

A Study on the Historical Research Characteristics of Fabric Material for the Concubines' Costume in *Yeonsan's* Reign

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1. Introduction

Yeonsan-gun(*Yeonsan*)(reign: 1494~1506), the 10th king of Joseon dynasty, was obsessed re-creation and luxury of the court costumes during the end of his reign. But after his dethronement, *Yeonsan's* costume culture has been destroyed. Therefore, the concubines' costume in *Yeonsan* period of media were produced without considering the characteristics of the fabric although it was the pinnacle of costume art at that time. This study is aimed to analyze and present the essential characteristics for concubine's costume at that time with historical research for correct reconstruction. Already in 1502, concerns about the luxury of kings were raised with the remonstrance of "The clothings are heavily adorned" (National Institute of Korean History [NIKH], 2005-2015). The research method for this study is as follows: First, I limit the scope of the study from 1502 to 1506. In this period, *Yeonsan's* most beloved concubine, *Jang Noksu*, become *sugyong* [淑容] and had the highest authority. Next, records of *Yeonsangun-ilgi* in this period, prior studies, and analysis of rare existing artifacts are conducted. Finally, I will present four essential characteristics of the fabric to reconstruct concubine costume of *Yeonsan*.

2. Essential Characteristics of fabrics for concubine's costume in *Yeonsan's* reign

The first characteristic is delicate '*mangeumseon* [fabric filled with golden pattern fully]'. Since 1504, *Yeonsan* ordered to teach a higher level techniques to weavers for making delicate golden satin damask with Chinese samples. And domestic production was succeeded as like: navy satin damask *mangeumseon* with small flowers and seven treasures pattern [七寶細花紋] in 1504 and *jeosa* [綾紗] *mangeumseon* with four season's flower pattern in 1505 (NIKH, 2005-2015), both of thick and thin. It was not a material for official robe, so it was most likely used for making concubine's costume. In the four season's flower pattern in relic of 15-16th century, the size of the flower was 1.6 to 3cm, and the kind of flowers in 1566 was pulm blossom, chrysanthemum, lotus, and camellia or peony (Song, 2011). As the width of the *pyeongeumsa* [flat gold thread] in the pattern of twill *jegori* of early 16th century was 0.35mm wide (Sim & Lim, 2015), *Yeonsan's* *mangeumseon* would have been woven with *pyeongeumsa* of less 0.35mm width. Costume of *Jang Noksu* in historical drama were mainly made of gold leaf and embroidery until today, but delicate *mangeumseon* with seven treasures or four season's flower pattern are needed for proper reconstruction.

The second characteristic is ‘thin interwoven fabric and silk gauze’. Fabrics which *Yeonsan* demanded in 1502~1504 were vivid colored *jeosa*, silk gauze with flower pattern, fine *jeosa* with flower pattern, and sheer fabric gauze[羅] (NIKH, 2005-2015). But the name of these thin fabrics were in records of Sep. and Oct., not in summer. *Jeosa* would have been preferred because it was thin but dyed in more vivid color and glossy. The quantity of required fabrics by king were small about 182cm, 61cm, 1 ~ 2 rolls which enough to make a 1 set of women’s clothing, and it is suitable as a material for the concubines’ costume because it was the preferred combination of scarlet and green in women's clothes.

The third characteristic is the ‘dyeing of deep vivid color’ applied to the above fabrics. In July 1503, the king called for thin fabrics of deep red, deep yellow & navy, deep green, deep rusty blue & willow blue [深碧青柳青], deep blue-white, and deep yellow green and willow blue [深綠黃柳青]. After that, he demanded to dye the plain silk and silk gossamer to red garden balsam color and the pale green *jeosa* to darker color, to encourage dyeing of deep vivid color (NIKH, 2005-2015). The woman of the province could not worn a white skirt by the command of king since April 1505, so pale colored fabrics should be excluded from the reconstruction of concubine’s costume. *Yeonsan* established a bureau in 1504 to produce domestic silk and *jeosa*. Therefore, referring to Kim(2014), it is estimated that the dyeing material of the above fabrics was also domestic indigo blue woad and safflower which were managed by the government office, and domestic sophora flowers or gardenia.

The fourth characteristic is ‘fur coat’ or ‘fur skirt’ as material of luxury winter clothes. In March 1500, *Yeonsan* demanded light, warm and vivid colored felt, showing interest in winter clothing. Since the women’s sable coat became widely popular during the reign of King *Seongjong*, the former king. However, the example in which sable fur was preferred as the skirt material for the court ladies only appeared in the *Yeonsangun-ilgi* in 1502(NIKH, 2005-2015). In addition, 60 pieces of sable fur entered the palace and it was ordered to make 4 women's sable coat and 1 women’s weasel fur coat in 1502. It is impossible to rule out the possibility that these clothes, made of expensive fur, were clothing for the queen. However, it is also possible that it was made for *Jang Noksu*, who took over the king's favor during this time.

3. Conclusion

The fabric culture pursued by *Yeonsan* had the disadvantage of being a ruined luxury, but on the other hand, it had the advantage of establishing a foundation for an aesthetically costume culture with the development of domestic weaving and dyeing techniques and interest in multi-faceted materials. The essential characteristics for *Jang Noksu* and other concubine’s costume are delicate *mangeumseon*, thin silk gauze and *jeosa*, vivid dyeing, fur coat and fur skirt with expensive fur. Since the luxury of clothing was strictly forbidden in the subsequent reign of King *Jungjong*, the periodic characteristics of the fabric of *Yeonsan*’s reign must be reflected in the historical research of his concubine’s costume.

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