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A Study of the Document "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" on Qing Dynasty Clothing Regulations

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Abstract

The document "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" issued and implemented by Emperor Shunzhi in 1652 during the Qing Dynasty established clothing and attire rules, falling within the framework of ancient Chinese clothing systems. Through a comprehensive study of "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li," this research reveals the strict hierarchical differences present in the early Qing Dynasty clothing system, reflecting its clothing characteristics of "distinguishing ranks and displaying status." Moreover, the enactment of this system established the foundational elements of Qing Dynasty clothing regulations, serving as a blueprint and theoretical basis for the eventual development of clothing traditions, with significant historical value.

Keywords: "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li," clothing system, official attire.

1. Introduction

"Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li," issued and implemented by Emperor Shunzhi in 1652 during the Qing Dynasty, falls within the realm of ancient Chinese clothing systems. Records pertaining to ancient Chinese attire are primarily found in official histories such as the "Twenty-Four Histories" and the "Draft History of Qing," along with scattered accounts in various dynastic records, regulations, and notes. The document "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" discussed in this article is a part of such records. Taking "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" as a focal point, this study delves into the Qing Dynasty clothing system. This choice is based on two considerations: Firstly, the Qing Dynasty, ruled by the minority Manchu ethnic group, was a feudal regime in Chinese history. It was the sole dynasty that strictly mandated the preservation or adaptation of the ethnic Manchu customs throughout the entire nation, persistently maintaining Manchu clothing styles and characteristics. This system of clothing regulations, refined through official decrees and regulations, remained largely unchanged for over two centuries within the rich cultural heritage of the Han ethnic majority. Secondly, "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" was promulgated during the early reign of Emperor Shunzhi, a critical period of stability for the Qing Dynasty's rule. The rulers needed to safeguard and consolidate their authority through various means, including clothing regulations that highlighted hierarchical distinctions. This enactment not only embodied strict hierarchical divisions but also reflected a profound political intention to "distinguish ranks and display status" through clothing. Furthermore, it laid the foundation for the Qing Dynasty's clothing regulations, holding practical historical significance.

2. Literature review

The development of clothing culture during a dynasty is closely related to the societal context, political governance, and economic dynamics of that era. Scholars' exploration of clothing culture's evolution is significantly supported by interdisciplinary fields such as sociology and history. By integrating historical documents and multidisciplinary knowledge, researchers have dissected the characteristics and underlying causes of clothing styles across different periods from the ancestors of the Manchu people to the Xinhai Revolution, revealing the inevitability of inheritance, development, innovation, and fusion within clothing culture (Zeng, 2013).

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Efforts are directed towards contextual analysis to comprehend factors that shaped clothing formation, grouped under five major influences: ethnic, preceding dynasties, imperial ideologies, aesthetic philosophies, and religion. Despite the vast cultural gap between Manchu and Han traditions, the historical narrative intertwines the two, showcasing variations and development spurred by historical forces. Although the Qing government endeavored to enforce attire reforms after its establishment, Han clothing continued to thrive in common households. Similarly, while the Qing government aimed to uphold Manchu traditions by discarding Ming attire, remnants of Han influence remained embedded in some aspects of the clothing system (Park, 2007). Hence, comparative analysis of Manchu and Han elements and forms in attire is essential to understand their interplay and transformations.

Towards the end of the Qing Dynasty, amidst significant societal transformations and modernization, Qing attire resonated with Western fashion. Men's clothing transitioned from traditional robes to Western suits and Zhongshan suits, while women's attire evolved from traditional robes to modern qipao and Western dresses, ushering in a diversified fashion landscape. This transformation significantly influenced the development of modern Chinese attire (Wang, 2008; Liu, n.d.).

During this era, extensive research emerged, delving into attire styles, evolutionary factors, and more. The Qing Dynasty's clothing system emerged as an intrinsic part of its cultural transformation. The intricate web of regulations governing clothing standards during the Qing Dynasty reached its zenith, ranging from emperors to commoners. The clothing regulations significantly impacted the imperial court, nobility, civil officials, and military officers. Archaeological findings and historical records classify Qing attire worn by the imperial court, nobility, civil officials, and palace concubines, shedding light on their structural characteristics and symbolic significance (Liu, 2014; Li, 2009).

The research of Qing attire's elements and forms is pivotal, as these elements encapsulate the essence of cultural identity. The study encompasses attire styles, patterns, colors, craftsmanship, and accessories, offering insights into the multifaceted symbolism that transcends the materialistic appearance. The intricate elements provide a glimpse into the depth and cultural significance of Qing attire (Yan, 2008). Moreover, from an aesthetic perspective, analyzing the opulence, extravagance, and delicacy of imperial attire highlights its distinctive aesthetic features (Lei, 2013).

The evolution of Qing attire styles departed from the wide sleeves and robes of Han attire, instead embracing a clothing form dominated by changpao and magua. During the late Qing period, additional clothing styles such as changyi, chenyi, kanjian, and pants emerged. Deep research into Manchu attire structure examines various clothing styles and structures during the Qing Dynasty, elucidating their practical functionality (Wang, 2012). By scrutinizing historical records and artifacts, researchers differentiate between changyi and chenyi styles, rectifying misconceptions that often conflate the two (Yin, 2014). Further exploration dissects different styles of changyi based on archaeological artifacts, categorizing them into four distinctive forms and highlighting their structural features and craftsmanship (Xu, 2017). Additionally,

researchers have measured and analyzed the structure and characteristics of Qing-era Manchu trousers and investigated the origins, forms, fabrics, colors, and stitching techniques of qipao and other attire (Liang, 2015). Research approaches vary, with some dissecting attire through structural analysis, including meticulous measurements and reconstructions of Qing attire specimens (Liu, 2010, 2017).

In conclusion, while scholars have made considerable progress in researching Qing attire, there remains untapped potential for further exploration, extending the breadth and depth of our understanding. The study of Qing Dynasty clothing reveals a rich tapestry of societal, cultural, and political influences, exemplifying the symbiotic relationship between clothing and historical context.

3. Themes and findings

3.1 "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" as the Blueprint for Qing Dynasty Clothing System

In the year 1644, the Qing government issued a decree, establishing Beijing as the capital and naming the reign period Shunzhi. This marked the establishment of the Qing Dynasty's central authority throughout the nation. In the early years of Shunzhi's reign, official attire regulations for officials largely followed the clothing norms of the Ming Dynasty, with round-collar gowns and saucer-shaped hats for court appearances. Both formal and informal attire were similar to the Ming standards. Soon after, the Qing government made multiple revisions to the clothing system. In the second year of Shunzhi's reign, regulations were established for officials' hats, specifying decorations on the hats and ornaments on the hatbands in detail. In the eighth and ninth years of Shunzhi's reign (1651 and 1652), requirements for decorative items and their usage were further expanded for members of the imperial family.

In the ninth year of Shunzhi's reign, the clothing system "Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" was formulated and implemented. This regulation stipulated clothing styles, colors, materials, patterns, and craftsmanship for imperial family members and officials, as well as the general populace. It manifested a strict hierarchical distinction, setting standards for ceremonial clothing and delineating various levels of society. For instance, it specified that officials of different ranks would wear gowns made from various types of satin and silk, embroidered with specific patterns. The document meticulously outlined the patterns and materials used for the rank badges on officials' hats and the cuffs of their robes, creating a foundational guideline for the embroidery patterns of civil and military officials.

In addition to clothing regulations for officials, "Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" also provided guidelines for scholars, students, and various social groups, restricting their choices of clothing materials, colors, and accessories. The document even extended its reach to marital practices, specifying the types of jewelry and accessories that could be worn by women. The restrictions and guidelines were comprehensive, reflecting the Qing Dynasty's meticulous attention to detail in clothing regulations.

3.2 Punitive Measures for Dress Code Violations in "Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li"

Notably, "Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" included explicit punitive measures for violations of dress codes. It outlined penalties for wearing prohibited clothing items, specifying

the usage of fabrics and decorative elements that were not allowed. These penalties ranged from fines to physical punishments, with garments being confiscated and destroyed. Such regulations aimed to enforce the hierarchical distinctions and maintain the integrity of the clothing system.

The document emphasized that officials must strictly adhere to their designated attire based on their rank, with severe consequences for violations. It required that officials' clothing should reflect their status and authority, promoting a sense of order and hierarchy within society. This rigorous enforcement of clothing regulations emphasized the political and societal significance of attire during the Qing Dynasty.

4. Conclusion

The study of "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" transcends its historical context, extending its significance to modern times. While uncovering the historical value of traditional clothing culture, this research serves as a guide for the innovation and development of contemporary clothing culture. By leveraging historical and cultural insights, modern clothing culture can be enriched, fostering cultural transmission and enhancing competitiveness in the modern era. Thus, the study of "Qin Ding Fu Se Jian Yu Yong Li" holds innovative significance.

Furthermore, this research does not merely offer a linear historical overview but employs an expansive approach. It explores and delves into various factors, including political, ceremonial, religious, and cultural dimensions, as well as ideologies and aesthetic perspectives. By examining clothing culture from this multifaceted perspective, a more comprehensive understanding of the intricacies and significance of Qing Dynasty attire is achieved, resulting in new insights and facilitating the in-depth development of clothing culture studies.

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