

The monograph is in 4 *chüan*, which deal respectively with:

- 1) Imperial carriages, sedan chairs, parasols and horse trappings
- 2) Garments of the emperor, empresses and princes of the blood
- 3) Garments of serving officials
- 4) Seals, tallies, palace buildings, domestic buildings and utensils

An idea of the degree of detail into which the laws went can be gained from the section on "Utensils" (*ch'i-yung*) 器用, here translated in full:

Prohibitions on the use of utensils: In the 26th year of Hung-wu (1393) it was decreed that Dukes, Marquises and officials of the 1st and 2nd Ranks might have wine pots and wine cups of gold, and for other items use silver. Officials of the 3rd to 5th ranks might have pots of silver and wine cups of gold, while those of the 6th to 9th Ranks might have pots and cups of silver, for the rest making use of porcelain or lacquer. Items of woodwork should not make use of cinnabar, gilt or painted gold decoration, or of carvings of dragons or phoenixes. The common people should have pewter wine pots, wine cups of silver, and for the rest use porcelain or lacquer ware. Couches, screens and window lattices of variously carved and decorated lacquer belonging to officials should not be carved with dragon designs or be of vermilion lacquer decorated with gold. Military officials and officers should have bows and arrows of black lacquer, while bow cases and quivers must not use vermilion lacquer or painted gold decoration. In the 4th year of Chien-wen (1402) a reprimand was issued to officials and the populace, forbidding the unlawful use of gold *chüeh* 爵 goblets for wine and the use of gold-decorated vermilion lacquer on woodwork. In the 16th year of Cheng-te (1521) it was decreed that officials of the 1st and 2nd Rank might not use vessels of jade, but only of gold. Merchants and practitioners of craft skills might not use vessels of silver and were in all respects to be as the common people.⁹

Although this is a relatively short entry (it is brief in comparison with the material on dress), there are a number of typical features. Categories of people are assumed to be immutable, and objects of consumption are assigned to these categories. More attention is given to discriminations within the ruling class than to that between the rulers and the ruled. This is for example true for the material on dress, where the entry on the clothing of the common people (dated 1381) is mainly concerned with restricting the types of fabrics which may be worn. Here a significant difference in the

⁹ *Ming-shih*, ch. 68, *chü* 44, *Yü-fu* 4, Vol. 6, p. 1672.

fabrics allowed is made between the farmers (*nung*) and merchants (*shang*), to the detriment of the latter, in keeping with classical political theory. No subsequent additions or alterations to these laws were made, except the prohibition of certain furs in Cheng-te 1 (1506) and of "purple flowered armour" in Cheng-te 16 (1521).¹⁰

One of the most striking features about the Ming sumptuary laws is that they are typically a product of the regulatory zeal of the founding emperor in the late fourteenth century, and undergo relatively little modification in later reigns. One of the few significant alterations to the laws was made early in the Chia-ching reign, a period of intense concern about correct ritual forms which coalesced round the "Great Ritual Controversy", *Ta li-i* 大禮議, over the proper worship to be offered to the emperor's non-imperial parents.¹¹ The emperor's chief ritualist, Chang Ts'ung 張璠 (1476-1539) memorialized in 1528;

"There have never been clear regulations on the dress of ranked officials living out of office, and disciples of the outlandish and strange compete in their odd dressing, thereby upsetting the dynastic canons. I beg that it be patterned on the ancient *hsüan-tuan* and embodied in a separate statute to be promulgated to the empire, that noble and base may have their proper rankings." The Emperor then ordered again the creation of the "Picture of the Loyal and Pure Hat and Dress" *Chung ching kuan-fu t'u* 忠靖冠服圖), and its promulgation by the Board of Rites, together with an edict stating, "The Ancestors examined Antiquity and established regulations, so that the court and sacrificial dress of serving officials might all have the appropriate grades. However the feelings of ordinary people grow respectful to that which is clear, insolent to that which is hidden or obscure. The ancient Sage kings were alert to this, and ordained the *hsüan-tuan* 玄端 as the dress for those living in retirement. Recently clothing styles have been strange and outlandish, with no distinctions of superior and inferior, so that the people's inclinations have no fixed points. We therefore have consulted the ancient regulations on the *hsüan-tuan*, and changed its name to the "Loyal and True", alluding to "Thinking of utmost loyalty when entering, thinking of amending one's faults when retiring". We have made pictures with explanations, showing the styles and patterns. It is allowed to be worn by officials in the capital above the 7th Rank, and members of the Han-lin Academy, the Directorate of Education, and the Messenger Office above the 8th Rank; in the provinces it is allowed to Regional Supervisors, the Senior Officials of each Prefecture, the chief official of a Subprefecture or County, and the Educational Official of Confu-

¹⁰ *Ming-shih*, 6, pp. 1649-50.

¹¹ Carney T. Fisher, *The Chosen One: Succession and Adoption in the Court of Ming Shizong* (Sydney, 1990), p. 58.

cian Schools. Only military officials of the rank of Commissioner-in-chief or above may wear it. Others are not allowed to go beyond the regulations in dress.¹¹ The Board of Rites promulgated the pictorial explanation to the empire and the edict was executed.¹²

After this date, there is very little alteration to the sumptuary laws. If we accept that one of the barriers the state was most anxious to police was that between official and non-official, it is perhaps significant that the very latest sumptuary regulation in the *Ming Statutes* of 1587 is an edict dated 1574, forbidding the *chung-ching kuan* 忠靖冠, the "Loyal and True hat" to those who were not officials.¹³ There was certainly no attempt made to update the sumptuary laws to take account of new types of product which had come into being since the early part of the dynasty, or of changes in the terminology applied to types of silk textiles. The evidence of an inventory made in 1562 of the property of the disgraced Grand Secretary Yen Sung 嚴嵩 enables us to rank textiles in terms of their value in the Chia-ching reign.¹⁴ Yet the sumptuary laws persist in "forbidding" to the common people textiles which are of lower value, while allowing others which are ranked more highly by the inventory's compilers. And there is no mention at all in the laws of *kai-chi* 改機, a particularly sumptuous fabric which was invented in Fujian province in the early 16th century.

REGULATION OF CONSUMPTION AND THE INSTITUTION OF CORRECT MORALITY BY THE MING STATE

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NORMS AND THE STATE IN CHINA

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