

Research on the Origin and Development of Hair Band Custom in Tang Dynasty

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Abstract: Women in Tang Dynasty used hair bands to tie up their hairs or as decoration. Researchers often call the hair band as Mo'e (literally translated as "wipe the forehead"), which is the same as Mo'e used by men. However, the shape and usage method of these hair bands are different from those of Mo'e, but are the same as those of hair bands wore by Hu people who entered China at that time. The two kinds of hair bands should be closely related. Through the comparative study of image materials, this paper explores the influence of the fashionable hair band in Central Asia on women's hairdressing in Tang Dynasty. In addition, Dunhuang murals, Tubo coffin paintings and handed down scroll paintings can show the custom of hair bands or head scarves wrapping in Tubo. This paper also makes a slight analysis of its origin.

1. Introduction

In tomb murals of Tang dynasty, archaeologists often find women images wearing hair bands. Researchers once believed that these female hair bands should be the same as Mo'e (literally translated as "wipe the forehead") used by men. But this opinion is not persuasive. After careful comparative analysis based on image materials, this paper proposes another point of view on the origin of hair bands wore by Tang women and Tubo people at that time.

2. The Image of Hair-Band-Wearing Women in Tang Dynasty

Among the unearthed cultural relics of the Tang Dynasty, such as pottery figurines and tomb murals, a common type of female image with the hair band is found. Examples include murals in Duan Jianbi Tomb of Zhaoling in Tang Dynasty (Figure 1), murals in the Tomb of the Princess Xincheng of Tang Dynasty, the figure of women in men's clothes depicted in murals of Wei Concubine's Tomb found in Liquan County, maiden figurines unearthed in the Tang Tomb of Shilipu Village in the East Suburb Luoyang, the maiden figure with Hu bottle painted in murals of An Yuan-shou's Tomb in Liquan County, and the horse riding figures unearthed in the River Road Tang Tomb of Chaoyang, Liaoning Province. The hair bands are all made of brocade and other fabrics, which are weaved into narrow strips and covered on the forehead, with thin ribbons on both sides tied behind the head. These women wear round collar gowns, which belong to men's clothes. Among them, the female figurine in Duan Jianbi Tomb wears a belt, with a knife hanging in the waist; the female figurine in the River Road Tang Tomb of Chaoyang travels on horseback and carries a bottle. This special combination of dress and behavior proves that, the hair band should not be a traditional female headdress in China; it is the imitation of men's hairdo.



Figure 1. Tang woman with hair band



Figure 2. Tang Warrior with Mo'e

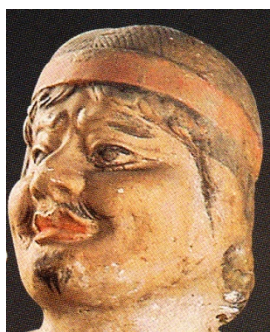


Figure 3. Hu people with hair band in Tang dynasty



Figure 4. Sogdian with hair band lived in Central Asia



Figure 5. The figure of Lu Dong Zan

In Tang Dynasty, compared with men's Mo'e, women's hair bands are different from shape and the binding way. Bin Wang, Di Zhu and other scholars called them as Mo'e in excavation reports, and believed that they were similar to Mo'e used by men. However, relevant records in Tang Dynasty literature refer Mo'e specifically to the clothes of men, especially warriors. For example, in Mu Du's Report to the Official of Xuanzhou, there's the saying "Shi-de Lou, a privy counselor, was also a scholar who won in the highest imperial examinations ... He also wore a red Mo'e and enrolled as a brave warrior, opening up wasteland and growing food grain." In addition, the Biography of Shide Lou in the New Book of Tang also has similar record: "Later warriors were recruited to fight against Tubo. Men were self-motivated and wearing the red Mo'e to enroll." From the above literature, we can see that Mo'e is a warrior costume.

Warriors wore red Mo'e in Tang Dynasty can be seen in unearthed murals and pottery figurines, such as warriors in mural of the Tomb of Prince Jiemin of Tang Dynasty (Figure 2), warriors in the mural of the Jingling Tomb of Tang Dynasty, horse-riding figurines in the Tomb of Prince Yide found in Qianxian County, and warriors as ceremonial guards in the Tomb of Prince Zhanghuai found in Qianxian County. Mo'e was usually used combined with the black Fu'tou (the gauze cap), and was tied outside the Fu'tou. The man should wrap the Fu'tou first, and then wrap the Mo'e back along the forehead, and then tie the end of the band in front. From images it can be found, the majority of Mo'e is red, which is consistent with documents. In addition to warriors, musicians and dancers also wore red Mo'e. In the murals of Han Xiu tomb in Xi'an, most dancers and musicians wore Mo'e. The Biography of Wei Jian in the Volume 105 of the Book of Tang contains following passage.

"Chengfu wrote ten more lyrics. He wore short green shirts with brocade on half of the sleeves, showing a part of his bare shoulders. He wore a red, silk Mo'e. He sang in the first boat; a hundred women joined in the chorus. The women were all in beautiful clothes and pretty makeup, and responded with drums and flutes."

Musicians and dancers wore "red Mo'e", which can be corroborated with murals of Han Xiu's tomb. In addition, in the mural of Han Xiu's tomb, there is only one person on the top right corner who wears the hair band. The person is playing the brass cymbals. He wears a hair band with ornaments on his forehead and two ribbons behind his head. It can be seen that there is a clear distinction between the two bands in the Tang Dynasty. Female hair bands in Tang Dynasty are different from those worn by male warriors and dancers. Therefore, they should not be called as Mo'e.

3. Hu People's Hair Band Custom

The special costume of hair bands can also be seen in the figures of Hu people in the pottery figurines and stone carvings of the Tang Dynasty. The Tomb of Anbo Couple found in Longmen is an example (Figure 3). Anbo and his wife He are both Sogdian. In the tomb there are Hu merchant figures wearing lapel robes and pointed hats with rolled eaves. They represent the image of Sogdian Hu merchants from the Central Asia. The lower parts of their lapel gowns were rolled up and tucked

into the belt. This is the same with the recording in Duan Li's poem, *Hu Teng Er*, that the costume of the Sogdian Hu people are "light shirts rolled in the front and back". In addition, Hu figures with hair bands can also be seen in the Mutai Tombs of Tang dynasty found in Qingcheng, the horse-riding and hunting figurines in the Palace Museum, the inscription on the side of the stele of Xingfu Temple of Tang Dynasty, the inscription on the M6 stone tomb gate of He's Cemetery in Yanchi and the collection of Hu figurines in Nelson Museum. Thus, hair bands can be seen as common hair decorations for Hu people in the Tang Dynasty. In Tang Dynasty, women's hair bands were basically the same in shape and fashion. But such special headdresses cannot be seen in Han women before Tang Dynasty, so they should be influenced by Hu people.

As for the genus of Hu figurines with haircut and hair bands unearthed from Tang tombs, Jian-wu Han pointed out that they should be Qiuci people, and Jiang Ren considered that they should be Sogdian. "Figures wearing pointed-hats, haircut and hair bands, and horse-hunting figurines with dogs and leopards unearthed from Xi'an Tang tombs are Sogdian people." In my opinion, the Sogdian theory seems more reasonable. The custom of Sogdian people with hair bands can be seen in the murals of Karai Kafirnikan, Afrasi Abu (Figure 4) and Pitchkent in the Central Asia. Their shape and using method are similar to those of the Tang Dynasty figurines. Moreover, among Hu people who entered China in the Tang Dynasty, most of them were Sogdian with the nine surnames of Zhao-wu. During this period, all kinds of Hu figurines were mostly shaped by the image of the Sogdian.

In addition, among the owners of unearthed tombs, Sogdian people include Yuan-shou An and He's family in Yanchi, Ningxia. Among them, Yuan-shou An was a Sogdian descendant of Anguo State in the Central Asia. His father, Xing-gui An, and his uncle Xiu-ren An were founding officials of the Tang Dynasty. In the fourth year of Wude (621), 16-year-old Yuan-shou An followed Shi-min Li bravely and entered his palace as an official. During the reign of Gaozong, he became a general. After he died in 683, An was buried in Zhaoling Mausoleum according to special orders. The image of the Hu people with hair bands in the tombs of Sogdian who entered China can also be used as an important evidence to prove the influence of Sogdian people on the headdress of women in Tang Dynasty.

Hui Chao, a monk in the Tang Dynasty, wrote the *Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*. He wrote that in the country of Small Bruza, people wore "shirts and boots; they cut their hair and wrapped hairs with a piece of cloth around the head". The Small Bruza is situated in the northwest of Kashmir. The capital city is Nado, which is now Gilgit. The country was adjacent to Sogdian territory. The characteristic of adult male's costume is consistent with the murals of Hu figurines and Sogdian mentioned above. It can be seen that hair bands were also prevalent in Central Asia countries adjacent to Sogdian. In the mourning picture of Cave 158 of Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, the cut-nosed Hu people have deep eyes, high nose and short hair. He wears hair bands, earrings, a robe with lapel and narrow sleeve, as well as a belt at the waist. Qing-jie Zhang pointed out that the figure "might come from the Small Bruza or a neighboring country with similar clothes". The region is probably in the Mainland of Sogdian and its adjacent areas in Central Asia. In addition, the Hu people who hold objects in Cave 12 of Mogao Grottoes have two ribbons tied behind their heads, the same as those who play cymbals in the music and dance mural in Han Xiu's tomb. It can be seen that the two kinds of hair bands are commonly used by Sogdian in the Central Asia.

4. The Origin of Hair Band and Headscarf Wrapping Custom in Tubo

We can find the custom of Tubo people wearing hair bands or headscarves in Dunhuang grotto murals, paintings in Tubo coffin boards and handed down scroll paintings. For example, in Li-ben Yan's *Picture of Step and Ride* (Figure. 5), Lu Dong Zan (Figure 5) wears a black hair band. Similar hair bands can also be seen in the Maitreya Sutra of the north wall of Cave 25 of Yulin Grottoes in Anxi, the murals in Cave 225 of Mogao Grottoes, the Tubo Zanpu Buddhist painting of Cave 159 of Mogao Grottoes, and the Tubo coffin painting unearthed from Qinghai. The hair band of Lu Dong Zan makes a circle. There are also figures with hair bands of two circles in grotto

murals and coffin paintings. The shape of the band is similar to that of the Hu figurines in Tang Dynasty and the Sogdian figures in Central Asian murals. The author thinks it should be the result of direct influence. Tubo characters wrapped tall tubular headscarves, which should also evolve from hair bands. The only difference lies in the number of circles.

From the analysis of costume collocation, Tubo figures' hair bands often match with lapel gowns. Lu Dong Zan's gown and coffin figures' gowns are all decorated with bead patterns in collars, sleeves, plackets and openings. It is similar to the garment decoration of Sogdian people with hair bands seen in Central Asia's Afrasi Abu and Pitchkent frescoes. These characteristics can also be used as the evidence of the influence of the Sogdian people lived in Central Asia on the hair band and turban-binding customs in Tubo. In addition, Tubo was greatly influenced by Sogdian in gold and silver wares, harness and weapons. Under the strong influence of Hu style, Tubo people learned the hair decoration method. Moreover, braided hair was prevalent in Tubo, while short braided hair was also common in Sogdian. The hair style is suitable for hair bands, which is also a reason of the custom.

5. Conclusion

Based on above analysis, it can be found that the shape and usage method of female hair bands in Tang Dynasty are different from those of Mo'e, but are basically the same as those of the hair bands used by Sogdian people in China. Tang women's hair bands should be the result of Sogdian influence. In Central Asia at that time, hair bands were prevalent in the areas adjacent to Sogdian. Relevant cultural relics are commonly seen in this area. The Tubo hair bands and headscarves are also similar to those wore by Sogdian people, which can be proved by figures and images found in the murals of Central Asia. Tubo hair bands should also be the result of Sogdian influence. The popularity of hair bands reflected the flourishing cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries at that time.

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