

# **A Research on Clothing in the Wee-Jin Period**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Wee-Jin period was a turning point from the ancient ages to the Middle Ages. People in the north and the south moved extensively due to continuous civil wars and attacks from other races. Many races mixed, and cultures were exchanged and merged. Therefore, this period deeply influenced the progress of clothing styles.

In this study, diffusions and influences of cultures through clothing and the changes in clothing styles through cultural changes in the Wee-Jin period were studied after looking at clothing cultures from documents, mural paintings, and related literature.

## **2. Social and Cultural Backgrounds during the Wee-Jin period**

The Wee-Jin period was less than a century old, beginning in the year 220 when Jo-Bi led the Han dynasty and shortly fell when the Seo-Jin dynasty (265~316) collapsed. This period was characterized by confusion; politics and society were in disarray; Buddhism and Taoism flourished from different types of cultures in northern China and the Yangtze valley. However, there was big progress in the area of culture.

1) In the year 220, Mun-Je of Wee ascended the throne, and Han collapsed. The new and eventually famous bureaucratic employment system, Gu-Pum-Jeong-Gwan-In-Bub, was established. This was to open offices for capable men to work outside. By reorganizing the bureaucratic system, a medieval intelligent class, a high official class, in other words, was formed.

2) The Wee-Jin period was significant due to the actual integration of cultures in the northern and southern regions of China. The three divided countries included Wee (220~280), which inherited the Jung-Won culture, Chok, which inherited the western culture of Sa-Chun and Gui-Ju, and O, which inherited the southern culture in the downstream of the Yangtze River. They were unified under the Jin dynasty. The cultures in the north and the south merged, and living culture, such as clothing, faced a new age in this period.

3) Amid confusion, unprecedented consciousnesses, philosophies, and cultures flourished. During this time, traditional Confucianism had lost its dominating power, and several new philosophies from thinkers, such as No-Ja, Jang-Ja, Bup-Ga and Myung-Ga, arose vividly.

Thereupon, the freedom-liberation trend became popular in the world of thought. People's minds became more open. They faced daily life with open and unreserved mental attitudes, and they tended to be free from worldly cares.

### **3. Clothing Culture during the Wee-Jin period**

#### **1) Bu-Gu-Ye-Bup**

During the Jin-Han dynasty, the clothes and crown system had been established already. The dividing line was clear that the nobility was supposed to wear a crown, while the commoners were supposed to wear a head cover. However, this system broke down during the Wee-Jin period. A discipline that was not restricted by courtesy appeared in clothing. Jo-Jo, a founder of the Wee dynasty, wore Gahp made of Gyumpo, which was similar to Pi-Byun1 in the ancient ages. In "Yeo-Bok-Ji," there is a comment saying, "The world is destroyed, and there is a shortage of materials. Gyum-gun became a substitute for Pi-Byun."

O's role in "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" was described in a story in which Yuk-Son defeated Jo-Hue of Wee, and returned. Son-Kwon, who was the king of O, took off his Chui-Mo, and gave it to Yuk-Son. What exactly was Chui-Mo was never determined, but there was a clue in "Sam-Bon-Jung-Nyun," which says that Chui-Mo was like a hempen hood in jade color.

During the Wee-Jin period, unlined clothes were popular among high officials. The discipline of official uniforms became meaningless: there were dress regulations, but those existed only in form. Princes, marquis, and generals wore silk dresses decorated with Gum-Ra-Gum-Un, while courtiers and servants wore dresses in various colors. Courtiers could mimic the dress of an emperor, and the yellow color that symbolized the emperor could be used for the dresses of government officials at lower levels.

As mentioned above, this period had relatively frequent wars, frequent Jo-Dae, frequent movement, and mixed residence. These often changed the character of clothing.

#### **2) Dae-Su-Sam, Po-E-Bak-Dae**

A marked tendency to transcend self was seen. People tried to find possibilities in clothing. Looking down, the world was considered as a super mundane spirit. People did not hesitate to expose their chests and arms, and wore wide clothes.

"Ju-Ryang-Jeon," a document of the Song dynasty, says, "The size of a sleeve was big enough to cut into two. The size of a hem could also be divided into two." The sleeves in the upper garment look very long in "Nak-Sin-Bu," "Yol-Nyo-Jeon," and "Yo-Sa-Jahm" in Gogaeji. Wan-Jeok, a writer during the Wee-Jin period, described the beauty inspired by a sleeve like flowing water in his poem: "There is a beautiful woman in the west. She is as bright as

sunshine. Wearing a soft silk dress, she raises her long sleeves, and covers her face from the morning sun."

In "Sae-Sul-Sin-Oe Im-Tan," there is a description of Yu-Young who was naked, and sat inside. "I take the universe as my house, and this living room as my clothes. My friends, how come you got into the middle of my pants?" This story despised the mundane world, and it was not to be restricted. Such tendency is shown more evidently in the mural painting, "Juk-Lim-Chil-Hyun" in Seo-Sun-Gyo, Dong-Jin-Mo-Chul-To, Nam-Gyung.

In "Juk-Lim-Chil-Hyun," almost everybody exposed his or her chest, was barefoot, had disarranged hair or Y-hair, and put on hempen hood. They were wearing Gwan-Su-Dae-Sam and Po-E-Bak-Dae. This was an expression of their mentality that worshipped emptiness, looked down on courtesy, and wished to transcend the world by following nature. This represented a unique cultural stage among feudal literary men under high-pressure politics in the age of endless civil wars, destroyed courtesy, and Confucian crisis.

### **3) Influences of the north and the south**

The clothing of the O dynasty, which reigned in the downstream of the Yangtze River in the southern region of China, came from a southern style, meaning, long upper garments and short lower garments. However, as the period of Jin unification came, clothing was influenced by the northern style. Upper garments became shorter, and covered the lower body.

Commoners during the Wee-Jin period wore white clothes, and put on wooden shoes called Guek. Guek is a kind of wooden clogs. It was made for walking through muddy roads in the rainy and humid south. It was airy. Before Tae-Gang (280~289), the tips of women's shoes were round, and the tips of men's shoes were square. After Tae-Kang, shoes with heels appeared, and women's shoes had square tips. Guek was made of piece of wood and originally used for people in humble conditions. However, it was very popular among high officials during the age of Tae-Gang, when they began putting on elegant fashion. "An-Ssi Family Precept" says, "Children of the nobility in the prime of the Yang dynasty scattered perfume, powdered their faces, wore high-heeled Chi-Geuk, and rode wagons with long-lasting sunscreen protection." This influenced the contact with the residents of O in the south.

### **4) Influence of Buddhism**

The flourishing of Buddhism influenced clothing. A hairstyle called "Bi-Chon-Gye" was intended to raise women's hair highly up to their crowns, on which we could see the strong influence of Buddhism.

Also, patterns of lotus and honeysuckle were used widely in clothing materials and decorations.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Wee-Jin period was a turning point from the ancient ages to the Middle Ages. This period was characterized by confusion and wars, but progressed well in thinking and culture. This phenomenon influenced clothing in general. The clothing during this period was vastly different. Traditional Confucianism lost its dominating power, and many schools of thought, such as No-Jang, arose vividly. In clothing, people were not restricted from courtesy. Both the ruler and the ruled had one common interest: fashion. Through the unification of the north and the south, clothes from both regions influenced each other, enriching the clothing culture, and opening a new page in the Chinese clothing culture.