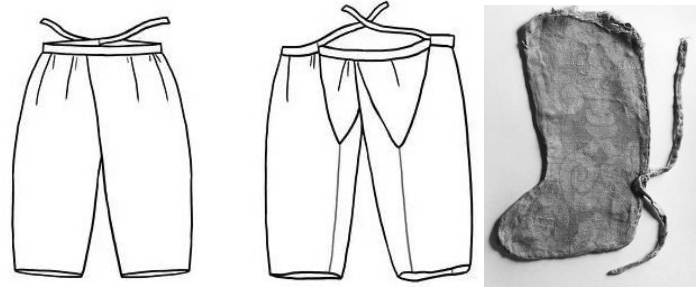


The Tang Dynasty is considered a high point in Chinese history. The capital city, Chang'an, was the world's largest and most cosmopolitan city until the middle of the 8th century. There is record of active contact between Tang Dynasty China and several other nations along the Silk Road, most of which had delegates in Chang'an. Han China adopted many foreign fashion trends, both from other nations as well as other Chinese ethnic groups, and also influenced the fashion of other cultures, such as Japan and Korea. Women's clothing of this period went on to influence our modern concept of traditional Chinese clothing.

**Fabrics** used included silk, wool, linen, ramie, and hemp. Silk was woven in a wide variety of types and weights, and fabrics featured woven, printed, and embroidered designs.

Not much is written about **undergarments** – especially for women. They were considered a taboo and extremely personal garment. Research on undergarments is difficult – especially since much of what is written is in Chinese.



**Underpants** include two types – Ku (袴) and Kun (裪), crotchless and crotchless. These were likely layered with the crotchless pants on top.

The upper undergarment for women was called the hezi (诃子), and resembled a modern strapless camisole. It was made of strong and elastic fabric, probably layers of silk cut on the bias.

**Socks** were also made of silk. An extant child's sock features ties issuing from the ankle, presumably to help secure it on the foot. Similar socks were found in the Mawangdui tombs dating to the Han Dynasty.

**Foundational women's garments** included:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Shirt - Ru (襦)     | Short Jacket - Ban bi (半臂, literally "half arm"), Bei xin (背心) |
| Skirt - Qun (裙)    | Large-Sleeved Gown - Da Xiu Shan (女式]大袖衫)                      |
| Shawl - Pijin (披巾) | Long Jacket - Beizi (被子 literally "quilted cover")             |
|                    | Riding Outfit - Hu Fu (胡服, literally "foreign costume")        |

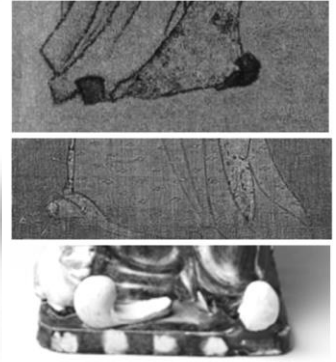


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## CLOTHING OF THE TANG DYNASTY

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**Shoes** had upturned toes or were mitered across the toe and vamp (the top of the foot). Shoes had a variety of toe shapes. Men wore shoes or boots with upturned toes.



Women and men wore a variety of **headgear**. Women mostly wore hats when traveling, and otherwise decorated their elaborately arranged hair (often with supplemental wigs) with combs and other pieces of jewelry. Women are not depicted in any of the extant art that I have seen wearing any other jewelry. Men's headwear consisted of a piece of tied black cloth, potentially worn over a piece of stiffened silk gauze to achieve a desirable shape.

**Cosmetics** also played a significant role in women's fashion, with a prescribed order to how it should be applied and a variety of blush, lip, and eyebrow styles throughout the dynasty.



**Men** wore an undershirt similar to the ban bi (半臂), but with an attached skirt. Men most often wore a round-collared robe and belt over this. The color of the robe and any decoration was determined by the individual's rank, and commoners could only wear white linen or hemp robes that didn't go past their thighs. Women would also occasionally wear men's clothing.



More information about how to construct women's Tang Dynasty clothing can be found on my website: <http://bit.ly/tangdynastygarb>. Here's a brief bibliography to get you started:

- Zhou Xun & Gao Chunming, *5000 Years of Chinese Costume* (1987)
- Hua Mei, *Chinese Clothing* (2011)
- S.J. Vainker, *Chinese Silk: A Cultural History* (2004)
- Shaorong Yang, *Traditional Chinese Clothing* (2004)
- Charles Benn, *China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty* (2004)

Lastly, be careful when you're looking online at Chinese sources. The Hanfu movement is neat, but just like the "Hollywood Effect" on Western European historic fashion, you have to sort through the commercial popular culture to get to those who are doing real recreations – which is very difficult when you don't read Chinese.