

Western Cultural Factors in Robes of Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties as Well as Sui and Tang Dynasties

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Abstract: In the period of Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties as well as Sui and Tang Dynasties, there were many Western cultural factors in robes popular in Han region. It is of certain significance to study them systematically. On the basis of predecessors' research, this paper discusses key problems of the shape, origin and spreading of various foreign cultural factors from the following aspects: lapel robes, round collar robes, Piantan dress, Banbi (half arm) dress, swaying leaf dress, partial decoration of robes, Peibo streamers and Pannang bags.

1. Introduction

In the period of Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties as well as Sui and Tang Dynasties, lapel robes and round collar robes popular in Western Asia and Central Asia were all also commonly seen in the Han region.^[1] Peibo streamer originated from Kushan Empire also spread to the East through Buddhism, and became the common clothing of women in Sui and Tang Dynasties together with the narrow Banbi dress came from Qiuci. Due to the influence of Buddhism and Hu people who came to China, the Piantan dress originated from the West was popular in the Han region from northern dynasties to the Tang Dynasty. In Central Asia, Sogdians usually decorated the hem of their robes, such as cuffs and lapels with brocade with pearl roundel patterns. There was also a custom of decorating a circle of fabrics on the sleeves. From northern dynasties, these robes and clothes decoration customs were absorbed and improved by the Han nation. Pannang bags created by Sogdians in Central Asia appeared in China in Northern Qi Dynasty and became popular in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. In recent years, with the increase of new archaeological materials, relevant issues are worth discussing. This paper intends to make a comparative study of Western cultural factors in Han robes, and to explore the spreading processes as well as reasons.

2. Origin and Spreading of Various Robes



Fig.1 Warrior Figurines of Northern Wei Dynasty.



Fig.2 Tomb of Anga of Northern Zhou Dynasty

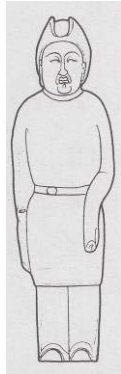


Fig.3 Tery Figurine of Northern Qi Dynasty

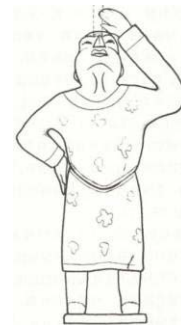


Fig.4 Hu Figurines of Northern Wei Dynasty.



Fig.5 Y of Tang Dynasty.



Fig.6 Hu Figurine of Northern Qi Dynasty.

Lapel robes originated from western Asia, and were popular in the Sogdian region of Central Asia (Figure 2), Qiuci and Gaochang. Scholars such as Congwen Shen, Wei Huo, Heather Karmay and Qingfan Yang have studied their origins from different perspectives. The appearance and popular of lapel robes in Han region can be discussed briefly. First of all, they appeared earlier in the north. Pottery figurines wearing lapel robes can be found in tombs of the Northern Wei Dynasty. For example, in the Tomb of Ji Yang in the Northern Wei Dynasty found in Luoyang (Figure 1) and a tomb of the last years of Northern Wei Dynasty found in the southern suburb of Xi'an, ^[2] terracotta figures wearing triangular lapel robes are unearthed, which are the earliest images of Xianbei people or Han people wearing lapel robes up to now. In the two tombs scholars also unearthed camels and horses carrying luggage, which reflects the trade activities of Sogdian merchants. The popularity of lapel robes should be related to this. Secondly, by the time of Northern Qi Dynasty, lapel robes became popular in the Han region and were worn by both men and women. The Sui and Tang Dynasties inherited and developed this custom. In pottery figurines of the tomb of Eastern Wei Dynasty found in Dongchen Village, Cixian County ^[3] and mural tombs of the early Northern Qi Dynasty found in Jiuyuanguang of Xinzhou, there are many figures wearing lapel robes. In the Northern Qi Dynasty, lapel robes were even more popular. In tombs of this period, pottery figurines unearthed often wearing lapel robes, examples include the Rui Lou Tomb,

the Mural Tomb of Wanzhang, the Shedi Huiluo Tomb and others.

The shape of round collar robe (Figure 3) is similar to the lapel robe, and they can be transformed through buttons. In Tang Dynasty pottery figures and line inscription images on stone coffins, there are figures wearing lapel robes with three buttons on the collar. The clothes can become round collar robes if the buttons are buckled. It can be seen that both round collar robes and lapel robes originated in Western Asia and spread eastward through Sogdians in Central Asia. Therefore, since the Northern Wei Dynasty, round collar robes began to influence the shapes of robes in the Central Plain. For example, in M5 tomb of the tomb group of Northern Wei Dynasty found in Yanbei Normal College of Datong,^[4] the robes of terracotta warriors are buttoned to the left. They have the same characteristics with terracotta warriors of Hu people unearthed from the tomb of Shaozu Song of Northern Wei Dynasty (Figure 4) and the round collar robe of the terracotta warriors of Hu people with Xumao hat with curled eaves unearthed from the tomb of Northern Wei Dynasty in Quyang.^[5]

Piantan (bare-shouldered) dress prevailed in Northern Sui and Tang Dynasties. It first appeared in the Northern Wei Dynasty, and then continued to be used in the Eastern Wei Dynasty and the Northern Qi Dynasty. Bingling Song pointed out that Buddhist statues with the right shoulder exposed were one of the important reasons for the acceptance and popularity of Piantan dress in northern dynasties. The author notes that there is another important reason for its popularity: the influence of Sogdians entering China. In northern Sui and Tang Dynasties, Hu figures and stone funerary implements found in the tombs of Sogdians entering China often dressed Piantan dress. For example, in the Tomb of Rui Lou in Northern Qi Dynasty, the Hu terracotta figure (Figure 6) was dressed in Piantan dress with the right shoulder exposed and Banbi inside; in the tomb of Hong Yu, a Sogdian of Sui Dynasty, Piantan dress can also be found in pictures about battles carved on the outer coffin in lines; in the tomb of Sui Dynasty found in Anyang, nine terracotta figures and nine pottery camels were unearthed. The Hu figures wore clothes with the right shoulder exposed. This kind of collocation is common in Hu terracotta figures of Tang Dynasty; examples include the Xianzhu Tomb of Jinxiang, the Tomb of Xian Li and the tomb of Tang Dynasty found in the northern suburb of Wuzhong. It should be one of the important characteristics of Sogdians' costumes at that time. In addition, Hu people usually dressed Piantan with Banbi inside, which also affected the dress of Tang people. In the tomb of Jing Xue in the Tang Dynasty of Wanrong, a maid's figure is carved on the outer coffin line (Figure 5). She only put into one sleeve of the outer lapel robe, while the other sleeve is wrapped around the waist and knotted, so as to expose the brocade half arm inside. In Tang Dynasty, most female figurines with Xumao hats or braided hair, kneeling and holding goose shaped wine utensils wear similar clothes. This kind of dress should be the "brocaded Banbi, one arm exposed" in the literature.^[6] Moreover, the source of Piantan dress in Central Asia also deserves attention. The tradition of Piantan dress in Western Asia and its west regions has a long history. It is common in Greek and Roman stone carvings and frescoes,^[7] such as the statue of ancient Greek God Apollo, images in Campana pottery plates and painted bottles, and frescoes about the "secret sacrifice" in villas near Pompeii in ancient Rome. These figures also wore Piantan dress with Banbi inside, which shows that this custom of Sogdians in Central Asia should be influenced by Western Asia.



Fig.7 Ale Figures of Tang Dynasty.



Fig.8 Female Figures of Qiuci.

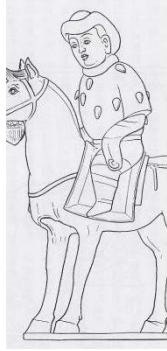


Fig.9 Acotta Figures of Northern Qi Dynasty. Fig.10 Central Asian Murals.



Fig.11 Ale Figures of Tang Dynasty. Fig.12 Central Asian Murals.

Banbi (half arm) means the top clothes with short sleeves. In Tang Dynasty, a kind of narrow half arm was popular among women: the sleeve could only cover the elbow; the clothes were waist-length (Figure 7). *New Book of Tang* records: “half arm, skirt and Ru (a short jacket), are common clothes for maids served at the Eastern Palace.”^[8] At that time, both noble and common women wore half arms, which was universal in the early Tang Dynasty. Scholars have pointed out that the shape of Banbi was mainly influenced by Qiuci. This suit was quite popular in Qiuci; both men and women wear it. From the aspect of clothing collocation, more evidences can be found. In the murals of Kizil Grottoes in Xinjiang (Figure 8), figures wear half arm and striped skirt, holding silk Peibo by hand, and wearing low cut tops. The shape of clothes and matching custom were similar to woman's clothing in the early Tang Dynasty.^[9]

Swaying leaf dress clothes are characterized with small leave-shaped decoration sewn on clothes. The leaves can sway. In the tomb of Rui Lou of Northern Qi Dynasty found in Taiyuan (Figure 9) and terracotta figures unearthed in the tomb of Huluche of Sui Dynasty found in Taiyuan, we can see the image of riding warriors dressing clothes with shaking leaves.^[10] Both the two tombs are located in Taiyuan; the time difference is 25 years. The Sui Dynasty should continued the tradition of Northern Qi Dynasty. Ji Sun pointed out that the custom originated in Persia and left traces on the pottery figurines of Northern Qi Dynasty after it was spread to China. The two have the same interest in decoration. In addition, Persian clothing with shaking leaves spread to Taiyuan in the Northern Qi Dynasty; the spreading process needs further discussion. The Central Asia may serve as a medium. First of all, influenced by Persia, banqueting murals in Gubyang Grottoes in the Faryab area of Northwest Afghanistan and murals of Balalyk-Tepe, the site of Sogdian in Central Asia (Figures 10) also show costumes of shaking leaves. Some scholars call this as “heart-shaped pattern”, which belongs to “cloth pattern”. They point out that the heart-shaped pattern seen in the Northern Wei embroidery diagram of Mogao Grottoes is the pattern popular in Central Asia at that time.^[11-12] The Central Asian murals do not depict fabric patterns, but real leaves sewn on clothes. According to the Northern Wei embroidery diagram, King Yuanjia of Guangyang became the provider. The four providers all dressed in Xianbei clothes. Indeed, the robes were decorated with heart-shaped patterns, but they should be traditional patterns of Han region. Similar patterns are

found in the image of Zhenguan Emperor in cave 220 of Mogao Grottoes. Moreover, the Hu style clothing prevailed in Taiyuan area (Bingzhou) in Northern Qi Dynasty. In tombs with pottery figurines decorated with shaking leaves, there were also murals or pottery figurines related to Sogdian trade caravan. Therefore, it should be Central Asians who came to trade in the East that introduced this dress custom.^[13-15]

The partial decoration of robes means to decorate the collars, sleeves, front and back parts, as well as the arms of robes with brocade and other fabrics. The decorative parts and styles were different from traditional Han custom; they should be influenced by foreign cultures. Scholars have noticed that decorative brocade in the collars, sleeves and front parts of Tang robes was originated from Central Asia and could be found in Sogdian murals (Figure 12). With abundant archaeological materials unearthed, especially the discovery of rich mural images in Xianxiu Xu's Tomb in Taiyuan (the robes of Mrs. Xianxiu Xu), the tomb of Rui Lou and other mural tombs of nobles in northern dynasties, as well as tombs of Sogdian people who enter China, new materials can be used to find out when the decoration pattern was introduced into the Han territory, as well as the spreading process of some special decorative parts.^[16] In addition, Tubo and Uighur costumes also have partial decoration; the relationship between them and Sogdian costumes is also worth discussing. The author believes that, the partial decoration of robes appeared in Bingzhou in the Northern Qi Dynasty. It was found in murals of tombs. The decorative parts were arms, fronts and backs; the pearl roundel fabric (brocade) was used to decorate the hems. By the Tang Dynasty, it became more popular; more diversified decoration parts appeared (Figure 11). This custom was influenced by Sogdian people who entered China. In Sogdian murals and images of people depicted in stone burial objects, it can be seen that Sogdians decorated their robes with pearl roundel brocade and other fabrics. Among them, the arm decoration was special and prevalent, which spread to China during the Northern Qi Dynasty. The decorative parts and styles of Tubo and Uighur robes were close to those of Sogdian people and should be directly affected by them.^[17]



Fig.13 Ale Figure of Tang Dynasty.



Fig.14 Stone Carving of Gandhara.



Fig.15 al of Northern Dynasties



Fig.16 Mural of the Central Asia.

Peibo is a long cloth covering the shoulder, which is commonly used by women in the northern dynasties as well as Sui and Tang Dynasties (Figure 13) for decoration. Under the influence of Buddhism, Peibo was used in woman's clothing in the late Northern Wei Dynasty. It can be seen in maid figurines unearthed in the Nancai Village, Yanshi. Sui and Tang Dynasties saw its popular. At that time, the basic compositions of woman's clothing were skirts, unlined upper garments and Pei.

Ji Sun and Qingjie Zhang pointed out that Peibo originated from Persia. The Buddhist stone carvings of Kushan and Gandhara (Figure 14), which were earlier in Persia have shown the use of Peibo. Examples also include stone carvings of the Kushan period exhibit in New Delhi Museum, India, Gandhara stone carvings for Buddha from the first to the middle of the second century unearthed in Pakistan, Gandhara Buddhist musician relief from the second to the third century, and stone carvings of the fourth to the fifth century unearthed in Afghanistan. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that Peibo was passed from Kushan to the East through Buddhism.

Pannang is a small bag placed at the waist to hold articles. Officials in the Han region put the seal in Pannang on the side of the waist.^[18] The Han portrait stone found in Yinan depicted the tiger head Pannang recorded in literature. Dongqian Gao and other scholars collected and classified Pannang in different times. Ye Chen pointed out that the shape and pattern of the Pannang in the Northern Dynasties as well as Sui and Tang Dynasties (Figure 15) were different from those in the Han region, but they were basically the same with bags of Sogdians who entered China.^[19] The bags were hung with long belts and should be influenced by Sogdians. Xiaoqing Qi also pointed out that most of the Pannang worn by Sogdians were horseshoe-shaped sacs with flip covers. We can see this kind of Pannang in images curved on stone burial tools of Sogdians and stone figurines in Hong Yu's tomb, as well as Hu figurines with the image of Sogdians leading camels (or horses) of Tang Dynasty. Some bags were equipped with ropes and were directly hung on the leather belt; others were hung on the Diexie belt. In the murals of Pyanjikent (Figure 16) and Barrack, the hometown of Sogdian in Central Asia, we can also see the figure of Pannang. The author has noticed that Hu figurines unearthed in the Tomb of Huihe Wei in the last year of the Northern Wei Dynasty (534) found in the southern suburb of Xi'an are the earliest images of Hu people equipped with Pannang. Compared with the tomb of Princess Ruru of Eastern Wei Dynasty found in Cixian County, the tomb of the Northern Wei Dynasty found in the Hengshan Road of Luoyang, and the tomb of Hu Yuan of Eastern Wei Dynasty found in Cixian County, and combined with figures in tombs of Sogdians entering China, Hu figurines unearthed in the Tomb of Huihe Wei should be Sogdians. Craftsmen of Northern Wei Dynasty noticed the special ornament of Hu people who came to China, and regarded it as an important feature in pottery figurine creation, which did not exclude the possibility that the Northern Wei Dynasty also often used Pannang. Evidences also include the clothing styles of Hu people appeared at that time. The costume styles of lapel robes and round collar robes which were popular in Central and Western Asia, the Peibo from India, and the central armor bending way from Persia, were all used in the north of China in the late Northern Wei Dynasty.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, in the period of Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties as well as Sui and Tang Dynasties, robes and clothes originated from Central Asia, Western Asia, India and other places were spread to the Han region through various channels. The Sogdians from Central Asia produced the greatest influence; they also played an intermediary role in the spread of various robes and clothes from west to the east. The exchange of clothing reflects the historical background of smooth traffic along the Silk Road as well as the frequent trade between the East and the West at that time.

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