

## To Explore the Changes in Dress System Affected by Imperial Politics Thinking during Sui and Tang Dynasties

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**Abstract.** The ancient Chinese dress system was a visual product of political thought at every stage of Chinese history. Under the influence of syncretism of three religions, the political thought changed significantly, and the dress rules were changed accordingly. This article started with ideology and politics thinking during Sui and Tang dynasties. Through sorting and analyzing historical materials, it explored the dependence relationship that dress system relied on politics thinking. As a result, this article summed up and set up the inner motivation, changing characteristics and specific forms of the changes in dress system during Sui and Tang dynasties. The research pointed out that the strengthening legitimacy and functionality of dress system in Sui and Tang dynasties achieved a high degree of uniformity; therefore, they became the classical paradigm for dress system in the later ages.

### The Ideology and Politics Thinking during Sui and Tang Dynasties

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Sui and Tang dynasties were a period of great prosperity in ancient China. The emperor system and its ruling philosophy reached to a mature stage. It was expressed in the mature and complete monarch doctrine of kingship operation, as well as the significant developments of Confucian political philosophy which was official school. Different with Confucianism in Han dynasty that the sacred “heaven” was the unique principle, the Confucianism in Sui and Tang dynasties made natural “doctrine” as the highest category of their philosophy, which blended patriarch ethic, original human nature and the nature of universe. The essence of politics thinking in this kind of ideology was to make patriarch morality dissimilate to general and forceful social regulation and nearly cult-like cultural belief, with the help of the nature theory and human nature theory. [1] In this system, it emphasized the importance of “doctrine” for monarch ruling. Monarch was in a position of vital significance, and kingship had supreme absoluteness, following by huge political risks. Therefore, adjusting and standardizing kingship became the core content to administer a country. The monarch doctrine that advocated Benevolence (Ren) and Ceremony (Li) of Confucianism brought universe, ethic, rite and law into doctrine. The doctrine contained political philosophy, system theory, social relations, political principle and various kinds of political norms and moral rules. Therefore, with doctrine as the core, it constituted a complete political theory system. In this political system, political thinkers in Sui and Tang dynasties proposed a lot of theories around the relationship among heaven and human, etiquette and law, conventional principle (Jing) and contingency (Quan). The unity of conventional principle (Jing) and contingency (Quan) originally proposed by Liu Zongyuan. He thought that only blending Jing and Quan, using benevolence and intelligence, could avoid deviating the main road. This theory emphasized to insist principles but never make principles turn into rigid dogma, and devoted particular care to flexibility but not rebel against the orthodoxy, which reflected that the political philosophy in this period was full of rational thoughts and realism. [1]

The traditional rite in Confucianism was an important manifestation of doctrine. Kong Yingda thought that rite came from heaven, and rite was doctrine. However, in Liu Zongyuan’s mind, the emperors and countries systems, the institutions and cultural relics, rite, music and penal law were all

the expression of doctrine. During Sui and Tang dynasties, especially in Tang dynasty, as the important ceremony, sacrifice system significantly changed. The New Book of Tang · Records of Rite and Music (Xin Tangshu · Liyue Zhi) recorded that there were three grades of sacrifices, including main sacrifices (Da Si) centering on universe and shrine, the secondary medium sacrifices and other small sacrifices. [2] There were strict distinction between emperor's personal sacrifices and official administration. In the established systems, emperor should execute twenty-two main sacrifices per year. Because it was difficult for emperor to attend every sacrifice, the officials would execute the sacrifices. However, these sacrifices in charged by officials were greatly inferior to emperor's personal sacrifices, such as the display of splendor, expenditure, rites, etc. In Tang dynasty, the political utilitarian of sacrifice was getting stronger. In the middle and later periods, every emperor' personal sacrifice proclaimed a general amnesty. Actually, when Wu Zetian got the throne, emperor personal sacrifice, amnesty and change the title of a reign were combined. In the first moon during the 10th year of emperor Tang Xuanzong's reign, emperor personal sacrifice developed into a series of sacrifices from Taiqing Palace, the Imperial Ancestral Temple to southern suburbs. The appearance of Taiqing Palace leaded emperor's personal sacrifices out of imperial palace and city. The Taiqing Palace was located in Daning lane, the north-east of Chang'an city. The Imperial Ancestral Temple was in the south-east of Chang'an city, then along the Zhuque Door and heading down south to the due south of Chang'an city-Mingde Door, and the southern suburbs was to the east of this door. This kind of daily moving ceremony shocked ordinary citizens greatly, and caused powerful function of political propaganda. [3] You can see that in the beginning, sacrifice ceremony just had the religious function to simply express admiration and worship of universe, and then expanded to multiple functions including declare imperial power and dignified manner to the people. As a result, the function of visual representation was improved greatly. Therefore, it was the tendency to change the dress system.

## **The Changing Characteristics of Dress System in Sui and Tang Dynasties**

### **Strengthening the Legitimacy**

The dress system changed constantly through Sui and Tang dynasties and it respected ancients and distinguish right from wrong, to show the doctrine of kingcraft. In the legitimacy, it promoted its political tendency that inherited the Rites of Zhou, and sort out the dress system in the previous dynasties to preserve the different contents and characteristics, especially affirmed and completed the sorting technique of costumes in Sui dynasty.

Sui and Tang were born of the northern regimes, and they sat their horses very well. Thus, for the daily dress, they strived for comfort and practicality which was convenient for action, so that they were not so accustomed to the over stiff dress in Han dynasty. Therefore, Emperor Taizong of Tang made Yishan hat, and wore informal dress in many occasions.

However, although emperors and nobility's main dress was informal dress, it not represented that their dress system was loose or not conform to the ritual system. On the contrary, because informal dress was used in many occasions, so it was ranked into different grades in Tang dynasty. It also brought this kind of superior and inferior difference to informal occasion, which enhanced the function of dress system to standardize identity differences. It didn't weaken ritual system, instead, it brought this kind of ritual system into daily life, enhanced hierarchy, and highlighted centralized rule. [4]

### **Thinking Highly of Detailing the Functionality**

In Sui and Tang dynasties, the functionality of dress needed to be detailed to meet the reality governing, and was more in line with the dressing occasion and status. It could highlight the dress system in daily life. At this time, the relationship between dress system and monarch's governing strategies was closer and closer, the mystery elements were weakened, and the practicability was getting stronger. In fact, considering the practicability of dress system, there were some evidence

during emperor Liangwu's period. The Book of Sui· Rites Record (Sui Shu·Li Zhi) recorded that in the 3rd year of TianJian, minister He Tong submitted memorials to the emperor "the sacrifices garment below aristocracy, has underclothes inside, according to the dress system of The Record of Vehicles and Dress (Yu Fu Zhi) in the 2nd year of Yong Ping, the edging of collar and sleeves of underclothes was deep red, the pants and socks were deep red, which express that people serve the God with red sincere heart. Now, the garment with deep red edging can express sincere heart, and it needn't strict rules for the pants and socks."

## The Garment Styles during the Changes of Dress System in Sui and Tang Dynasties

### The Integration of Clothing Types

The Tong Dian recorded that when Sui and Tang were making the dress systems, they were not really according to the dress systems in Zhou dynasty; they firstly preserved the different contents and characteristics, and then distinguished them to build their own system. Table 1 shows the changes of different kinds of crowns and hats in each dynasty. It can be perceived that Sui and Tang accepted or reject the dress systems of Zhou dynasty. It integrated the systems of Zhou, Han and the Southern dynasties. As a result, it formed a more comprehensive category of crowns and hats. The changes of crowns and hats from Zhou to Tang dynasty showed in Table 1.

Table 1, The changes of crowns and hats from Zhou to Tang dynasty

Dynasty Name of Guan	Zhou	Qin	Han	Wei	Jin	Song	Qi	Liang	Chen	Northern Qi	Northern Zhou	Sui	Tang
Mian	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Zibu Guan	○		○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Muzhui Guan	○		○			○							
Tongtian Guan		○	○		○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○
Chang Guan			○		○			○					
Yuanyou Guan		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			○	○
Gaoshan Guan		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○			○	○
Fa Guan		○	○		○	○	○	○	○			○	○
Jianhua Guan			○		○	○	○	○	○				
Wu Guan		○	○		○	○	○	○	○	○		○	○
Fangshan Guan			○		○								
Qiaoshi Guan			○		○								
Quefei Guan			○					○				○	○
Fankuai Guan			○		○	○	○		○				
Shushi Guan			○		○								
Quedi Guan					○				○				
Jinde Guan													○
Yishan Guan													○
Juebian	○		○		○							○	○
Pibian	○				○						○	○	○
Weibian					○	○					○		
Ze		○	○		○	○	○	○	○			○	○
Qia				○	○		○	○	○			○	○
Mao	○			○	○	○	○	○	○			○	○
Gejin					○		○		○	○			
Fujin				○			○		○	○			
Jinzi													.

○: The materials recorded this style. (Guan is a kind of crown, hat or kerchief for head.)

## Emperor's Sacrifices Garment Return to Six Mian of Zhou Dynasty

Since Tang dynasty was found, the new government confirmed that based on The Rites of Zhou (Zhou Li), emperor should wear six Mian. The Emperor Mingdi made Gun Mian according to the rites of Zhou. However, the later dynasties didn't execute well. Therefore, in the rites of Tang, the six Mian were completely presented, emperor's clothing included six Mian, such as Daqiu Mian, Gun Mian, Bi Mian, Cui Mian, Xiu Mian and Xuan Mian. The Six Institutions of Tang Dynasty (Da Tang Liu Dian) and The Book of Tang· Records of Officials (Jiu Tang Shu·Zhi Guan Zhi) recorded that there were thirteen types of emperor's Mianfu, including Daqiu Mian, Gun Mian, Bi Mian, Cui Mian, Xiu Mian, Xuan Mian, Tongtian Guan, Wubian, Heijie Ze, Baisha Mao, Pingjin Ze, Bianfu and Yishan Guan. The reason was that after Wei and Jin dynasties, Mianfu was not only used for sacrifices occasion which was different with Zhou dynasty, therefore, it was not strange to call all of emperor's clothes as Mianfu in Tang dynasty. Table 2 illustrated the comparisons of emperor's garment structures from Zhou to Tang dynasties.

Table 2, The emperor's garment from Zhou to Tang dynasties

Dynasty	Emperor's Garment
Zhou	Daqiu Mian, Guan Mian, Bi Mian, Cui Mian, Chi Mian, Xuan Mian
Qin	Juanxuan
The Western Han Dynasty	Juanxuan
The Eastern Han Dynasty	Guan Mian, Tongtian Guanfu, Juanxuan, Gaoshan Guanfu
Wei	Guan Mian, Tongtian Guanfu, Juanxuan
Jin	Guan Mian, Tongtian Guanfu, Hei Jieze, Zafu, Sufu
Song	Da Mian, Fa Mian, Guan Mian, Xiu Mian, Hong Mian, Tongtian Guanfu
Qi	Pingtian Guanfu, Tongtian Guanfu, Hei Jieze, Baiqia
Liang	Pingtian Guanfu, Tongtian Guanfu, Hei Jieze, Baiqia
Chen	Pingtian Guanfu, Tongtian Guanfu, Hei Jieze, Baiqia
The Northern Qi Dynasty	Guan Mian, Guan Mian, Tongtian Guanfu, Wushi Fu, Wuliang Yuanyou Guanfu, Hei Jieze, Wubian Fu, Baiqia
The Northern Zhou Dynasty	Cang Mian, Qing Mian, Zhu Mian, Huang Mian, Su Mian, Xuan Mian, Xiang Mian, Gun Mian, Shan Mian, Bi Mian, Pibian, Weibian
Sui (Emperor Wen)	Guan Mian, Tongtian Guanfu, Wubian Fu, Hei Jieze, Sufu, Biaqia
Sui (Emperor Yang)	Daqiu Mian, Guan Mian, Tongtian Guanfu, Yuanyou Guanfu, Wubian Fu, Bianfu, Mao, Biaqia, Ze
Tang (The Book of Tang)	Daqiu Mian, Guan Mian, Bi Mian, Cui Mian, Xiu Mian, Xuan Mian, Tongtian Guan, Wubian, Hei Jieze, Baisha Mao, Pingjin Ze, Biaqia
Tang (The New Book of Tang)	Daqiu Mian, Guan Mian, Bi Mian, Cui Mian, Chi Mian, Xuan Mian, Tongtian Guan, Wubian, Hei Jieze, Baisha Mao, Pingjin Ze, Biaqia, Pibian, Zibu Guan

## Emperor's Exclusive Color: Yellow

In Tang dynasty, yellow became emperor's exclusive color, which expressed emperor's most exclusive political consciousness. Before Tang dynasty, the officials in the Norther of Qi dynasty wore red, purple, black and yellow, demanded on their like. The emperor wore deep red robe. In Sui dynasty, both of emperor and officials wore similar yellow robe. In Tang people's view, this was not up to the law and discipline rites, it was difficult to distinguish superiors and inferiors. During the reformation in Tang dynasty, the dress system was much stricter; they used yellow to distinguish emperor and officials, which was used for more than one thousand years. From that moment on, yellow only belonged to emperor in the following dynasties.

## **The Ornaments Dress System of Bureaucrats**

In Sui and Tang dynasties, the grade-color dress system and ornament dress system were firstly made. The grade-color dress system means that for the officials' robes, according to their different grades of official position, matching with corresponding color, textile and ornaments. Matched with grade-color dress system, fish-symbol system was also used, called ornament dress system. The start using of these two kinds of systems should be related to the situation that informal dress was added into dress system. Because the informal dress was one-piece robe, the styles were very similar, so that the function of distinguishing superiors and inferiors was very weak. Therefore, it used color and accessories to achieve this function. This kind of functionality consideration was the important feature of dress system construction in Sui and Tang dynasties. The New Book of Tang · The Record of Vehicles and Dress (Xin Tangshu · Yufu Zhi) wrote that the dress color of officials from the ninth rank to the first rank were blue, green, deep red and purple, successively. Meanwhile, deep red and purple robes must match with golden or silver fish pouch, golden matching purple and silver matching deep red. As a result, as a kind of expression of hierarchy obsession, the ornaments dress system of bureaucrats was added into dress system, and became one of the effective means to maintain their dominant orders.

## **Summary**

The dress system in Sui and Tang dynasty was based on inheriting the systems of previous dynasties summarized the experiences of previous dynasties and improved incrementally. No matter in preciseness, systematicness or operability aspects, dress system at that time already achieved and expressed highly standard and maturity. It was not only existence as mysterious symbolic ritualization, but also tightly combined with ruling class's political activities, which formed a kind of institution norms with government administration function.

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