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ASIAN TEXTILES

MAGAZINE OF THE OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

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Inside: Japanese ‘temple hangings’; off the beaten track in Toraja; textile-hunting in Kyoto; visits to the Pitt Rivers and Fitzwilliam museums, events and more.

Contents

Front cover: detail from a 19th-century Japanese embroidered textile showing an eagle swooping down on its prey. 167-1898 Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Back cover: detail from a 19th-century Chinese theatrical costume. T.86-1977 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Editorial

This issue of *Asian Textiles* owes its content exclusively to members' contributions. We start with Hiroko McDermott's intriguing research on the thriving 19th-century trade in second-hand Japanese textiles for the tourist-collectors' market. Next, Hywel Coleman describes his visit to what must be one of the world's most out-of-the-way textile collections, in rural Indonesia. Following this, we have Aimée Payton's account of her adventures on the textile trail in Kyoto. Fiona Sutcliffe and Agnes Upshall have written about two behind-the-scenes museum visits that OATG members were fortunate to attend, at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and the Pitt Rivers in Oxford. Many thanks to all these people for their contributions.

A major development for the group is a new collaboration with the Ashmolean Museum's Education Department, whose facilities we can now use for our talks and meetings, and where we plan to hold occasional craft workshops (see opposite).

Michael Messham stepped in 18 months ago to fill the post of membership secretary, a role he has carried out with impressive efficiency and good humour. He is now stepping down, and we offer him our warmest thanks for all his hard work. Until further notice, Aimée Payton, the Chair, will be the contact for all membership enquiries.

The Editor

OATG events programme

Dear Members

I am sorry that I have been obliged to announce these events much later than I had hoped; this has been unavoidable because of a combination of illness and summer holidays.

We have been in conversation with the Ashmolean Museum, who have generously offered their education room as a venue for our talks and events. This gives us a more central location, and we are very grateful for the opportunity to work with the Museum. It is not necessary to book for evening lectures, but your prompt arrival at 6 for 6.15 pm will be appreciated.

I have been hoping to organise a batik workshop since we enjoyed Fiona Kerlogue's talk in February this year, and I am very pleased to be able to offer this in our new venue. There will be a maximum of ten places at this workshop, so early booking is recommended.

Best wishes

Christine

Christine Yates,

OATG Events Coordinator

OATG evening lectures in partnership with the Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PH

Talks will be held in the Education Department of the Ashmolean Museum, accessed via the St Giles' entrance from 6 pm. Each talk will begin at 6.15 pm and will be followed by a drinks reception ending at 8.30 pm. OATG members free, non-members £3, no booking required.

Wednesday 26 November 2014

'Magic Textiles', a talk given by Dr Susan Conway, SOAS Research Associate

Susan studies the culture, arts and crafts of SE Asia, specialising in Thailand and the Shan States of Burma (Myanmar). She has been conducting fieldwork for 30 years and has organised conferences and exhibitions throughout the world. She has written a number of books, most recently *Tai Magic: Arts of the Supernatural in the Shan States and Lan Na*.

Saturday 6 December 2014

BATIK DAY, a practical workshop on batik given by Angela Lenman

Angela is a member of the Batik Guild and has been practising and teaching batik for more than 30 years. She has recently returned from a visit to Java, and will bring some examples of traditional batik to the workshop. During this day participants will learn the principles of batik and will produce at least one small batik textile suitable to be made into a small item (e.g. bookmark, spectacle case, small book cover).

This event will be held in the Education Department of the Ashmolean Museum, 10 am–4.30 pm

£55 Full, £50 Concessions, £40 OATG members. Booking essential, please contact Ashmolean Education Department on 01865 288078

Saturday 24 January 2015

AGM followed by Show & Tell

Members will talk about Asian textiles from their private collections. The event will be compered by OATG Chair, Aimée Payton.

This event will be held in the Education Department of the Ashmolean Museum, from 2 pm (access via main entrance). OATG members free, non-members £3.

From ‘temple hanging’ to ‘tapestry’ – what’s in a name?

Threads of Silk and Gold author Hiroko T. McDermott traces the history of the mysterious ‘temple hangings’ in 19th-century Japan.

A great admirer of *fukusa*, Eliza R. Scidmore knew where to go for Japanese textiles in Kyoto. ‘For the old embroideries,’ she wrote in her book *Jinrikisha Days in Meiji Japan* (1891), ‘the buyer must seek the second-hand clothes-shops, the pawn-shops of the land. In the Awata district lives the great dealer who gathers in old kimonos, obi, fukusas, kesas, temple hangings, brocades, and embroideries from the godowns of nobles, commoners, priests, actors, saints, and sinners, to whom ready money is a necessity…’ [1]

When I first read this book, I wondered what sort of objects the term ‘temple hangings’ referred to. No such term in the Japanese translation or concept existed in traditional and Meiji (1868–1912) Japan, and neither do we Japanese know today what this English term meant. But, while recently studying American auction catalogues from the 1890s, I noticed that quite a number of Japanese ‘temple hangings’ were being sold in New York, Philadelphia and Boston. Drawing upon what I found in these catalogues, this essay will identify ‘a temple hanging’ and discuss why we know nothing about it today.

In the rest of Ms Scidmore’s book, no other mention is found of the term ‘temple hangings.’ Her acquaintance with the district of Awata and the identified textiles dealer probably dated from around 1886. Three years later, however, she saw ‘a large, new building with high-heaped shelves, replacing the dirty old house,’ and no longer ‘its questionable bales tied up in blue cotton, and horribly suggestive of smallpox, cholera, and other contagions.’ Also, ‘prices had trebled and were advancing steadily.’ She also observed that not only old *fukusa*, but even ‘choice old brocades are rarer now than good old embroideries.’

Figure 1. Late 19th-century ‘temple hanging’ depicting treasure-laden ships, embroidered plain-weave cotton with silk and metallic threads. Victoria & Albert Museum, T.94-1958

Figure 2. A 19th-century ‘temple hanging’ depicting peacocks and peonies, embroidered plain-weave cotton with silk and metallic threads. Victoria & Albert Museum, T.252-1921

Theatre costumes, the priest’s *kesa* (cloak), and the squares and bits from temple tables no longer provided exquisite bits of meshed gold thread and colours. Apparently, by 1889 good old textiles of any sort were scarce. Instead, newly-made pieces were piled up on the shelves as their replacement. Indeed, modern *fukusa* had been made for foreign customers for over a decade.[2] In less than a year after the American publication of Scidmore’s book, a large sale of an important collection of Japanese and Chinese art works was held from 28 January 1892 at the American Art Association in New York City. Having lately closed down its long-time trading operations in Yokohama, Deakin Brothers & Co. was now selling over 1,300 Japanese and Chinese items, both old and new, of various genres. Among some 300 Japanese textiles on sale were not just pieces of old brocade, kimono, *fukusa*, embroidered screens, etc., but also 37 ‘temple hangings.’ Very fortunately for us art historians, the sale catalogue details their size and describes their motifs and designs. Ten months later, on 28 November, a second sale of the Deakin holdings, of over 1,800 items, took place at the same auction house, including 36 temple hangings (of which a couple were called ‘palace hanging’). Three months later, in February 1893, the third sale of the Deakin holdings was held, this time in Philadelphia, showing 42 temple hangings, of which 11 were unsold leftovers from the second New York auction. The result of these three sales is unknown. Nonetheless, it is clear that Deakin Brothers & Co. had brought from Yokohama at least 104 temple hangings, to exhibit for sale in two major cities on the East Coast. As only three of all these items were specifically described as old – one being designated as ‘very old,’ we can conclude that almost all of the Deakin hangings were relatively new or recent creations.[3]

Coincidentally or not, there was another large New York sale of Japanese and Chinese art works on 28 November 1892, the same day as that of the second Deakin sale, at The Oriental Art Rooms, a few blocks down from the American Art Association. Consisting of some 2,000 items of all sorts, both new and old, this collection had been formed by Frederick Komp, another Yokohama trader. Of its 200 pieces of Japanese textiles, some 75 items were listed as ornamental silk textiles. Although the collection’s strength was in its 42 embroidered screens, 12 temple hangings were also shown.

FROM ‘TEMPLE HANGING’ TO ‘TAPESTRY’

Figure 3. Embroidered ‘temple hanging’ showing a phoenix. Image provided courtesy of Museu Calouste Gulbenkian

Unfortunately, this catalogue does not note the size of its objects, but it does indicate that the design, motifs, and ground fabric, such as satin, of its temple hangings were by and large similar to those of the Deakin temple hangings. The Komp items, however, seem to be decorated more with traditional bird and flower motifs, and less with dragons. Again, the outcome of this auction is unknown. We know little of Frederick Komp and his company.[4]

Unfortunately, none of these four catalogues identifies the actual makers of their temple hangings. No hanging is accompanied by an image, though some embroidered screens are illustrated with photographs. Thanks to the catalogues’ details, however, we have a general idea of what a ‘temple hanging’ looked like in the early 1890s: it was more or less a sizeable silk wall-hanging (typically, about 4 x 7 feet) of either woven or embroidered design. Most of them are rectangular in shape, more likely in a portrait-layout design, but some are squarish. And many works bear a design based upon some quasi-religious (not necessarily Buddhist) idea of Japanese or Chinese origin, or based upon mythological, legendary, historical, theatrical, and narrative tales. The most popular seem to have been the dragon (in 46 of the 103 Deakin hangings), and next the mythological Hō-ō phoenix (in 14 items). The latter was in nine items combined with dragon(s). Single or paired, the dragon was often depicted amidst the clouds or above the waves, and some are winged. Of actual creatures, the crane was the most appreciated; this elegant bird, along with the pine tree and the tortoise, was a symbol of longevity. Other subjects were flowers (peony, chrysanthemum, lotus, cherry, magnolia, camellia), birds (chickens, peacocks, parrots, swallows, some colourful mythological birds), and the Goddess Benten. Some animals are also included, both mythological and real ones, such as bats, deer, tigers, monkeys, and even reptiles. Most surprisingly, 15 items carry the imperial crest, in the chrysanthemum flower design. There were certainly no Buddhist images for worship, although such images had been embroidered in the pre-modern era. (Some existing works are shown in Figures 1–3, as likely examples of ‘temple hangings’.)[5]

The motifs and subjects of these silk hangings have no obvious affiliation with temples or shrines of any Japanese religion. Indeed, in Japan there was, and is today, no custom of hanging textiles of any type inside the Buddhist halls: the only textile one might have seen therein was the altar cloth (called *uchishiki*) used to cover the altar front. But *uchishiki,* in a square, triangular, or rectangular shape, were often offerings and donations from deceased believers or their bereaved. Thus, unless a temple had fallen into serious financial or social trouble, *uchishiki* or even old *kesa* would rarely have left it and ended up in the hands of dealers in used textiles. In short, the term ‘temple hangings’ appears to have been a category casually coined in the 1880s by a clever dealer or Western tourist, like Scidmore herself, to refer to a type of sizeable textile hanging that dealt with old exotic subjects but usually was not old itself.

Figure 4. Seeing off the Naginata Float during the procession in the mid-Meiji (1890s). From *Shashin kiroku Gion matsuri* (Gion Festival recorded in photographs), Gion Matsuri Yamahoko Rengōkai, 1978

Therefore, most ‘temple hangings’ sold then by Yokohama traders and Kyoto dealers were in all likelihood not old pieces and not from Japanese temples.

Four years later, a London-based painter named Mortimer Menpes, visiting Japan in 1896, observed the almost fanatical obsession of tourists hunting for temple hangings: ‘They had all come upon their treasures in some lucky and unexpected manner. By much good fortune every man had secured his own special piece of embroidery, and each by clever manipulation had outwitted the dealer from whom he had managed to wrest this one old temple hanging.’ Menpes goes on to say in his book, ‘I soon found that none of these coveted treasures was old at all. Such large pieces of embroidery are not used in temples, nor have they ever been; they are quite modern introductions, and have been brought about simply to attract and make money out of the credulous strangers. I have spent hour after hour with the embroiderers, watching them manipulate old temple hangings, … and it was all done so cleverly that none but a Jap could possibly detect that they were modern.’[6]

But if the ‘temple hanging,’ as mentioned by Menpes, was a modern innovation, what was it called and how was it described in Japanese by its makers and dealers in the 1890s Kyoto? Did the Japanese also invent a name or a new category for it, or did they just adapt this English term into Jap-lish as ‘tenpuru hangingu’? When in the 1870s the Japanese traditional gift cover *fukusa* found its fans in the West, its Japanese term *fukusa* was quickly learned and adopted in publication. In the case of ‘temple hanging,’ however, what were its roots? Was it simply an imitation of Western tapestry? The only Japanese prototype one might imagine is a group of textile hangings used to decorate the festival floats. Some maker might have thought of making and selling such large hangings to Westerners as interior decoration pieces. In order to find out when, how, and what large hanging textiles began to appear in Kyoto, I have gone over the early Meiji exhibition records at first.

FROM ‘TEMPLE HANGING’ TO ‘TAPESTRY’

Figure 5. A large embroidered hanging made by Nishimura Sōzaemon for the Universal International Exposition of 1889 at Paris. Image provided courtesy of Chisō Co. Ltd.

Not surprisingly, no records of the early Meiji exhibitions, domestic or overseas, mention large silk hangings until 1877. In other words, their production or their participation in the market and exhibitions took place somewhat later than other export textile products such as screens and *fukusa*. But just around 1877 the Kyoto textile industry had begun to manufacture silk fabrics, much wider than the conventional roll of 38 cm for *kimono*. With this technological improvement, large-size silk goods for export, such as *fukusa*, tablecloths, or bedcovers, could be finished neatly without a seam line crossing in the centre. When the first nation-wide industrial exhibition was held in Tokyo in August 1877, the long-established wholesale dealer Nishimura Sōzaemon captured the jury’s attention and won praise for his new products, including a *yūzen*-dyed wide hanging piece.[7] Meanwhile, Tanaka Rishichi, a pioneer in exporting ornamental silk textiles, was ambitious to promote a new type of souvenir textile: his large embroidered hanging piece was introduced as *miokuri* (literally meaning ‘seeing off,’ it refers to a usually rectangular large hanging textile that covers the rear of a festival float, as is seen, for example, in Figure 4).[8] Both makers’ hangings bore a design illustrating a Chinese legend. It is noted, however, that whereas Nishimura’s was shown in Group III, Fine Arts, Tanaka’s was put in Group II, Manufactured Products, and hence its needlework may have had thicker threads, possibly with padding and appliqué technique as well. More important, perhaps, was that by choosing this designation, Tanaka could place his goods within the line of development of Japan’s textile history.

Discontinued since the political turmoil in Kyoto in 1864, the 350-year-old Gion Festival had gradually been revived after the opening of this ancient capital to the rest

of the world in 1872. Some old, damaged floats were repaired and restored, so that 18 floats were paraded on the streets in July 1877 to the cheers of Kyoto residents, who were given a holiday from the city. Traditionally, and even today, each float was built with a different shape and design and was ornamented with wood carvings, metal fittings, or lacquered pictures. The most eye-catching, however, is a group of textile hangings surrounding the balcony that is set up on the float. Some hangings are very old. Some are of medieval European or Chinese origin, while others were designed by famous Kyoto artists such as Okamoto Toyohiko, Yosa Buson, Maruyama Ōkyo and Tsurusawa Tanzan, and more recently, by Takeuchi Seihō and Hirayama Ikuo. Each float has a stock of hangings which are kept by its sponsoring town, and a different one may be chosen to hang each year. A new hanging tended to be hung and exhibited at the festival following its creation.[9]

It is unknown whether Tanaka's 1877 *miokuri* was actually hung on a float, but the timely choice of this name for his hanging must have proven useful, particularly when the city immediately voted for the annual performance of its Gion Festivals. Two years later, at the Kyoto Exhibition of local products and artefacts, Tanaka exhibited four *miokuri*, one with an embroidered design of Mount Fuji with a Treasure-Bearing Boat and Seven Gods of Good Luck, and the other three of brocade with Chinese themes. This 1879 Exhibition also displayed 77 illustrated copies of old textile samples, including the designs of the Gion Festival float hangings.[10] The festival that year was held in November, when Prince Heinrich of Germany was visiting Kyoto. Before setting out onto the streets of the old capital, the floats were lined up at the south gate of the imperial palace grounds to welcome the Prince and receive his viewing.[11] By 1887, 27 floats were readied for the Gion procession, to revive the festival's original glamour. This year's Kyoto Exhibition displayed some old float hangings, including some 17th-century Chinese examples, as well as modern *miokuri* pieces made by Tanaka Rihei (Rishichi's father), and by Nishimura as well.[12] Nishimura would soon send *miokuri* to overseas exhibitions: to the Barcelona World Fair in 1888[13] and to the Paris Exposition in 1889 (Figure 5), probably the very year when Scidmore visited Nishimura's studio in Kyoto.[14]

By the early 1890s, when the temple hangings in the Deakin and Komp collections were put on sale in New York, their Kyoto makers must have known that large-size hangings were selling well abroad. In 1895 at the 4th National Industrial Exhibition, held in Kyoto, some makers other than Nishimura and Tanaka also showed *miokuri*, all in the Manufactured Products Section: no *miokuri* seems to have been permitted in the Fine Arts Section of the government-sponsored exhibitions.[15] In mid-July 1899, when the German Prince Heinrich was re-visiting Kyoto, a special art exhibition of new and old Japanese works was arranged for him, at the request of the Imperial Household Ministry, in the newly opened Kyoto National Museum, so that the prince could enjoy a viewing of the Museum as well as shopping. Among over 95 displayed textile items, such as *fukusa* and *screens*, were four *miokuri*, all made by Nishimura. This list specifies each item's sale price, but unfortunately reveals nothing about what he actually purchased.[16] Nishimura would exhibit a cut-velvet *miokuri* in 1900, at the Kyoto Exhibition,[17] but this is the very last record that I have so far found for the use of the term 'miokuri' in any exhibition inside Japan.

Outside Japan, the passion for 'temple hangings' seems to have gradually subsided by the late 1890s. At the 1893 Chicago World Fair, some Japanese silk hanging pieces were listed as 'tapestry' in the official catalogue. Japan was now promoting the sales of her venerable modernity, no longer Oriental exoticism **(**Figure 6). Also, a new type of design was put out on the market around this time: the photographic representation of a landscape scene or tourist attraction. In 1898, for instance, the Japanese art dealer Matsuki, based in Boston, showed some 20 embroidered silk hangings at a sale in Philadelphia. Only two of these items were described as 'temple hangings.' The following year, in Boston, Matsuki showed ten silk hangings. Only one of them was listed as a temple hanging, with a dragon design, and another a palace hanging, with white Hō-ō birds.[18] Also in 1899, another Japanese

Figure 6. Exhibited at 1893 Chicago World Fair, a large silk brocade hanging made by Sasaki Seishichi of Kyoto shows the Gion festival floats on procession with *miokuri* hung on each. Kyoto National Museum. From *Meiji no kōgei* (Art crafts of the Meiji Japan), ed. Nakagawa Chisaki, Tokyo, Shibundō, 1969

dealer, Yamanaka, held a sale in Philadelphia. His catalogue included more than several old embroidered hangings, but no 'temple hangings.'[19] In the end, the term 'temple hanging,' or *miokuri*, seems to have vanished from the auction/ exhibition lists by 1900. But its disappearance by no means indicates the disappearance of large silk hangings. On the contrary, they would flourish over the next two decades, re-labelled as 'wall hangings' (*kabekake*) or 'tapestry.' With this changed denotation, and with a much wider range of designs, these large hangings quickly became the most magnificent and celebrated Japanese exhibits at international exhibitions. Even the Imperial Ministry welcomed their use as gifts on important occasions.

Lastly, I should like to mention that in the early Meiji the English word 'temple' was used to refer to any non-Christian religious building without distinction, for instance, between Buddhist and Shinto examples.[20] It may even have been used for the small shrine-or-temple-like structure carried on a festival float (as seen in Figure 4), on the rear of which hung a *miokuri*. Hence it should cause no surprise that Menpes found no 'temple hangings' in Buddhist temples.

References

The author wishes to express special gratitude to Geneviève Lacambre and John E. Vollmer for information on the whereabouts of some images.

1 Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore, *Jinrikisha Days in Meiji Japan*, New York, Harper & Bros, 1891, pp.268–269.

2 Scidmore, p.269.

3 *Catalogue of an Important Collection of Japanese and Chinese Porcelains, Bronzes, Enamels, Lacquers, Ivory Carvings, Swords, Sword Guards, Cabinet Specimens, Embroideries, Screens, etc., etc. Selected by Mr H. Deakin of Messrs. Deakin Brothers & Co. formerly of Yokohama, Japan, and San Francisco*. New York, January 1892; New York, November 1892; and Philadelphia, February 1893.

4 *Catalogue of the Important Collection Made by Mr Frederick Komp of Yokohama, Japan, consisting of Japanese and Chinese Porcelains, Bronzes, Lacquers, Enamels, Jades, Ivory Carvings, Screens, Stuffs, Gowns, Embroideries, … etc.* New York, November 1892.

5 Also, see, for examples, the Ashmolean Museum catalogue nos. 2, 3 and 5 of *Threads of Silk and Gold: Ornamental Textiles from Meiji Japan,* Oxford, 2012–13.

6 Mortimer Menpes, *Japan. A Record in Colour*, London, A & C Black, 1901, pp.174–175.

7 Meiji bijutsu kiso shiryōshū (A collection of basic documents of the early Meiji fine arts), p.36. Tokyo Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, 1975.

8 *Naikoku Kangyō Hakurannkai shuppin mokuroku* (National Industrial Exhibition catalogue), Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai Jimukyoku, ed. 1877. *Tsuika, sai-tsui-kyō 2–5.*

9 For this paragraph, I drew upon Ōta Hidezō, *Ōta Hidezō senshoku shi chosakushū* (A collection of essays on textile history), Kyoto, Bunka shuppan kyoku, 1986; Tanaka Tsuneo, *Kinsei Gion matsuri yamahoko junkō shi* (A modern history of the procession of Gion festival floats), Kyoto, Gionsai yamahoko rengōkai, 1968; Kaneko Kinji, *Nihon shishū shi* (A history of embroidery in Japan), Kyoto, Kyoto shishū dōgyō kumiai, 1928; and *Yomiuri shinbun* (Yomiuri newspaper). Also see, for images of *miokuri* and Gion float hangings, *Kyoto Gion matsuri no senshoku bijutsu* (Ornamental textiles of Kyoto Gion Festival), Kyoto, 1998; and *Gion matsuri daiten*, an illustrated exhibition catalogue from Kyoto Bunka Hakubutsukan, 1994.

10 *Kyoto Hakurankai shuppin mokuroku* (Kyoto Exhibition catalogue), Kyoto, Kyoto Hakurankaisha, June 1879.

11 *Yomiuri shinbun* (Yomiuri newspaper), 1879.11.21, p.2.

12 *Kyoto shin-ko bijutsukai hinmoku* (Kyoto New-and-Old Fine Arts Society exhibition catalogue), 3 vols., Kyoto Shin-ko Bijutsukai, 1887, vol. 2, p. 1, & vol. 3, p. 16.

13 A Spanish newspaper highly praised Nishimura's hanging. *Barusurōnufu bankoku hakurannkai hōkokusho* (Official report on the Barcelona World Fair), 1890, p.37. Barcelona Exposition, Nishimura displayed a 2-metre-long squarish silk hanging with a design of swallows, sparrows and plants. *Catalogo de la Secccion Japonesa en la Exposicion Universal de Barcelona, 1888,* Barcelona, Imprenta de Luis Tasso Serra, 1888, p.11.

14 No details are available, but an old photograph (see Figure 5) reportedly records one of the works sent to the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle.

15 *Naikoku Kangyō Hakurannkai shuppin mokuroku* (National Industrial Exhibition catalogue), Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai Jimukyoku, ed. 1895.

16 *Kyoto Bijutsu Kyōkai zasshi* (Kyoto Fine Arts Society Journal), no.86 (1899.08), pp.22–28.

17 *Kyoto Bijutsu Kyōkai zasshi* (Kyoto Fine Arts Society Journal), no.95 (1900.05), p.37.

18 For Matsuki's sales, see *Descriptive Catalogue of an Important Ceramic Collection of Japanese and Chinese Pottery, Porcelain, Bronzes, Lacquers, Brocade, Prints, Embroideries,… and Buddhist Objects Selected by Mr Bunkio Matsuki of Kobe, Japan, and Boston.* Philadelphia, January 1898; and *Beautiful Silk Fabrics: Catalogue of an Extraordinary Collection of Antique and Modern Silks, Brocades and Other Fabrics … by the order of Mr Bunkio Matsuki.* Boston, February 1899.

19 For Yamanaka's sale, see *Catalogue of an Important Collection of Japanese Fine Art Objects … Selected by Yamanaka & Co.* Philadelphia, March 1899.

20 For example, see Basil Hall Chamberlain. *Things Japanese*, London & Yokohama, various publishers; 2nd edn, 1891, p.370; 4th edition, 1902, pp.404–405.

A family collection of textiles in Toraja, Indonesia

Hywel Coleman describes a unique museum in a Sulawesi village

In August 2013 I was revisiting the Toraja area in the Indonesian island of Sulawesi – an area I have known since the early 1980s – when by chance I came across an interesting family collection of textiles which is open to the public.

Toraja is a mountainous area located in the north of the province of Sulawesi Selatan (South Sulawesi). It is a beautiful area of limestone hills and mountains; water flows everywhere and the narrow valleys are carpeted with rice fields. There are two small towns – Makale, capital of the district of Toraja, and Rantepao, capital of the district of Toraja Utara (North Toraja) – but the majority of the population live in small villages in the valleys and on the mountain sides.

The people of the area speak Toraja-Sa'dan, a Malayo-Polynesian language which is only very distantly related to the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. Over the last century or so many people in the southern parts of Toraja have adopted Islam as their religion, whilst those in the centre and the north have become Christians. But, whatever their formal religion, the people of Toraja adhere with great fervour to their traditional beliefs and practices, *Aluk To Dolo* (Ways of the Ancestors). Water buffalo, traditional houses and funeral ceremonies play significant and complex roles in the traditional belief system. Textiles are also important in Torajan life, particularly as banners and wall hangings during house-restoration celebrations, funerals and other important events.

Figure 1: the village of Ke'te Kesu, Toraja; houses are on the left, rice barns on the right.

I came across this family collection of textiles in the village of Ke'te Kesu, which is situated about four kilometres southeast of Rantepao, on the road to Sangalla. Ke'te Kesu is famous for the many 'hanging graves' on the cliff face behind the village and it therefore attracts a steady stream of visitors from other parts of Indonesia and from overseas. However, on this particular visit I noticed that one of the traditional houses (*tongkonan*) in the middle of the village had had its ground floor walled in, although normally the ground floor is open to the world while the family live in the upper floor.

Figure 2: Indo' Ta'dung, c.1918–c.1990, founder of the Puang ri Kesu collection of textiles and handicrafts.

The name of this particular *tongkonan* is Puang ri Kesu; it is the third house on the left in Figure 1. According to the guardian, Mr Agustinus (Agus) Sarongallo, the house has been passed down through 17 generations, making it approximately 400 years old. Restorations take place approximately every 70 to 80 years; the

Figure 3: guardian of the collection Agustinus Sarongallo holding up a large undecorated *puya*.

most recent was in the year 2000. The house was the residence of the matriarch of the family, Indo' Ta'dung, from her birth in 1918 (approximately) to her death in 1990 (approximately). A portrait of Indo' Ta'dung hangs in the house (Figure 2). Agus Sarongallo is her nephew.

Indo' Ta'dung inherited the family heirlooms, but she was also a keen collector of Torajan handicrafts, particularly textiles. After she passed away the extended family considered selling off the collection, but eventually, in 1995, they decided to preserve it in the family home. In 2002 the ground floor was walled in and doors were fitted, for security. The museum was formally inaugurated in that year. At the same time, the family asked Agus Sarongallo, after he retired from employment in Jakarta, to return to Ke'te Kesu and become the guardian of the collection. Agus now lives there together with another retired member of the extended family.

The collection includes pottery, wooden statues and bowls, cooking pots, woven baskets and fish traps, hats, jewellery, weapons and costumes. However, by far the largest part of the collection consists of textiles. Most pieces are kept in locked glass cabinets, folded and, often, piled on top of each other, so it is not easy to see everything. Taking photographs through glass also produces rather unsatisfactory results. Nothing is labelled and there is no catalogue, but I counted approximately 115 textile items.

The collection possesses several examples of three particularly interesting categories of textile: *puya* (barkcloth, sometimes anglicised as 'fuya'), warp ikat blankets and *maa'* (sacred textiles). There are several pieces of both undecorated and decorated *puya* (Figures 3 and 4 respectively). This is significant, because Sulawesi has a very long history of producing barkcloth. According to Indonesia's leading expert on the subject, there is 3000-year-old archaeological evidence (in the form of stone beaters used to flatten bark) that barkcloth was produced in the areas immediately to the west, north and northeast of present-day Toraja. *Puya* is still produced today on a very small scale in remote valleys north of Toraja, across the border into Sulawesi Tengah (Central Sulawesi) (Simanjuntak 2013, 15–16). Indeed I remember a story that a colleague, the late Jacob Sabandar, told me in the early 1980s. Although Jacob Sabandar was not of Torajan origin, he was brought up in that area. During the 1950s he had to flee to the forest with his parents and siblings, to escape from rebels led by Kahar Muzakkar. There the refugees learnt to survive on forest products, including making their own clothes from barkcloth.

Figure 4: an example of a decorated *puya* in the collection.

The second important category of textile represented in the collection consists of large warp ikat blankets produced in the mountain villages of Rongkong (north of Toraja) and Kalumpang or Galumpang (in the

Figure 5: a warp ikat blanket from Rongkong or Galumpang in the collection.

neighbouring province of Sulawesi Barat, West Sulawesi, northwest of Toraja). An example is shown in Figure 5.

These blankets are notable for their large size, their use of locally grown cotton and natural dyes and their striking geometric designs. They share many characteristics with the *hinggi* cloths of Sumba (see, for example, Forshee 2001) and the *pua* of the Iban Dyak in Kalimantan or Borneo (see for instance Majlis 1984, 143–146). But, because Rongkong and Galumpang are remote and much harder to get to than Sumba and Kalimantan, their textiles are less well known to collectors from outside the region.

The blankets are given names according to their pattern, but interpreting these names is not easy. Examples include *kalambu tanete* ('mountain cloth'), *lobi-lobi* ('rainbow'), *pori lonjong* (meaning unclear; *pori* is 'ikat'), *pori situtu'* ('covering ikat' ?), *sora langi'* ('shrines in the sky' ?) and *rundun lolo* ('falling buds' ?).

When I visited Rongkong in 1982 – it took me two days to walk there from the nearest road – the weaver I met told me that finished blankets were taken down to Toraja, where they were traded for salt and other necessities. Torajans use the cloths to line the walls of the temporary pavilions which are erected for funeral ceremonies. Some sources also report that these majestic textiles are used as shrouds.

It is possible that the warp ikat blankets in the collection were purchased by Indo' Ta'dung from passing traders, as Agus Sarongallo remembered that his aunt would often buy new cloths to add to her collection. This would date the pieces, very approximately, to the second half of the 20th century (say 1950 to 1990).

Maa' constitute the third category of textile found in the Puang ri Kesu collection. They form the largest part of the collection (I counted at least 23 examples) and they are the oldest and in some ways the most interesting items. *Maa'* have been described as 'old decorative cloths, the majority of which are considered to have supernatural powers, usually kept as heirlooms and used only for decoration at times of great feasts' (Tammu & van der Veen 1972, 339; my translation from Bahasa Indonesia). An example can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: a *maa'* in the collection.

There is some debate about where the *maa'* originate from. They are old, long (at least four metres), relatively narrow (about 80 cm) and made of finely woven cotton (possibly also of silk). They are clearly not of Indonesian manufacture. One theory is that they are Indian trade textiles which were imported to Indonesia; another suggestion is that they were produced in the Netherlands

specifically for the Torajan market and were possibly traded for coffee. My colleague at the University of Leeds, Dr Michael Hann, believes that some may have been woven as plain cloths in the cotton mills of Lancashire, exported to India where they were decorated, and then imported to Indonesia. It is generally agreed that they were produced in the 19th century.

When these cloths first arrived in Toraja they were mysterious because their origin was unknown and because they were so different from the textiles with which people were familiar. 'They were regarded as sacred and as a gift from heaven because nobody exactly knew about their coming into existence' (Hauser-Schäublin 1991, 187). It is likely that the *maa'* in the collection are heirlooms which have been handed down since the 19th century, as cloths of this type are rarely sold.

There were some other pieces in the collection which I was unable to identify, but I was interested to note that there appeared to be no items of woven silk from the lowland areas populated by the Bugis and Mandar people, even though these are the textiles that are usually associated with southern Sulawesi by people in other parts of Indonesia. Indo' Ta'dung's interests did not extend to regions far beyond her native Toraja, it would seem.

When I asked if I could have a closer look at some of the items in the collection I was told that this was not possible because the cabinets were locked and the keys were 'not available.' The guardian explained that a few years ago some foreigners visited the museum and 'borrowed' some of the best items 'so that they could be photographed.' But the borrowed items were never returned. Quite understandably, Agus Sarongallo is now extremely cautious about letting visitors have access to the collection.

The Puang ri Kesu Museum is small but fascinating, as it combines one family's heirloom sacred textiles (which would normally never be on public display) with the collection of a private individual who, in the second half of the 20th century, was concerned to preserve the handicrafts of her region. But it must be said that some pieces are not in good condition, and the total lack of documentation is to be regretted.

The museum is open to the public whenever the guardian is at home. There are no formal opening hours. Agus Sarongallo suggests that people interested in seeing the collection should contact him in advance on his mobile phone (+62 852 9835 8227) to arrange a mutually convenient time for a visit. As you leave, you will be asked to sign the visitors' book and make a donation for the upkeep of the collection.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Stanislaus Sandarupa of Universitas Hasanuddin for his detailed comments on an earlier version of this article.

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Hywel Coleman lives in Depok, Indonesia.

Textile-hunting in Kyoto

Spending a few days in Japan recently, OATG chair Aimée Payton made it her mission to track down some textile gems.

Kyoto prides itself on having a reputation as the cultural heart of Japan, and during my few days there it was evident that the city oozed beauty, elegance, history and craftsmanship. I knew from the guidebooks and seasoned visitors that this was the place to see some truly magnificent textiles. And I was on a mission to find them!

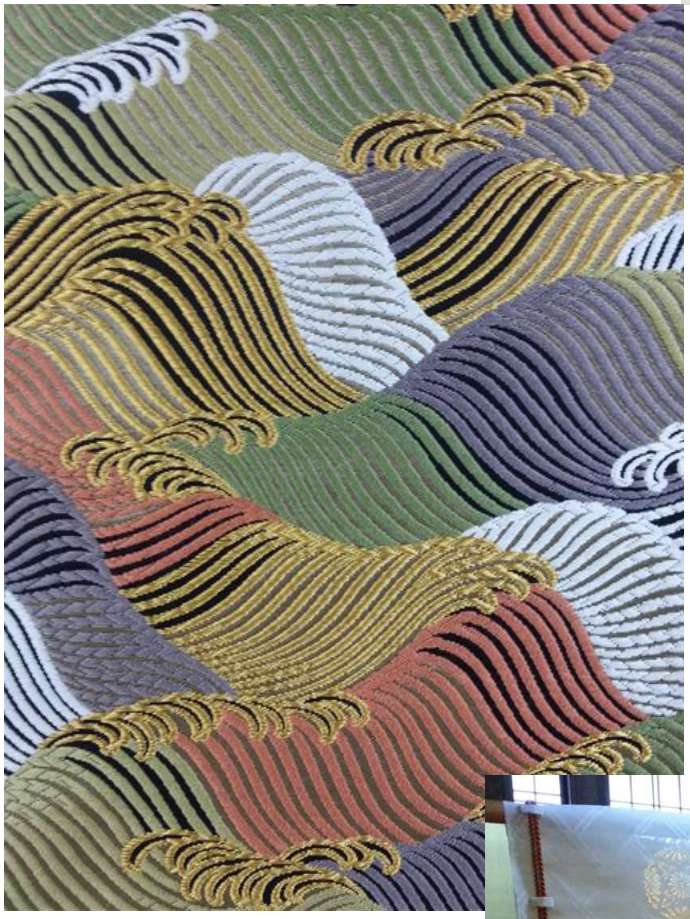
Above: detail of a length of fabric woven at Ori Nas Kan.

Left: yukata (summer kimono) and obi (sash) woven with a variety of techniques at Ori Nas Kan.

Below: obi woven at Ori Nas Kan.

Day 1

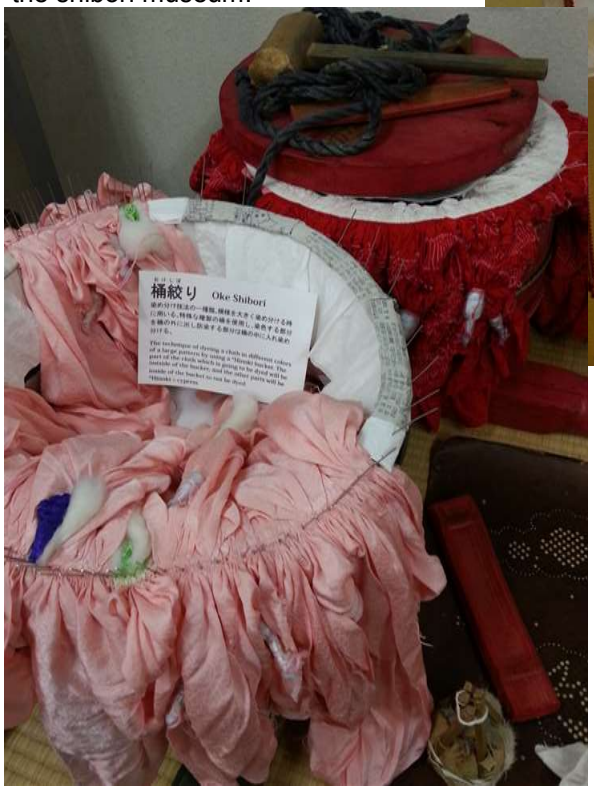
After starting out with such enthusiasm and excitement, my first day was rather disappointing. My first stop, having negotiated the complicated local transport, was the Nishijin Textile Centre. Nishijin was traditionally the weaving district, so I was looking forward to the museum, workshops, a fashion show, and the shop. To be perfectly honest, it was mostly a shop! The 'museum' did have a sample of interesting textiles, and tucked at the back of the shop were items relating to silk weaving, including live silk worms which you could actually hear munching on leaves. This display and



Above: obi woven at Ori Nas Kan.

Right: kimono made at Ori Nas Kan for the Gion Matsuri; the sleeves can be tied up for fighting.

Below: shibori tying and clamping at the shibori museum.



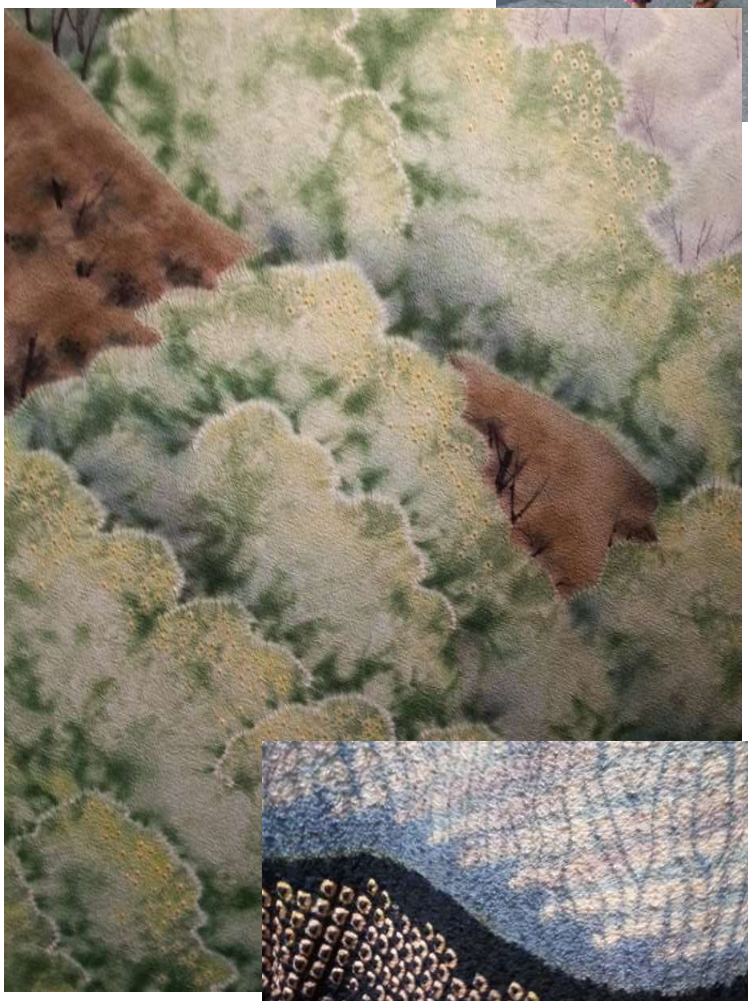
the museum items were really interesting, but you would have to know what it was that you were looking at and draw your own conclusions, as there is virtually no contextual information. I seemed to be the only person in the whole building who was interested, and the main source of entertainment was the shop, obviously, and the fashion show, which was without any explanation at all.

After wandering through a grid of the narrow streets of Nishijin looking for two textile museums, I arrived at Ori Nas Kan, which was closed. It was a Monday. The world over, this is the day when museums are closed, and despite working in a museum myself, I overlooked this all-important detail. All was not lost though, as on the opposite side of the street was a workshop called Geimiko. Two batik artists were at work, seated on tatami mats. They allowed me to take a look around and made no attempt to engage with me. They could probably guess that I would not be able to afford the astronomical prices of their kimono, obi and various wall hangings. I am not sure I would want to be the proud owner of one of their creations, which, although expertly made, were a bit too kitsch for my liking. There were pictures of kittens!

TEXTILE-HUNTING IN KYOTO

Day 2

My second day (not a Monday) was more successful. I returned to Ori Nas Kan and WOW, that was certainly worth the wait. The museum is housed in a traditional building and you have to take your shoes off at the entrance, as in most places in Japan. There is also an area with low tables and cushions on the tatami mats for drinking tea, which is included in the entrance fee. But the stars of the day were the textiles themselves. I was blown away even by the plain woven raw silk. Somehow they had made this straightforward textile into a work of art by their attention to the most subtle of details such as a virtually imperceptible shot of colour. Meandering through to the next room in my socks, I came across a selection of court kimono which were, according to the man at the entrance desk, more than 100 years old. I have a feeling his vagueness was due to lack of ability to explain



Top right: people parading the streets wearing yukata in downtown Kyoto.

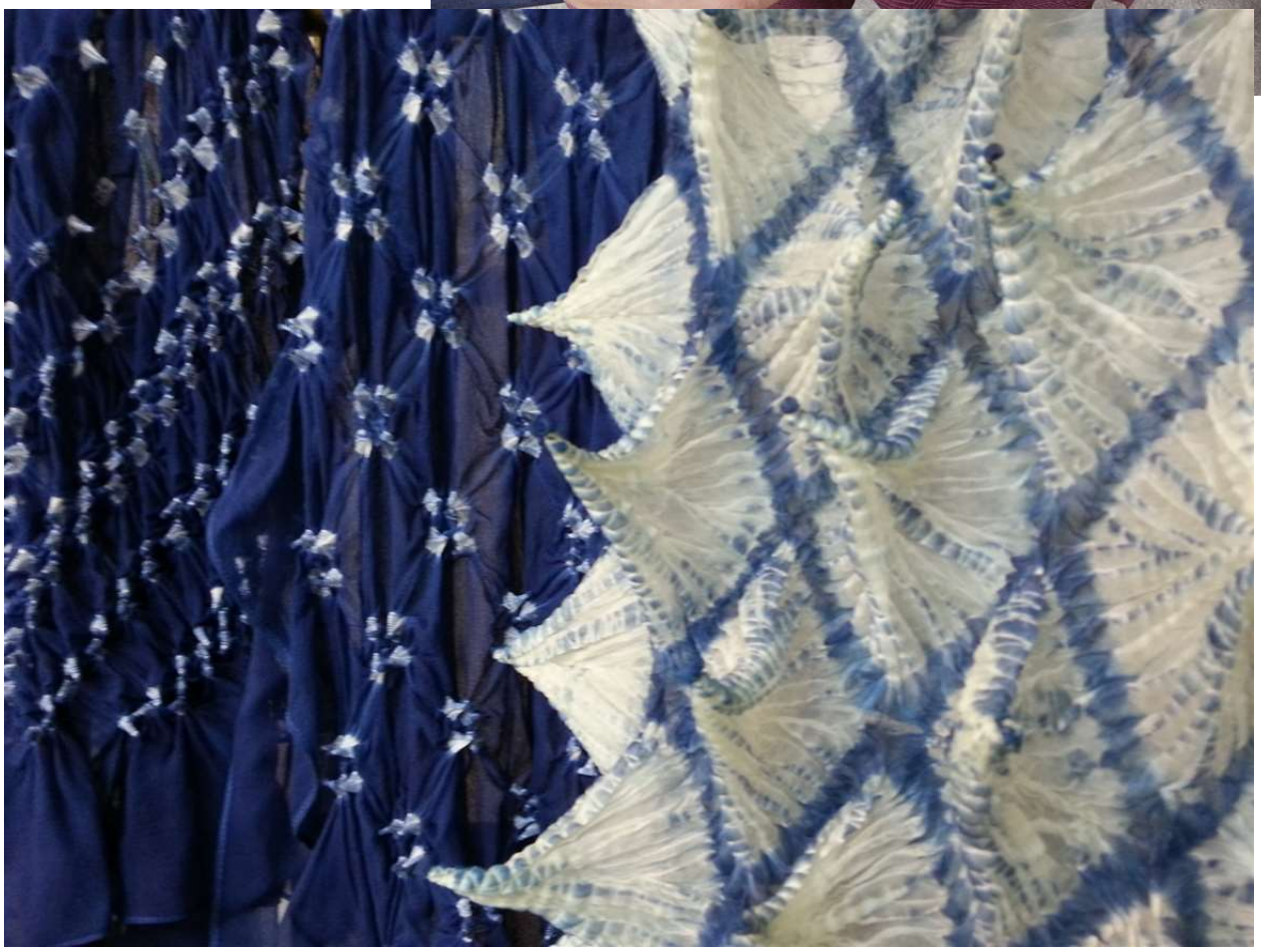
Above, right and opposite top left: details of kimono and wall hangings displaying a wide range of shibori techniques.

in English rather than a lack of knowledge. I fell for two kasuri kimono, which is the same technique as ikat.

I was then ushered into another room, which was in fact an active workshop full of jacquard looms. The tour included an explanation of the types of textiles they made in this tiny factory in the upstairs room of a museum, and a demonstration of weaving on a jacquard loom. The room next door had some of the masterpieces created in the workshop, which were amazing, truly beautiful and skilfully executed.

Right: preparation for dyeing at the shibori museum.

Below: scarves for sale in the shibori museum shop; these have not been flattened after the tying and dyeing process.



TEXTILE-HUNTING IN KYOTO

Day 3

The following day, I visited the shibori museum. We typically think of shibori as being the tiny circles of tie dye but in fact, as was explained by my private tour guide, some forms of shibori do not include any form of tying at all. Clamps, rocks and buckets with lids on can all create a resist for the dye and are all methods of shibori. Photography is not allowed, but I was given special permission for the OATG magazine.

Right, below and opposite: floats in the Gion Matsuri parade adorned with carpets and textiles from around the world.

The museum was primarily a shop as well, but the staff were very willing to talk in depth about their craft. Some of the pieces were just stunning where the fabric had not been ironed after the dyeing process. This left brilliant spikes in the fabric where the ties had been. I could only afford some earrings, which I now wear all the time! I'll wear them to the next OATG meeting, I promise.

Day 4

I was fortunate enough to be in Kyoto at the same time as the Gion Matsuri, a festival which has taken place annually for over 1,000 years. Throughout the month of July people wear yukata (summer kimono) to go about their everyday business. It was a fantastic sight to see so many kimono around the city.

On one day there is a parade of floats which are adorned in textiles. Although I wasn't able to get up close, it was evident that many of these prized textiles were really quite old and collected from all over the world. There were Chinese embroideries and Persian rugs alongside Japanese pieces, too. I would love to find out more about how they became absorbed into this very Japanese procession. I'm really looking forward to this issue going to print so I can read about this in Hiroko McDermott's article.

Chinese textiles at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

In June, a group of OATG members enjoyed seeing some beautiful items from the Fitzwilliam Museum's store. Agnes Upshall describes what we saw.

Back in June some members of the OATG went to the Fitzwilliam Museum to see some of the Chinese textiles in their collection. Thanks to Carol Humphrey, Honorary Keeper of Textiles at the museum, we were treated to a whirlwind guided tour of what must

Above: detail of a dragon robe, showing one of the larger dragons. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Below: some of the symbols on the hem of a dragon robe.Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Left: one of the four monster faces on the theatrical cape. T.86-1977 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Below: detail of one of the throne-back cushion covers. T.88-1977 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

have been more than thirty different textiles in just over two hours, but with plenty of time to look at each one in detail and ask questions.

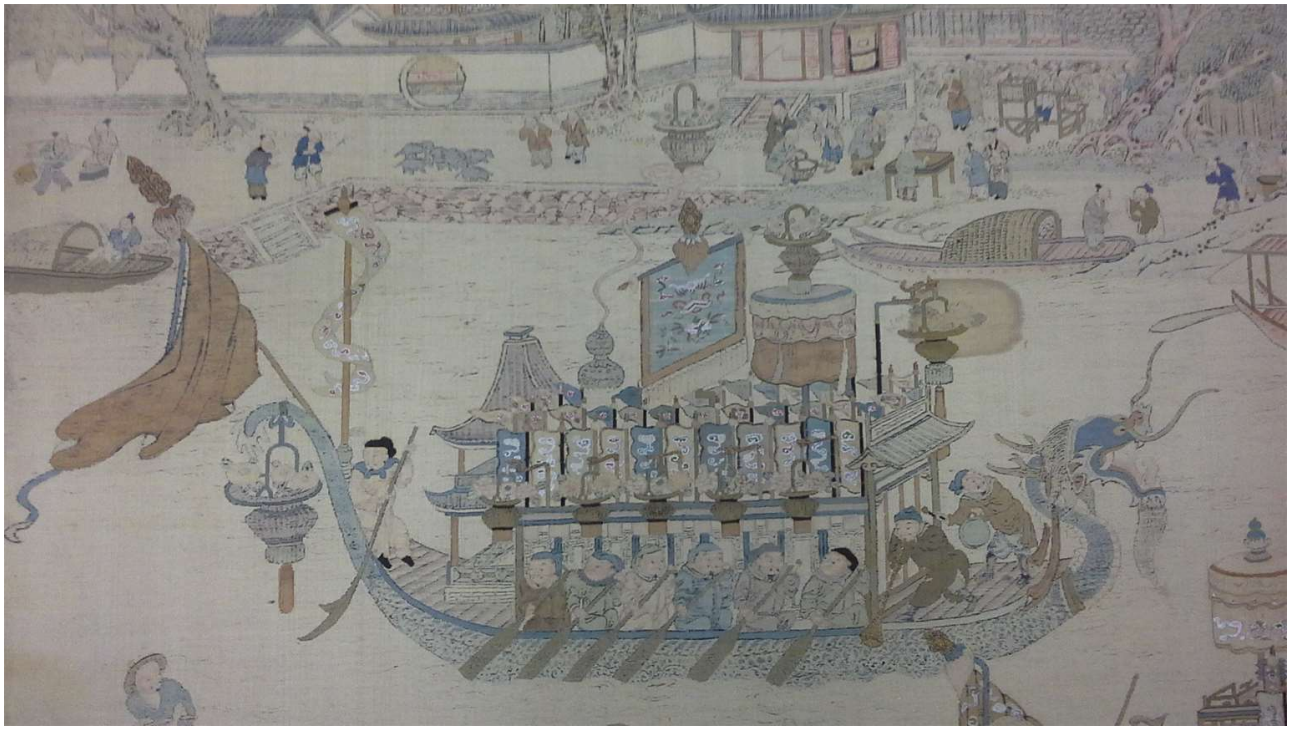
We saw a huge range of different objects, including dragon robes, sleeve bands, a woman's embroidered skirt, Mandarin squares, embroidered scrolls, cushion covers and kesi (fine silk tapestry weaving). A large number of the Fitzwilliam's Chinese textiles, and indeed most of the ones that we saw on the day, were left to the museum by the art historian and ex-Assistant Keeper of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum, Soame Jenyns, on his death in 1976.

We started with a couple of very fine dragon robes, with five-clawed dragons embroidered all over it in brilliant gold thread. I had fun trying to spot and identify all the different traditional and sacred Chinese symbols incorporated into the designs (bats, wheels of life, scrolls, rhinoceros horns, swastikas, flaming pearls…) for good luck, long life and happiness.

Next, we were treated to a fun and rather unusual textile: a nineteenth-century theatrical 'monster cape', with a hole in the

centre for the wearer's head, and four large and colourful appliquéd monster faces facing out in four different directions around the outside: one on the chest, one on the back and one on each shoulder. Each monster was unique in its ferocious appearance, but all had really magnificent eyebrows and wide-open mouths, baring their large teeth for the spectators.

Another of the more unusual textiles that we saw was a nineteenth-century embroidered silk valance (not a typically Chinese object!), decorated with motifs of birds, butterflies, flowers and plants, all in a Chinese style, but with a coat of arms in the centre, suggesting it was designed and made for a very specific export market (object number T.75-1977).



Detail from the kesi picture of a dragon boat festival. T.24-1974 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

We also saw a couple of beautiful eighteenth-century silk throne-back cushion covers, with lavish embroidered decoration and deep sides all the way around, showing that they were designed to fit over large, shaped cushions, and stand upright on a seat. An image of one is below, on bright yellow silk with a dense, symmetrical design of chrysanthemums and other foliage, complete with bats and swastikas amongst the flowers. The final object was a magnificent and quite large eighteenth-century kesi (tapestry-woven) picture of a scene from a dragon boat festival, worked entirely in silk, and with some of the finer details painted in, rather than woven. Unfortunately the detail on this piece is so fine that you just can't see it in this picture, but I think you can get a sense of the work.

Thanks again to Carol for showing us so many wonderful textiles, and for making it such a great visit. This was a fantastic opportunity to see lots of textiles from the museum's collection that are rarely out on display.

Visit to the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, 30 July 2014

Fiona Sutcliffe reports on an intriguing glimpse at some of the treasures contained in this fascinating museum.

One of the original aims of the Oxford Asian Textile Group was to make the wonderful textiles in the Oxford museums more widely known, so the arranged visit for a large group of members was greatly appreciated. We met at the Pitt Rivers Museum and split into two groups so that we could look, in turn, at the textile exhibits in the Court, and then at the fine display of items from around the world assembled and displayed by curatorial staff Julia Nicholson and Faye Belsey.

Whilst in the Court we looked more closely at the variety and ingenuity of weaving frames, including several backstrap designs, characteristic of many parts of Asia. Of special interest was a large dark blue robe with coloured embroidery, from Africa rather than Asia, but with a particularly interesting history. It was part of the founding collection donated by Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, but its date and origin were uncertain. In 2009 the museum received a photocopy of an article from the *Illustrated London News* of 1846, with a very accurate sketch of the robe and the information that it was a king's costume from Sierra Leone and was part of the collection being unloaded from Commander Deacon's ship just returned from surveying the west coast of Africa.

Embroidered robe from Sierra Leone. 1884.90.21 Copyright of the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

Our other venue was one of the newly opened and well lit research rooms, where a number of textiles from the Reserve Collection were displayed. Amongst the items from Central and South America was a beautiful band with exquisitely

embroidered animals, and also some rare fragments of Pre-Columbian cloth. Julia Nicholson bought the display to life with details of the collectors and information about the conservation of textiles within the Pitt Rivers Museum. From the large collection of Naga textiles held, we examined a selection, noting the significance of the woven designs and the materials, including dogs' hair, used. Many of us are familiar with the *patola* cloths traded to the East Indies from India, but it is always rewarding to marvel at the skills of the dyers and weavers in making the intricate tie-dye cloths known as double ikat. Of particular interest was the *hinggi* ceremonial shoulder cloth from Sumba, an Indonesian island. Into this garment was woven a design based on the coat of arms used by the Dutch East India Company, but it was worn by the local elite of the island. This textile was donated by George and Felicity Wood in 2003.

Perhaps the most striking and colourful item displayed, as seen in the group photograph below, was the Miao festival skirt from Ghizhou Province in Southwest China. This skirt was one of a number presented by Derryn O'Connor to the Pitt Rivers Museum.

The members are very grateful to the curatorial staff for sharing with us their research and knowledge.

Group photo taken by Faye Belsey.

Tiger costume

Further thoughts on this puzzling item from the Ashmolean's store.

In *Asian Textiles* no. 57, Aimée Payton wrote about the Ashmolean's mysterious tiger costume. Chinese art historian, Rachel Silberstein, has sent in the following comments:

'I'm pretty sure that rather than a child's costume, this is an adult's theatrical costume, for a tiger or a monkey. The Ashmolean's painting of the Monkey King seems a good clue here – it might be a theatrical costume for a character in the Monkey King play, 'Nao long gong', where the main character, Sun Wukong, has a throng of small monkey followers. Liu Yuemei, in *Zhongguo Kunqu yixiang* (Kun opera costumes) (Shanghai, 2014), records costumes for the Monkey character in this play, and also his monkey followers, and the costume design is quite similar, though not identical. There are no images for a tiger costume, but this would seem most likely.'

The Monkey King at the Peach Banquet, by Zheng Jiazhen. Zheng Jiazhen was a cartoonist, ink painter and calligrapher from Hong Kong. The Monkey King in an opera outfit seems to be his favourite subject to celebrate the year of the monkey. Here the Monkey King is drunk after tasting wine from the Jade Emperor's royal collection, and has stuffed his bag with the best peaches after having taken a bite of each. These peaches from the garden of the Queen Mother of the West are believed to bring longevity to heavenly gods and immortals every 3000 years. Ashmolean Eastern Art Department EA2002.169

Non-OATG events and exhibitions

27 September 2014—4 January 2015, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Kimono: A Modern History

The kimono is a simple garment with a complex history that has been shaped by the evolution of weaving, dyeing, and embroidery techniques as well as cultural changes in Japan. Featuring more than 50 spectacular robes dating from the 18th century to the present day, *Kimono: A Modern History* will tell the fascinating story of this eloquent garment, whose designs and patterns reflect trends in pictorial and decorative arts of the same period.

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2 October 2014—4 January 2015, British Museum, London

Power and Protection: Religious Practices in Burma and Thailand

There will be gallery talks on 28 October, 12 November and 5 December at 13:15 in Gallery 91.

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4 October 2014—6 September 2015, Horniman Museum, London

Revisiting Romania: Dress and Identity

The exhibition highlights the elaborately decorated textiles, costumes and artefacts used in Romanian peasant homes to showcase women's skill and industry, to display a family's social connections and to express national pride. It reflects the fascination and enchantment felt by visitors on seeing the textiles of Romania, explores the way in which the upper classes adopted peasant clothing, and looks at how the meaning attached to textiles – particularly costume – was manipulated under the Ceausescu regime to promote national unity.

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10 October 2014 —8 February 2015, Museu do Design e da Moda, Lisbon, Portugal

Boro – O Tecido da Vida (Boro – The Fabric of Life)

The exhibition 'Boro – The Fabric of Life' presents 54 pieces (kimonos, bags, tatamis) all worked using the boro method. *Boro* means 'rag', and boro textiles consist of different scraps of fabric stitched together like patchwork, and then dyed with indigo. This technique was in use in Japan from the end of the 18th century until the middle of the 20th century. Boro textiles spread across the whole of Japan for around 200 years, since the socioeconomic structure in Japan remained relatively unchanged during this period, until the beginning of the 20th century.

While wearing cotton was restricted to the wealthier classes, Japanese peasants would have bought rags and second-hand clothes of cotton and transformed them into these unique boro pieces, to create stronger, more resilient textiles.

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23 October 2014—25 January 2015, Museo do Oriente, Lisbon

Woven Languages / Linguagens Tecidas: Indonesian Ikat Textiles from the Peter ten Hoopen collection

The exhibition presents the weaving arts of the entire Indonesian archipelago, from Sumatra and Borneo to East Timor and beyond, including early 20th-century examples from very remote, tiny islands.

Avenida de Brasilia, Doca de Alcântara (Norte), 1350—352 Lisbon. Open Tuesday—Sunday,10:00—17:00.

Monday 15 December 2014, 19:00, Oriental Rug & Textile Society talk: 'A Journey through the Imperial Wardrobe': Chinese Formal & Informal Court Costume & Accessories (Qing Dynasty 1644—1911)

David Rosier will talk about the more common design themes from dragon imagery to the use of images from nature. Particular focus will be given to the highly decorative clothing and accessories of high-ranking Chinese ladies.

St James Piccadilly Conference Room, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL. Doors open at 18:00. The talk will be free, but there will be a collection in aid of the British Heart Foundation.

Wednesday 21 January 2015, 19:00, Oriental Rug and Textile Society talk: 'Textile designs in the 11th-century murals of Alchi, Ladakh'

Dr Marjo Alafouzo will lecture on the textile patterns depicted in the secular murals in two of the 11th-century Tibetan Buddhist temples at Alchi, in Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. The textile designs are painted on the costumes of the people and also decorate the ceiling, and they vary from sumptuous to more simple patterns. This talk attempts to suggest origins for some of the textile designs at Alchi.

St James Piccadilly Conference Room, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL. Doors open at 18:00.

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13 June 2015—31 January 2016, Victoria & Albert Musem, London

Shoes: Pleasure and Pain

This exhibition looks at the extremes of footwear, presenting around 200 pairs of shoes ranging from ancient Egyptian gold sandals to contemporary elaborate designs. It considers the cultural significance and transformative capacity of shoes, and will examine the latest developments in footwear technology. Examples from famous shoe wearers will be shown alongside a dazzling range of historic shoes, many of which have not been displayed before.

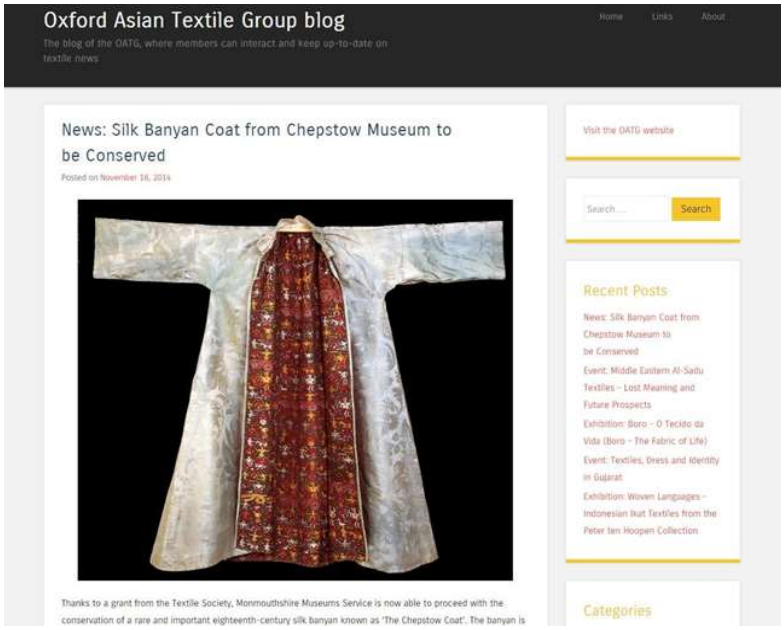
We are currently looking for shoes to be included in the exhibition: a pre-war pair of elevated decorative geta for geisha or maiko (okobo) and a pre-war pair of three-teethed geta for oiran (koma). If you have any of these in your wardrobe / collections, please contact Lucia at l.savi@vam.ac.uk or by phone ext. 2604.

Don't forget to look at OATG's blog for news and information about exhibitions and events

Keep up with Asian textiles news, events and more on the OATG's blog, at oxfordasiantextilegroup.wordpress.com. The blog is regularly updated with information about exhibitions, talks, textile fairs and news items from around the world, so no matter where you are, there's always something new to find out about.

OATG members and visitors to the blog are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas on the blog by leaving comments for others to read. Similarly, if you know of something you think others might find interesting, leave a comment for me, Agnes, and I'll share it online.

Agnes Upshall, OATG blogger



Increase in subscription rates — a message from our Treasurer

At the AGM in January a member proposed that the subscription should be raised to £25 a year in view of the increased costs of printing and posting the magazine and this was unanimously approved. There was a reference to the increase in the summary if the AGM in the February magazine and in the membership secretary's statement about subscriptions due for the year 2013/14, which included a note about the increase for the year 2014/15 in the June magazine. Unfortunately many members do not seem to have been made aware of the increase so that a majority of payments by standing order have been made at the old rate of £15. I would be grateful if you could check your bank statements and send me a cheque for £10 if you find that you have only paid £15 so far (cheques to Sheila Allen, OATG Treasurer, 19 Southmoor Road, Oxford, OX2 6RF please). Also could you ask your bank to change your standing order to the new amount please?

I apologise for the inconvenience but look forward to receiving your cheques so that we can continue to produce a high quality magazine and put on interesting events.

Asian Textiles is published three times a year: in February, June and October. We welcome input from members — send a review of a book you've read, or an exhibition you've seen.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS

FRIDAY 9 JANUARY 2015

Contributions should be emailed to: jane.anson@ntlworld.com

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MEMBERSHIP OF OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

(includes three issues of *Asian Textiles* magazine)

Membership subscriptions were due for renewal on 1 October 2014

OATG membership runs from 1 October to 30 September, and subscriptions for 2014–15 are now due. Membership costs £25 for individuals, or £35 for a joint subscription. If you pay by cheque, please make the cheque out to OATG, and write your name clearly on the back. If you haven't already renewed your membership for this year, we look forward to receiving your subscription soon, at the address below.

Alternatively, you could set up a banker's order, which is a great help to us as it cuts down on admin. You can download a form from the website and send it to your bank.

We depend on your subscriptions in order to keep our programme of lectures running, as well as for the printing and postage of *Asian Textiles* magazine. We do hope you would like to continue your membership of OATG.

Any queries, please contact:

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