



# The Evolution and Recognition of Civilian Buzi Pattern in Qing Dynasty

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**Abstract.** When the system was established in the Qing Dynasty, the civil officials' Buzi patterns had both the practical value and artistic aesthetic value of highlighting the imperial power and identifying the rank of the official grade. By observing Buzi, the article analyzes the characteristics and identification methods from three aspects: the main pattern, other patterns and border decoration. According to the chronological of the Qing dynasty, the evolution process and the characteristic changes in different periods were summarized in the form of lists.

**Keywords:** Buzi, Qing dynasty, pattern, evolution, recognition

## 1 Introduction

Buzi was a square or round silk fabric used to identify the rank of the imperial family and officials during the Ming and Qing dynasties on the front and back of the uniforms. Through the complex process, the auspicious symbols of birds, animals and plants endowed with auspicious meanings were presented on the uniforms.

The purpose of the study of the evolution and identification of the pattern of Buzi in the Qing Dynasty is to appreciate its artistic value and oriental aesthetic culture, to savour the philosophy of life of the ancients who revered and praised nature, and to narrow the gap between ancient and modern cultural exchanges.

## 2 Structural System of Buzi Patterns

From an aesthetic and design perspective, the Buzi Patterns were not simply a decorative pattern embroidered on the garment that contained a beautiful and auspicious symbol. In this paper, the patterns were divided into three main parts: the main patterns, the other patterns, and the border decorations.

## 2.1 The main patterns

The main pattern located in the center of Buzi were mainly dragons, pythons, birds, and beasts.<sup>[1]</sup>

The official uniforms of the first rank were embroidered a crane with extraordinary aura that symbolised purity and holiness. The second rank was embroidered a colorful golden pheasant whose five virtues were in line with the emperors' expectations. The peacock of the third rank signified prudence, loyalty and diligence. The fourth rank were embroidered with a geese with the spirit of unity and observe the etiquette. The fifth-rank civilians were embroidered a silver pheasant that had a solid personality. It could get rid of bad luck and welcome the good fortune. The sixth-rank herons represented an official who had a clear concept of hierarchy. Purple mandarin ducks of the seventh rank, loyal to each other, signified unity and beauty. Eighth-rank quails, pure and innocent, indifferent to fame and fortune, and the same sound as "An", symbolised peace and prosperity. Ninth-rank and unranked officials embroidered a noble sparrow, was a symbol of blessings and longevity.

## 2.2 Other patterns

### The sun pattern.

The sun pattern on the Qing dynasty had appeared in the ShunZhi period. According to regulations, it must be embellished in the civil and military officials' Buzi.<sup>[2]</sup> The interaction between the sun pattern and the main pattern on the Buzi was mainly in the form of looking up and looking back down. It symbolised the emperor, who was revered by officials for his supremacy and grace.

### The cloud pattern.

The cloud pattern symbolized the primitive ancestors' longing for good weather and the desire to wish for blessings for everything. It was one of the indispensable patterns in the BuZi, as the proportion and shape of civil officials' BuZi in the Qing Dynasty had also been constantly changing with the passage of time.

### The sea and mountain pattern.

Consisting of two parts, "seawater" and "cliffs", (Fig.1) the sea pattern was a symmetrical arrangement of evenly spaced straight or curved lines tilted at a certain angle.<sup>[3]</sup> There were two forms of standing and flat water patterns.



Fig. 1. The sea and mountain pattern



1	Crane	Red warts, sharp beak	Slim and slender	White or light grey	White, pointed tail	Blue, green or gold, slim legs, greenish feet	Black, white or grey feathers, rounded and leaf-shaped or pointed tail
2	Golden pheasant	Pointed crown with ribbon-like lines	reddish-brown feathers	Full plumage, rich in colour	Ample feather, neat tail end	Red or gold, thicker and shorter than cranes	Two parallel slender ornate feathers as the primary feathers, the secondary feathers were shorter
3	Peacock	Crown with eye-like markings	Short neck, green plumage	Bright and colorful, green or blue	Varied, layered and feathered	green or gold	Eye-like mottled feathers, teardrop shaped and overlapping in multiple layers.
4	Geese	Smooth head, short beak	Double line patterns on the body	Resembled a tortoise shell	Shorter wings, no extra decorations	Shorter legs, gold or brown	Short and fan-shaped tail, with the longest feathers in the middle
5	Silver pheasant	Large crown, short and red beak	White, shorter and thicker	Overall white, shorter body	Like a peacock's screen.	Slender, red or brown; red feet	Toothed edges, two reddish feathers on each of the outermost sides
6	Heron	pointed and straight beak	Unlayered and white	Overall white with no feather stacking	Wings were broad and pointed at the end	Slender, greenish feet	Like a geese, shorter and with a slightly raised centre feather.
7	Purple mandarin duck	Pointed tail, red beak	two layers, white, gold or brown.	The feathers layered in scales	Larger, blue and gold.	Slender legs, gold and red; feet were weakened into claws	Short, curved and fan-like tail, slightly curved in the middle
8	Quail	Crownless, short sharp mouth	Rhombic feathers	Short, greyish-brown, diamond-	Dark brown, wings were variable	Yellow and white	Shortest tail, pointed at the end, and some of them were bald

				shaped plumage			
9	Sparrow	Short filaments, red mouth	White, some unstratified folded, some scaly		Slender, red and yellow	An eye-like marking, 1-4 red feathers on each side were mostly. <sup>[5]</sup>	

## 4 The Evolution of Civilian Bu Zi Pattern in Qing Dynasty

### 4.1 Early Qing Dynasty (1644-1735)

1644-1735, was the stage of laying the foundation of the Qing dynasty. The main pattern accounted for a relatively large proportion, approximately 60% of Buzi.<sup>[6]</sup>The shape of the early main patterns was not unique. Some was standing on the river cliffs, head to the sun. The cloud pattern was mostly three kinds of blue. The sea and mountain pattern was mostly a soothing flat water pattern. Initially, there were only 2-4 eight treasures patterns. The borders of this period were all narrower and even undecorated. Crafts were more common in brocade, followed by embroidery. The Buzi was reduced from 40cm square cloth to nearly 30cm.

### 4.2 Mid-Qing Dynasty (1736-1850)

The main pattern was more realistic and vivid. The sea and mountain pattern was more detailed and complex, with a combination of standing water and flat water in the QianLong period, and flat water dominating in the DaoGuang period. The Buddhist Eight Treasures patterns began to appear, followed closely by the Daoist Eight Auspicious Patterns.<sup>[7]</sup> Ganoderma lucidum and pine trees as auspicious patterns proliferated. During this period, the border was widened, and the tapestry and embroidery were given greater weight.

### 4.3 Late Qing Dynasty (1851-1911)

The main patterns usually left bottomed to allow for changing grades at any time. The cloud patterns were less dynamic. Bat patterns became an indispensable match. The proportion of sea and mountain patterns increased.<sup>[8]</sup>The Buzi began to be heavily overlaid with eight treasures and auspicious patterns. The border decorations were widened. Crafts were mainly embroidery. The silk tapestry process become rough. The most distinctive feature of this period was the extensive use of chemical dyes on the Buzi.<sup>[9]</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

The Buzi was a witness to the rise and fall of the Qing Dynasty for 300 years. At that time, it was given the social function of concentrating the imperial force and strengthening the ruling power as the decoration on the Buzi. The official uniform system and Buzi was the crystallisation of the fusion of Manchu and Han.<sup>[10]</sup> It was the result of continuous refinement and change of several generations of emperors of the Qing dynasty.

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