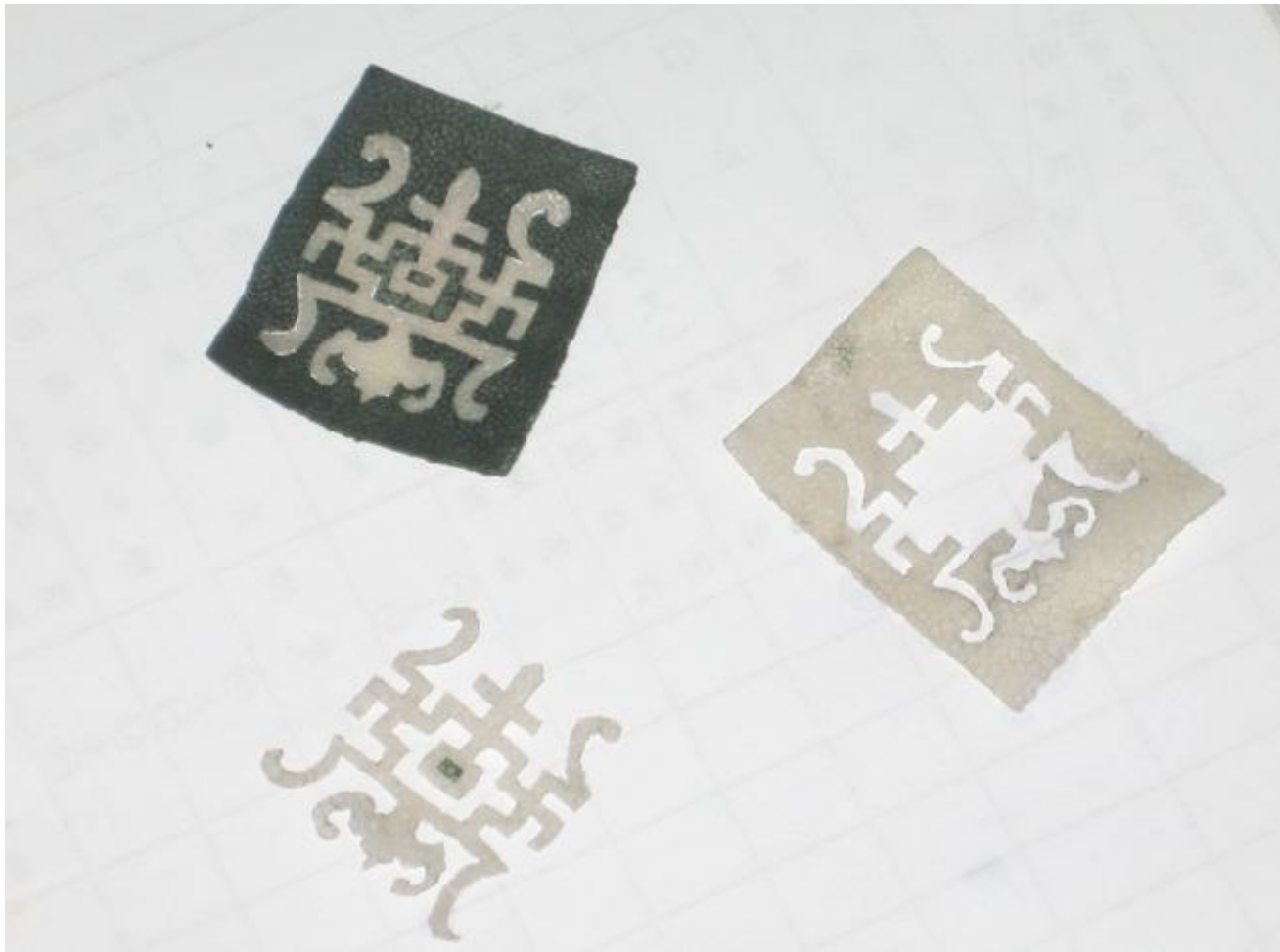
Finished ray skin covered ear. Anyone who has worked with this material will know how hard this is.



Close-up of ray skin covered tip with inlay in contrasting color in the shape of a bat.



Cutting out the eternal knots for the sides of the handle.



The stylized longevity symbols for on the knees, also in contrasting colors of ray skin.



Finished bow!



Frontal view of the upper bending limb.



Limb and handle section, back side.



The finished ray-skin reinforcement at the inside of the knee.



Excellently executed decorative motifs.



Handle section, belly side.

When Wen Chieh came to Amsterdam recently, we were able to compare the bow with my antique. It was quite impressive, given the fact that Wen Chieh had never seen the actual bow and only worked with some pictures I sent him.



Top: antique. Bottom: Wen Chieh's bow.



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Left: antique. Right: Wen Chieh's bow.



The handle sections. Top: my antique. Bottom: Wen Chieh's bow.



Me posing with a bow case and quiver made by Wen Chieh, the quiver contains his arrows and his

baogong is in the bow case. A full set of gear like this is quite heavy!