



Hanfu-Bench

Hanfu-Bench is a manually curated multimodal dataset composed of traditional Chinese Hanfu designs spanning various dynasties. This dataset serves as an essential resource for evaluating cultural understanding and creative adaptability of Visual Language Models. Through the two core tasks—cultural visual understanding and cultural image transcreation—our experiments reveal significant limitations of current models in capturing and distinguishing subtle temporal-cultural features and effectively adapt ancient designs into modern contexts. This work highlights AI's critical role in promoting cultural heritage, bridging the understanding of tradition with innovative digital reinterpretation.

Hanfu: A Living Cultural Heritage

Hanfu is the traditional clothing of the Han Chinese people, deeply rooted in Chinese cultural heritage. With roots stretching back over 3,000 years—from the legendary Yellow Emperor to the Ming Dynasty—it has evolved through dynasties such as the Han, Tang, Song, and Ming, each contributing to its distinctive styles and aesthetics. Key features of Hanfu include: crossed collars, wide sleeves, flowing silhouettes, and hidden ties. Modern Hanfu is not a strict historical replica, but a creative reinterpretation—faithful to traditional silhouettes while incorporating contemporary colors, patterns, and styling. Today, Hanfu is more than clothing—it's a living symbol of Chinese culture, worn worldwide for ceremony and daily life, embodying elegance, grace, and tradition.

THEY'RE DIFFERENT !!!



汉服

HANFU

和服

KIMONO

Wearing History: Hanfu Through the Dynasties

Hanfu is a history worn on the body, with each dynasty contributing its own distinct style to form a vivid historical canvas.



Qin & Han
221 BCE - 220 CE



Wei & Jin
220 CE - 589 CE



Tang
618 CE - 907 CE



Song
960 CE - 1279 CE



Ming
1368 CE - 1644 CE

Qin and Han Dynasties | Solemn and classic

Represented by shenyi (connected upper and lower garment), in two types: quju (front panels wrap around the body) and zhiju (front panels fall straight). Styles were dignified and elegant, with colors mainly black, red, and blue.

Wei and Jin Dynasties | Graceful and free

Influenced by the elegant literati, clothing emphasized “loose robes and wide sashes.” Zaju chuishaob robes emerged, with sashes fluttering in the wind, expressing elegance and unrestrained spirit.

Tang Dynasty | Open and luxurious

With the empire's prosperity, clothing became vibrant and bold in design. Women favored high-waisted qixiong ruqun with wide sleeves; cross-dressing and hufu (garments of nomadic peoples) became fashionable, reflecting Tang confidence and cosmopolitanism.

Song Dynasty | Simple and restrained

Influenced by Neo-Confucian thought, clothing became elongated and modest. The beizi (long open-front jacket) was popular, with muted colors and a disciplined, understated style.

Ming Dynasty | Synthesis of tradition

Ming attire revived Han traditions, integrating the best elements from previous dynasties. The aoqun (jacket and skirt) became women's daily wear, while the mamianqun (pleated skirt with smooth front and back panels) displayed intricate craftsmanship; stand-up collars also gained popularity.



Paper



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Code & Data





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Hanfu-Bench: A Multimodal Benchmark on Cross-Temporal Cultural Understanding and Transcreation

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Code

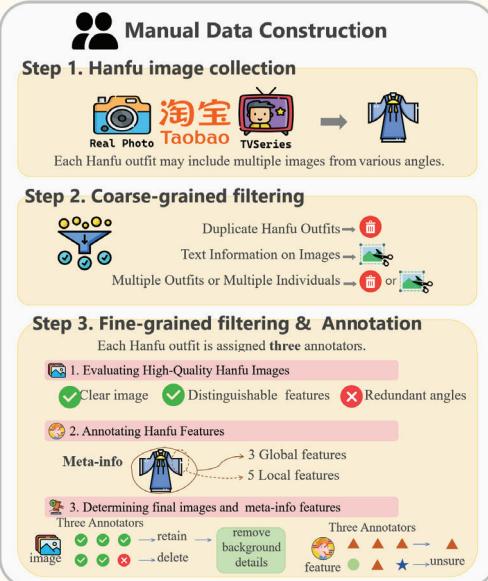


Culture: Not Just Where, but Also When!



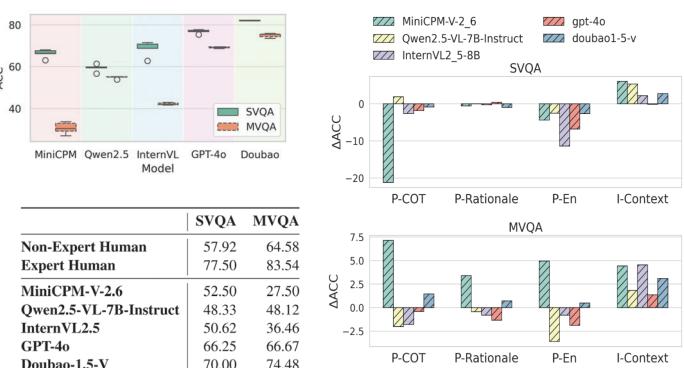
Top: Hanfu styles from five distinct periods of Chinese history, illustrating variations in structure and design and tracing the evolution of traditional Chinese attire over time. **Bottom:** The transformation of traditional Hanfu into modern clothing through cultural adaptation.

- Culture is a rich and dynamic domain that evolves across both **geography** and **time**.
- Existing studies on cultural understanding with vision-language models (VLMs) primarily emphasize geographic diversity, often overlooking the critical temporal dimensions.



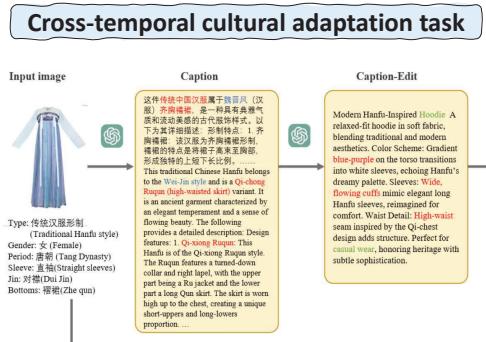
Task 1: Cultural Visual Understanding

	Type	Gender	Period	Sleeve	Jin	Collar	Bottoms	Outerwear	Overall
SVQA									
Count	217	485	138	121	291	183	169	117	1721
MiniCPM-V-2.6	70.51	90.31	44.93	51.24	65.98	49.73	68.05	49.57	68.04
Qwen2.5-VL-7B-Instruct	74.65	88.25	42.75	63.64	40.89	53.55	41.42	36.75	61.36
InternVL2.5	78.34	94.23	44.93	66.12	78.01	55.74	43.79	49.57	71.47
GPT-4o	74.65	96.49	73.19	70.25	61.17	59.02	88.76	72.65	77.69
Doubaot-1.5-V	79.72	94.02	76.81	67.77	82.47	71.04	92.90	61.54	82.28
MVQA									
Count	288	642	374	159	385	240	224	153	2465
MiniCPM-V-2.6	21.53	59.03	22.99	25.79	18.70	26.67	34.38	33.99	33.79
Qwen2.5-VL-7B-Instruct	38.19	89.25	46.26	34.59	32.21	52.08	54.02	52.29	55.21
InternVL2.5	32.64	73.05	34.49	19.50	29.35	33.33	38.39	37.91	43.00
GPT-4o	54.86	94.08	63.10	59.75	47.53	67.50	75.89	69.28	69.53
Doubaot-1.5-V	46.72	94.95	83.71	100.00	62.40	70.46	74.88	71.72	75.95



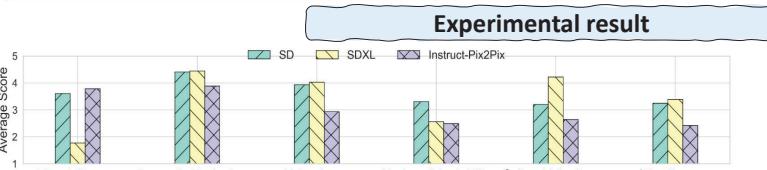
(1) Multi-Image VQA is More Difficult for VLMs; (2) Humans Perform Better on Multi-Image VQA; (3) Image Background is Helpful for Reasoning.

Task 2: Cultural Image Transcreation



(1) All models score low in modern adaptability; (2) Tradition-to-modern transformation is challenging!

ID	Question	Property
C0	Is there any visual change in the generated image compared to the original image?	Visual-change
C1	Is the content of this image clothing?	Semantic-equivalence
C2	Does the clothing in this image reflect naturally occurring in life?	Naturalness
C3	Is the clothing in this image suitable for modern daily wear?	Modern-adaptability
C4	Does the generated image retain the Hanfu cultural elements from the original image?	Cultural-Inheritance
C5	Does the clothing in this image match your aesthetic preferences?	Attractiveness



- We present **Hanfu-Bench**, a manually curated multimodal dataset composed of traditional Chinese Hanfu designs spanning various dynasties.
- Through the two core tasks—**cultural visual understanding** and **cultural image transcreation**—our experiments reveal significant limitations of current models in capturing and distinguishing subtle temporal-cultural features and effectively adapt ancient designs into modern contexts.
- This work highlights AI's critical role in **promoting cultural heritage, bridging the understanding of tradition with innovative digital reinterpretation**.



Ensure AI supports preservation rather than misrepresentation of culture heritage.

Conclusion

