Here is my 8 days trial and error of Indigo Dyeing Kit

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1ST Day:

I followed the recipe in manual of the Indigo Dyeing Kit. Due to the size of containers I have, I didi it twice to get 5 liters of alkaline water from wood ash (500g). The PH test is perfect, which is close to PH 13. At the same night, I made the indigo paste. Same condition, the smaller size of cooking pot, I can only get 3,500cc, 70o C water to mix with indigo powder. This is probably one change I made without following the recipe exactly. Today, it is 29 o C -32 o C with high humidity, I think the temperature is good for the indigo fermentation.

2nd Day:

Same temperature and humidity with the 1ST day, I added 200g maltose with 500cc hot water (70-80 o C) to the indigo mixed solution. The vat could not reach 40 o C or more as requested, only 35 o C was measured. The alkalinity of solution is still good in PH 12.

I tested the flour paste to be printed onto the silk provided in the kit with cut stencil from thick acetate, and it worked well. But the flour paste I used is quickly soluble in water, I changed to soy bean powder paste mixed with 40-50% lime (sifted) in the later days.

3rd Day:

Similar temperature and humidity with the 1ST day, I did the stir twice a day with gentleness. The indigo solution started to turn greenish, I had the 200g glucose in the vat. I did a first test with little strip of cotton clothe, nothing but very pale bluish shade which is also washed away soon after the 5 mins soaked in the solution.

4th , 5th and 6th Day:

Nothing changed much. I tried to keep the indigo solution warm, did the stir twice a day with gentleness and pour in some liquor to nourish the compounds.

7th Day:

Nothing changed much.

I decide to ‘cheat’. Since there’s no more of wood ash to increase the alkalinity, I had 3g Sodium Hydroxide added. The PH value is leveled up to 12, and then 6g Thiourea Dioxide went into the indigo solution.

Here in the photo, you may see the growing difference. I started my first dyeing at 20 hrs. after the Thiourea Dioxide was added, and the outcome is pleasing.

8th Day:

I continue to dye three more pieces with different techniques and fabrics, which are silk & cotton blended, cotton and cotton & linen blended.

(Before I printed the paste on to the silk & cotton blended fabric, I painted with clear water from the inside out on glass to make it flat.)