

(Right) The lacquer wood tomb figures excavated in Xinyang in Henan Province. The figures wore long dresses with curved garment pieces, decorative plates and angel sleeves. This type of sleeve was often used afterwards to make the movement of elbow and wrist flexible. Jackets and skirts were their everyday clothes with the skirt pieces overlapping in the behind and decorative jade plates in front of the waist. (Photo by Li Zhanqiang)
(bottom) Garment pictures painted by Gao Chunming according to lacquer wooden figurines unearthed in Luoyang, Henan Province.



or even the same clothing lines. A married woman returning to her mother's home was not permitted to eat at the same table with her brothers. When going out, a woman had to keep herself fully covered. These rules and rituals were recorded in great detail in the Confucian Book of Rites.

The *shenyi* is made up of the upper and lower garment, tailored and made in a unique way. There is a special chapter in the Book of Rites detailing the make of the *shenyi*. It said that in the Warring States Period, the style of the *shenyi* must conform to the rites and rituals, its style fit for the rules with the proper square and round shapes and the perfect balance. It has to be long enough not to expose the skin, but short enough not to drag on the floor. The forepart is elongated into a large triangle, with the part above the waist in straight cut and the part below the waist bias cut, for ease of movement. The underarm section is made for flexible movement of the elbow, therefore the generous length of sleeves reaches the elbow when folded from the fingertips. Moderately formal, the *shenyi* is fit for both men of letters and warriors. It ranks second in ceremonial wear, functional, not wasteful and simple in style. *Shenyi* of this period can be seen in silk paintings unearthed from ancient tombs, as well as on clay and wooden figurines found in the same period, with clear indications of the style, and often even the patterns.

ceremonial wear. Even later, the *bixi* became the protector of the royal dignity. The emperor's *bixi* is pure red in color.

Shoes to go with the *mianfu* are made of silk with double-layered wooden soles. Another kind exists that uses flax or animal skin as the sole depending on the season. By order of importance, the emperor wore red, white or black shoes on different occasions.

The most outstanding feature of the Chinese royal attire is the embroidered dragon. In Ming and Qing Dynasties, the robe had to have nine dragons embroidered, on front and back of the two shoulders and two sleeves, as well as inside the front lapel, displaying the royal prominence bestowed by the gods.



An imperial waistcoat of Qing Dynasty queen. (Collected by Beijing Palace Museum)

cap of a fixed shape. "Black gauze cap" also became a synonym for the government official status, used until the present day. No significant changes were made in the Tang, Song and Ming official gowns. There were clear rules specifying the appropriate color for each of the ranks, with slight modifications made in each dynasty. This system was passed down until the Qing Dynasty ended in history.

In Tang Dynasty the woman emperor Wuzetian had all official



The head wrapping scarf was usually made of black etamine. The style evolved from soft and slanting forward to hard with a square shape, but the major styles were about 3-5 types. (Selected from Research on Ancient Chinese Clothes and Adornments written by Shen Congwen)



The clothes for Tang Dynasty civil officials. The styles of robes, hats and shoes were slightly different. (Selected from Research on Ancient Chinese Clothes and Adornments written by Shen Congwen)