

**Pioneer Open Summer Study**

# **Factors influencing the costumes of the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties**

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## **Abstract**

This essay main focus on the issue of the influence of historical context to cloth features in the Song Dynasty. From the perspective of environment, the subtropical monsoon climate and the temperate monsoon climate in the Song Dynasty provided a suitable growing environment for flax and further developed the flax industry. In the Northern Song Dynasty, rapid development of agriculture and improvement of textile technology lead to a more prosperous textile industry. Superb embroidery technology enables the nobility to use distinctive clothing pattern to demonstrate their identity. Though the overall tendency of later Northern Song Dynasty is towards liberalization and openness, because of the Confucianism and the influence of the monarch's stereotype, the mainstream clothing style of Southern Song dynasty is relatively conservative and simple compare to the clothing style in Tang dynasty.

## Introduction

The objective of the research is find the factors influencing the costumes of North and South Song dynasty. The Song Dynasty was a unified dynasty after the tang Dynasty and after the chaos of the five Dynasties and ten Kingdoms. Zhao Kuangyin, the first emperor, learned from the mutiny initiated by the military generals of the previous dynasties, and implemented the civil service system, in the other words, emphasizing literature but undervaluing military force. Also because of the civil service system, the imperial examination system was further improved in the Song Dynasty. The political system, which valued article over military force, made the country short of military generals. Wars on the border often ended in failure. In order to quell the war, the Song government used money to achieve peace, so the national Treasury was empty. But economically, the Song government strongly supported overseas trade, and during this period the Maritime Silk Road reached its peak and became economically active. The people of the country is also very rich, the very famous painting “Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival” which painted by North Song painter Zhang Zeduan description of Bianjing (also known as Dongjing, is now in Henan Province Kaifeng) city and all walks of people's living conditions at that time, is witnessing a Bianjing when the boom period of northern song dynasty capital, is also the portrayal of northern song dynasty city economy. The fact that the people are richer than the country is also extremely rare in the history of the Chinese nation, which is also a very interesting point in the Song Dynasty. The huge difference between the early song dynasty, which was prosperous, and the later Southern Song, which was plagued by humiliation and war, makes them of great interest to us and is why we choose them to study. We use online resources to find the information that we need and also find some information from history books.

## Results

In Chinese history, the Song Dynasty was founded in 960 and destroyed in 1279. The Northern Song Dynasty was founded in 960 and was destroyed by foreign invasion in 1127. After that, the Southern Song Dynasty began in 1127 and was also destroyed by foreign invasion in 1297. The direct cause of the extinction of the Southern Song Dynasty was the devastating blow to the agricultural production relations of the Song Dynasty by the nomads.

During the Northern Song Dynasty, the population of the Northern Song Dynasty increased rapidly from 37.1 million in 980 to 126 million in 1124 due to the promotion of Zhancheng rice. In terms of geographical location, the geographical coordinate of the Northern Song Dynasty is the same as Kaifeng, Henan Province', which is located between  $113^{\circ} 52' 15''$ -  $115^{\circ} 15' 42''$  E and  $34^{\circ} 11' 45''$ -  $35^{\circ} 01' 20''$  n; The geographical coordinates of the Southern Song Dynasty, Shangqiu, today's prefecture level city of Henan Province, lie between  $114^{\circ} 49'$ -  $116^{\circ} 39'$  e and  $33^{\circ} 43'$ -  $34^{\circ} 52'$  n.

Because of the geographical location of the Northern Song Dynasty, the climates of the most areas in Northern Song Dynasty were 'Dry winter warm summer'. However, due to the geographical differences between the Southern Song Dynasty and the Northern Song Dynasty, the climate of most areas in the Southern Song Dynasty were 'humid with hot summer'.

In the Northern Song Dynasty, a large numbers of iron agricultural tools and agricultural books have already appeared. By the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, the textile industry became very common. Many machines which used to promote textile efficiency were invented in the Song Dynasty, such as weaving machines. the Song Dynasty advocated learning from the ancients and making strict demand on oneself, therefore under the influence of the monarch' stereotype and the citizens' observance of propriety and morality, the folk costumes were relatively simple and conservative compare with the cloths in Tang Dynasty. What's more, due to the lack of national strength, the Song Dynasty paid tribute, usually silk, to other countries annually.

Most of the official clothes of Song Dynasty follow the early Tang Dynasty. In the early Northern Song Dynasty, due to the lack of custom-made clothes and the influence of foreign countries, Khitan clothes with "Yuli" and "Goulong" appeared, which were called strange clothes by the white people.

In politics, although the ideology is democratic, due to the ideological confinement of "Cheng Zhu Neo Confucianism" and the compromise and concession of foreign policy. Clothing culture is no longer gorgeous and luxurious, but simple.

In the Song Dynasty, women's clothing was rigid, conservative, elegant and quiet in color. The "cover up" function of Ruyi and Tuzi was strengthened, and all the "arrogance" was greatly reduced. In the Song Dynasty, both the powerful and the common people loved to wear straight collars and the back of the lapel, because they were comfortable and appropriate, and convenient to look good. The clothing of Song Dynasty mostly inherited the Tang Dynasty in color and style, but it was better and more natural with the traditional combination, which gave people the feeling of restoring Chinese style. The Han people in Song Dynasty fully absorbed the advantages of the costumes of the neighboring ethnic minorities. During the period of Renzong and Huizong, imperial edicts were issued repeatedly to prohibit the common people and women from imitating the clothes and decorations of Khitan people.

One thing needs to be pointed out is that in fact, only the "court dress" still retains a little Han system, and the others are all derived from the "Hu clothing".

The Song Dynasty was a relatively democratic and free period, during which The Chinese politics went towards the democratization and the participation of the people in the deliberation and administration of state affairs. For example, different schools of thought argue with each other and express their views. Moreover, officials who make treasonable statements are rarely punished.

Then Chengzhulixue is one of the main schools of Neo-Confucianism. The fundamental characteristic of Neo-Confucianism is to construct a more complete conceptualization and systematization of philosophy and belief system by combining Confucian social, national, ethical and personal life belief concepts, and to make

them logical, psychological, abstract and truth-oriented. This makes Neo-Confucianism have a strong sense of autonomy. What's more, Chengzhulixue refers to the Confucian school developed by scholars after the Song Dynasty. They believed that truth was the origin of all things in the universe, among which "keeping heaven's principles and eliminating desires" was an important point of their thinking. However, later generations believe that this idea imprisons human freedom.

Finally, Wudelun is an important thought in Song Dynasty, which is especially valued by the royal and noble class. It is created by Zou Yan; its principle is five elements supreme.

## Discussion

Long before the Song dynasty, China's textile industry had included both silk and linen, but the consumer groups of silk fabrics and linen fabrics are clearly different. While the technology of silk industry was exploited by the ruling class, the linen industry for ordinary people's clothing was highly affected by the ecology factors of the Song dynasty. Above all, since most area of both Northern Song and the Southern Song have Subtropical Monsoon Climate and Temperate monsoon climate, a suitable environment for the growth of ramie was provided because ramie, one of the most important primary material of the production of linen can only grow well in temperate and subtropical climates. China has the history of ramie cultivation of more than 4700 years. In this process, the climate environment had undoubtedly promoted the development of linen weaving techniques by laying a foundation for it. In addition, the massive increase in population in the beginning of the Song Dynasty made the demand for linen products greatly increase which also stimulate the growth of linen industry.

In the Northern Song Dynasty, farmers began to pay attention to fine farming and use different fertilizers according to the nature of the soil. The rapid improvement of agricultural production also played a great role in the production of clothing raw materials. Cotton production increased, making the southern Song's textile industry reached a higher level. At the same time, the production of mulberry silk in the Southern Song Dynasty formed a process from planting to garment, which laid the foundation for the production of silk in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Although the Song Dynasty was weak in wars, the textile industry was particularly developed. The advent of the loom made it easy to make clothes. Generally, the clothing for men is based on diamond yarn, while the clothing for women is based on printed fabric. The embroidery technology of the Song Dynasty was developed, and the aristocratic clothing was extremely exquisite, advocating luxury and delicacy. The literati preferred flowers as embroidery patterns. The more elaborate the costume, the higher the status of the person.

The clothing of the Northern Song Dynasty followed the style of the early Tang Dynasty. Due to the influence of foreign countries and few restrictions, the clothing was luxurious and varied. However, with the confinement of Cheng Zhu Neo Confucianism and the compromise and concession of foreign policy, the clothing culture is no longer gorgeous and luxurious, but simple. In terms of clothing color, it emphasizes the natural color and takes light elegance as the fashion. Light blue, light yellow, green, lotus root silk color, light pink, dark green and white are the favorite colors of Song people. Neo Confucianism on the costume of Song Dynasty has great impact on the aspects of official dress, literati dress and female dress. The rigid and stylized dress of officials in Song Dynasty. Cheng Zhu's philosophy, with the guiding ideology of "preserving the principles of heaven and removing human desires", established the ethical principles perfectly. Therefore, the court dress of the Song Dynasty was rigid and stylized. In general, the shape of the court dress inherited the evolution after the Han Dynasty, inherited the style of the Tang Dynasty, such as the court dress, the square heart curved collar and the knee covering style of the Tang Dynasty. Neo Confucianism of Cheng and Zhu is a philosophy that teaches people how to be a man. It is hoped that scholars can be rational, upright and self-cultivation, and become a person with both internal and external cultivation and talent and morality. Under its influence, the literati of Song Dynasty pursued the realm of nature, simplicity and beauty, which was also reflected in their clothes. The literati clothing driven by literati highlights the individuality and humanization of the wearer, tends to loose and casual plain clothes, and the sentiment of returning to simplicity and simplicity is very popular. Women in the Song Dynasty were influenced by the dress concept of "only be clean, not different from others". Compared with the previous era, the Tang Dynasty, women became reserved. What they pursued was not luxury, but elegant beauty. In terms of clothing color, women in Song Dynasty did not advocate gorgeous but elegant. They like light blue, light yellow, green, lotus root silk color, light pink, dark green, white and other colors. The dark flower Luo fabric with hazy feeling just reflects the characteristics of light and natural silk patterns, upright and solemn, and highlighting the distinctive style of the times.

In the early stage of northern Song dynasty, because of the Emperor's positive advocations, people dress quiet simply. In the period of Renzong in Beisong dynasty, even Emperor's harem and senior officials cannot wear cloths with gold decorations.

However, luxury seems to be human nature. By the time of Huizong, all the concepts of "frugality" were outdated and extravagance was reflected in clothes. People liked to wear cloths with gold decorations and try to use silk imported from Jin and Liao. At the same time, there was a sudden vogue among females for a kind of slinky, short cloth without collar. Later, when Jin invaded the capital, superstitious people thought these kinds of cloths were ominous because "do not make collar" sounds like "do not defeat Jin" in Chinese. Thus, it can be seen that the overall trend of clothing in the late Northern Song Dynasty was towards liberalization and individuation, but tight and repressed cloths was still the mainstream in most of the time.

The clothing of the Southern Song Dynasty is closely related to its culture and popular thought. It was not until the Reign of Emperor Lizong (from 1205 to 1264) that The Neo-Confucianism, gained a dominant position in academic thought. Emperor's thought became inflexible, and then guided people to dress practical and simple cloths. As a result, Southern Song dynasty clothing usually covered the whole body, which is looser and more conservative.

According to the portrayals of the Emperors of Song dynasty, it is easy to find that they prefer to wear red dragon robes. When it came to the Song Dynasty, there was a new breakthrough in dyeing technology, red became the color that everyone was keen to pursue. When the time of ZhenZong, he directly decreed that, according to the theory of Yin and Yang and the five Elements, Song dynasty should be the fire virtue, so it was appropriate to wear red clothes.