

# A Study of Design in Rank Badges for Old Chinese Military and Civil Officials

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This report is a study of designs embroidered in rank badges of military and civil officials' uniform in old China. Rank badges, or Bo(補) in Chinese, which are attached to officials' uniform, are embroidered designs on the breast and the back for people to easily discern between military and civil officials as well as between higher ranking and lower ranking officials. Bo(補) was used for various social stratum including king, queen, king's brothers, prince, and princess. This study, however, is focused on design of Bo(補) attached to the uniform of military and civil officials. This study first started with the origin of Bo(補) design, woven symbols in patches on the breast and the back of Gibsa (集史)'s uniform during the Yuan(元) dynasty. Lastly, this study reviewed and analyzed design of Bo(補) for military and civil officials during the Ming(明) and Qing(清) dynasties. This subjects of the study are literature, real pictures and miniatures. I have briefly looked into the historical background during the Yuan(元), Ming(明), and Qing(清) dynasties. According to the Bo(補) designs shown in "Myung-Hwoi-Chen" and "Sam-Jae-Do-Hwoi" during the Ming(明) dynasty. The official's uniform system during the Ming(明) dynasty succeed to the Qing(清) dynasty. However, there begins to show some variances in major embroidered designs during the latter part of

the Qing(清) dynasty. Also, during this period, sub-designs became diversified and colorful, the size of the Bo(補) became smaller than those of the Ming(明) dynasty, and the Bo(補) became to be divided into two pieces in keeping with the shape of the front two wings of the uniforms that show 'S' letter style when two wings are folded. The Bo(補) designs for various ranks of military and civil officials, major embroidered designs for civil officials are 'birds' and those for military officials are 'four legged-animals'. The Bo(補) is composed of upper, middle, and lower parts. The upper part is embroidered with such designs as cloud, sun, and Buddhist pattern while the middle part carries the major designs like birds and four-legged animals. The lower part is decorated with design such as rocks and waves. We can see that Bo(補) designs of the Ming(明) dynasty is simple while those of the Qing(清) dynasty is colorful.