Oxford Asian Textile Group

Newsletter No. 37 **June 2007**

A weaver suckles her baby while working her loom,
bronze, height 25.8 cm, depth 22.8 cm, width 15.2 cm
from Flores, Eastern Indonesia, 6th century AD (see p. 15)

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Emma Dick entitled her article for newsletter no. 31 (June 2005) *A Fashion for Ethics*, and I am interested to see how, in the two years since then, Fairtrade has become ever more trendy, as I read that in Britain the demand for "ethically certified" cotton has doubled in six months. Mind you, we are not informed from what low base it has doubled – double 1% is still no significant figure – nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction.

In the same period the number of cotton producers who have been awarded the right to use the Fairtrade mark has increased to 100 worldwide, still no very great number, and so great is demand apparently that Marks and Spencer alone will need to buy up a third of the whole supply in order to fulfill its pledge to be the world's biggest seller. But M.& S. sells to an affluent class of people who are happy to pay a little more for their goods to salve their consciences. Many more think that cheapness is everything, and so long as they do, child labour and other malpractices in the sweatshops of Africa and Asia will continue, despite campaigns led by the likes of Anita Roddick to end them..

Some of you will have seen me in my Oxford days, and many more non-members see me now, cycling around with ONE LESS CAR writ large on my back. Since these old singlets were wearing out I asked Richard Laursen (the Newsletter's contact in Boston, Mass.) if he could put me in touch with the shop there where I bought them. Sadly it seems to have gone out of business, so I decided to buy some singlets and have my own printed.

Next came the problem of finding something in a suitably fluorescent colour, which led to a tour of the T-shirt selling stores of Southbourne, Christchurch, Poole, Bournemouth and finally a cluster of cheap shops in Boscombe. In general I found prices averaged £10 or more and for designer fashions, of course, you could pay many times that. At Boscombe I even went into Primark, a firm I usually boycott because their very low prices make me suspicious of their sources, and could have bought one there for £3 or two for £5. I finally got a lurid yellow singlet at Dorothy Perkins for £5 (and could have had 3 for £12) – made in Bulgaria. Did I do right? I wonder, especially as I would have been prepared to pay M.& S. prices, or, better still, buy it from the small independent shop in Southbourne Grove. Unfortunately neither had what I wanted.

PROGRAMME

Thursday 14 June at 11 am
British Museum Textile Store
The BM curators will present rarely seen textiles from Siberia and also display some Palestinian embroidered garments. In the afternoon we will visit an interesting private collection. Sorry, there are no places left

Wednesday 11 July at 2 pm
Pitt Rivers Museum. – Please go through the
OU Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford
TREASURED TEXTILES
Cloth and clothing around the world
Gallery talk by Julia Nicholson, Joint Head of Collections PRM
Please contact programme coordinators to book a place

Saturday 18 August at 11 a.m.
TEXTILES AND CULTURE OF TIBET
Mary Kinipple invites members to her home in Streatley, which is between Reading and Wallingford and on the Ridgeway Path. She is a weaver and also has a special interest in Tibetan culture and textiles. There will be a talk at 11.30 followed by lunch. (Bring a picnic.) In the afternoon there will be an opportunity to handle and discuss her collection of Tibetan clothing, domestic items and animal regalia. Cost £5 on the day
If you are interested please contact Mary on 01491 872148 ormkinipple@aol.com before August 15. Places limited

Wednesday 24 October at 5.45 p.m.
A.G.M
followed at 6.15 p.m. by

TEXTILE, TEXT AND BUDDHIST CONTEXT
in Burmese manuscript binding tapes, by Ralph Isaacs
at the Pauling Centre, 58 Banbury Road, Oxford
Refreshments from 5.15 p.m. Visitors welcome (£2), but cannot vote at A.G.M.

Saturday 17 November
INDIGO; A BLUE TO DYE FOR
A visit to this exhibition at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery
Details in the next newsletter

For further information or to book for visits, contact one of the programme coordinators:
Rosemary Lee, tel. 01491 873276, e-mail: rosemary.lee@talk21.com
Fiona Sutcliffe, tel. 01491 872268 e-mail: j.v.sutcliffe@talk21.com

MIAO TEXTILES: SOME TRADITIONAL PROCESSES

The various populations listed under the name of the Chinese Miao nationality, approximately 6 million people (nearly 60% in Guizhou Province) speak many different languages, and their traditional refusal to marry out of their own group has preserved extremely diversified and original customs. To-day the incredible richness of their dress is particularly threatened by the radical changes introduced by modern life.

Although now synthetic fabrics are more and more in favour, many Miao textile goods have been made traditionally from wool, cotton, silk or from locally grown hemp and ramie, and still are to some extent.

Hemp is a textile material known in China at least since Neolithic times. It is still grown in the north and west of Guizhou province but, in the lower areas of the south-east, it has given way to cotton during the last century. Hemp *(cannabis saliva L.)* usually known as *da ma* but also as *huo ma*, is an annual sown in early spring and harvested at the end of summer when it is some 2 m in height. The stalks are cut in two, stripped of their leaves and left to dry in the fresh air for several days. They are then soaked for some hours in water to facilitate fibre extraction. This is done manually. Then, using the finger nails, two filaments are extracted, joined end-to-end with other pairs and then twisted together. The thread is washed several times to whiten it and make it supple. It is then woven at home and washed again before being made up in its natural state or dyed indigo.

Hemp and ramie, a type of nettle native to China *(zhu ma* or *yuan ma)* are often used in the same villages. Ramie is cropped three times a year in the west of Ghizhou, more often in the south-east owing to its lower elevation and warmer climate. Immediately after cutting, the leaves are stripped off, leaving only the stalks, which are much shorter than those of hemp. Using a bamboo knife, the core of the stalks is removed and the green parts are scraped away, leaving just the fibres. These are then prepared in the same way as hemp. The resultant fabric, known sometimes as summer cloth *(xia bu),* is whiter and finer than that derived from hemp It is, however, not always easy to tell the two apart. These fabrics, a bit coarse to the touch, become supple with use and are sought after for their durability and comfort. Most of the time, they are dyed indigo.

There are innumerable methods of weaving and making up the cloth, varying from family to family, some with a back-strap loom, others using a frame loom. The Miao generally weave the thread in its natural colour and dye the finished cloth. There are both plain and decorated monochrome fabrics, and the methods used to weave them vary from place to place, giving the cloth its regional character. In the Qian Dongnan area (south east part of Guizhou province), plain fabrics are mostly produced using a fixed frame, either oblique or horizontal, with two rows of heddles operated by pedal. Further east in Ghizhou, the plain fabrics are made on a back-strap loom, though this method is gradually giving way to fixed frame production.

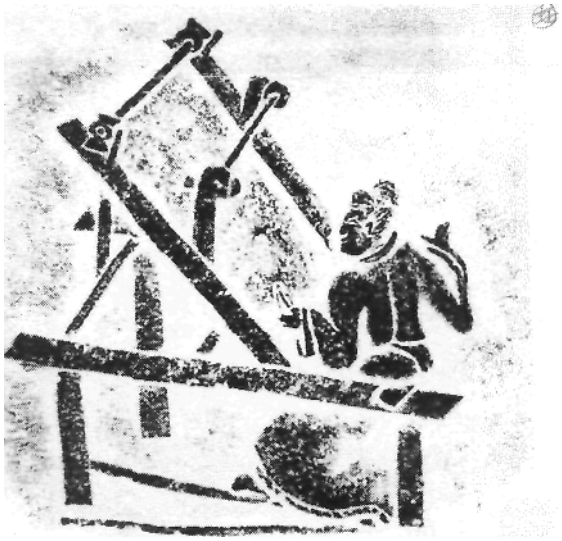

Fig. 1. Oblique loom with pedal. Han period, as engraved on a tomb in Sichuan

Fabrics woven with lozenge-shaped motifs, known as *dou wen bu,* are sometimes made using an oblique frame similar to those engraved on a Han (206 BC – 221 AD) tombstone at Tuqiao in the neighbouring province of Sichuan (fig. 1), but they are mostly made on flat frame looms *(woshi ji).* Up to four heddles are used to form the *dou wen bu* fabrics. This type of cloth with cross weave lozenges dates back a long way in China. There is a specimen in the Nanjing museum dating back 6000 years, found at Caoxieshan in the district of Wu in Jiangsu province (fig. 2). *Dou wen bu* encompasses many variants and occurs through many centuries of Chinese history. To-day the technique is still practised in Guizhou and in neighbouring Laos.

For multi-coloured weaves (*jin*), sometimes mistaken as embroidery, the Miao traditionally employ weaving methods using a variety of back-strap looms such as for example the one used in Weining. However, in most places fixed frame looms are becoming the norm. Extra colours are provided by additional wefts, continuous or discontinuous.

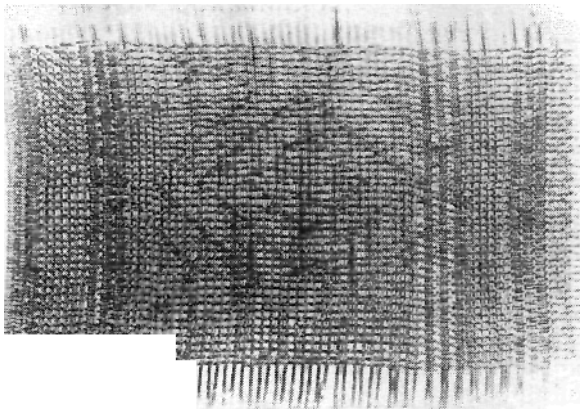

Fig. 2. Fragment of lozenge-woven fabric, c.4000 BC, found at Caoxieshan, Jiangsi Province

Traditional clothing is decorated with figurative and stylised designs which, among peoples that have no written language, serve as an iconographic identity of the group and of the wearer. Women use this iconography to illustrate tribal legends, to describe the nature around them and the experiences of their daily life. Each village and each group within it has its own design, and, within such designs, individuals add their personal identifying variations.

We have seen that plain weaves are generally made up in their natural colour and then the complete bolt of fabric (15-20 m.) may be dyed. At one time the range of colours was limited. The principal colours were indigo, red made from madder, safflower or sapanwood, and yellow obtained from the pagoda tree *huai huang (Sophora japonica)* flowers or the seed of gardenia *zhizi (Gardenia jasmenoides).* In Shidong the red dye is also obtained from the roots of *pyracantha angustifolia*, a red-flowering thorny shrub. In this case the roots are pounded into a paste with rice alcohol. To obtain black, the red-yielding root is tied in bundles and immersed for some time in paddy-field mud which, because it is rich in iron, turns the dye black. Nowadays many bright colours come from chemical dyes obtained in the market place, and among the natural dyes formerly used only indigo is very widespread. One common characteristic decoration is of white patterns on a blue ground or the reverse, blue on white, depending on the dyeing process used. Because the two fibres do not take up the colour in the same way, in the districts of Taijiang and Jianhe, it is the custom to mix silk and cotton in a figured fabric that, after dyed with indigo and used for some time, will reveal a very pale blue design (silk) on a dark blue (cotton) background.

Indigo itself is present in numerous plants. In Guizhou the most commonly used are woad: *malan, (Isatis tinctoria L.)* and dyer's knot weed: *liaolan (Polygonum tinctorium)* There are many other dye-yielding plants, both wild and cultivated, in use, but despite slight differences from place to place, the preparation of the dyes, starting with the fresh leaves, follows in invariable sequence. The fermentation of the plant sets off the formation of indoxyl. According to the quality of the solution, ash or lime is added and the piece being dyed is immersed from five to seven times or sometimes more. Between each immersion of about an hour, the piece is carefully rinsed and dried in the air. This allows the indoxyl to

oxidize and form a soluble precipitate of indigo within the fibres of the cloth. At the end of this process the colour is a deep blue which fades gradually with washing and gives rise to increasingly beautiful shades.

In truth, among the mountainfolk of Guizhou, indigo is more than simply a dye. Among the “Miao of the ravines”, for example, indigo is alive and risks death if one does not respect certain imperatives in its vicinity; for instance, anyone seeing a snake in the mountains must undergo purification before entering the place where the indigo vats are kept. The Miao are well aware of the particular qualities of indigo, such as its colour, its pleasant smell, its insect repellent properties and even some benefit to health... In Zhouxi, near Kaili, fabric intended for baby-carriers is given a clear blue base by soaking the raw silk filament in a liquid in which a wild plant similar to polygonum tinctorum, gathered in July, has been macerated.

The exact origins of resist-dyeing remain unknown but can be attributed to several areas of China. For example, in Sichuan, among items found in the rock tombs of Fengxianglai and Laijiang, there are objects from the Qin (221-206 BC) and Han dynasties belonging to royal warriors, including fragments of clothing and fine cloths dyed indigo using wax as a resist. In the centre of Guizhou a series of skirts printed by the batik process have been found in cave tombs from the Song era (960-1279 AD), of which one from Jiaoma (Changsun district) is particularly interesting in having a floral theme made of small white spots on a deep blue ground achieved by tie-dying. The most remarkable discovery is from Xia Baguan (Pingba district) where cotton and hemp skirts have been identified as dating from the Song era. One in particular (fig. 3), in an excellent state of preservation, depicts egrets in batik outline and highlighted in colour.

Fig. 3 Song Dynasty skirt decorated with batik egrets

It is said that Guizhou is the country of *laran:* batik, a method of dyeing based on wax resist or similar methods. To-day, with the exception of batik itself, these processes have largely died out, They are divided into four distinct methods:

Jiaxie. This method, used by the Yao and described in the Lingwai Daida of Zhou Qufei, published in 1178, involves pressing the material between strips of wood which carry engraved patterns. Designs are engraved on wooden planks or blocks between which the fabric is then clamped and liquid wax passed through the space between them. After the wax has set, the blocks are removed and the fabric soaked in a bath of indigo dye. When the fabric is well impregnated with colour, it is boiled to remove the wax, revealing a design composed of fine lines. This technique was employed by the Miao of Songtao, on the frontier with Hunan, up to the middle of the 20th century, and was used for, blankets covers, but has now fallen into disuse.

Lanyin huabu or impression by stencil-plate. This technique, derived from the *jiaxie* method, involves cutting the pattern out of sheets of tough cardboard which are then laid on the fabric and a thin layer of paste of soya blended with lime spread on the exposed parts. The paste adheres to the fabric following the lines of the design. After dyeing, the paste is scraped from the cloth to reveal the pattern. This method was also in use until a few years ago among groups of Han and Miao from the north of Guizhou for blanket covers.

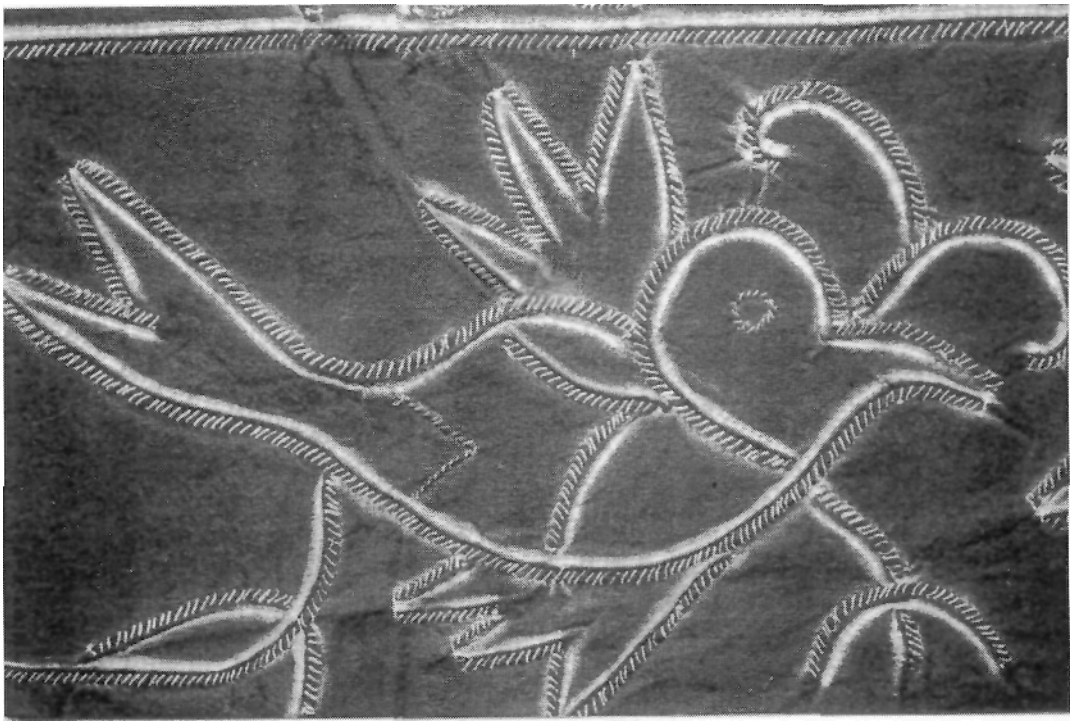

Fig. 4. Buyi saddlecloth decorated with a bird made by the *zhoran* method.

Zharan, that is to say resist by binding; This technique was practised until 50 years ago by the Miao but is to-day all but extinct except in the south-west of the province close to Yunnan. It remains in use by another minority nationality, the Buyi, for blanket covers. In this process, a twist of cotton is tacked on to the undyed cloth and confined by a kind of whipping. After several immersions in the indigo vat, the cotton twist is removed revealing the pattern, usually of birds and flowers, in brilliant white (fig. 4). Another group of Miao at

Heishitou in the district of Anshun decorate women's clothes and baby-carriers with a ten-petalled flower (like eglantine which abounds in Guizhou). To make this flower the material is folded into a triangle, refolded and stitched. After dyeing the thread is removed to reveal the white flowers.

Laran or batik. This is the process actually used by the majority of Miao groups. To trace the design in the resist, wax is usually used but it can also be the pith of the liquidambar tree, *fengxiang (Liquidambar formosana* Hce), which is harvested in August-September and heated to soften it when required. This technique, attested in the district of Huishui, where it has nearly disappeared, is also used in the Biasha region of Congjiang district.

As well as beeswax, nowadays tallow is often used, which, if well applied, enables as delicate a form of work as wax does. Of an extreme delicacy, batiks as made in Zhuchang (Zhijin district) for women's clothes and baby carriers, are to-day most often drawn in tallow (in certain cases a mixture of beeswax and tallow) on factory-made cotton cloth, which is preferred for this purpose to the coarser texture of handwoven textiles (fig. 5).

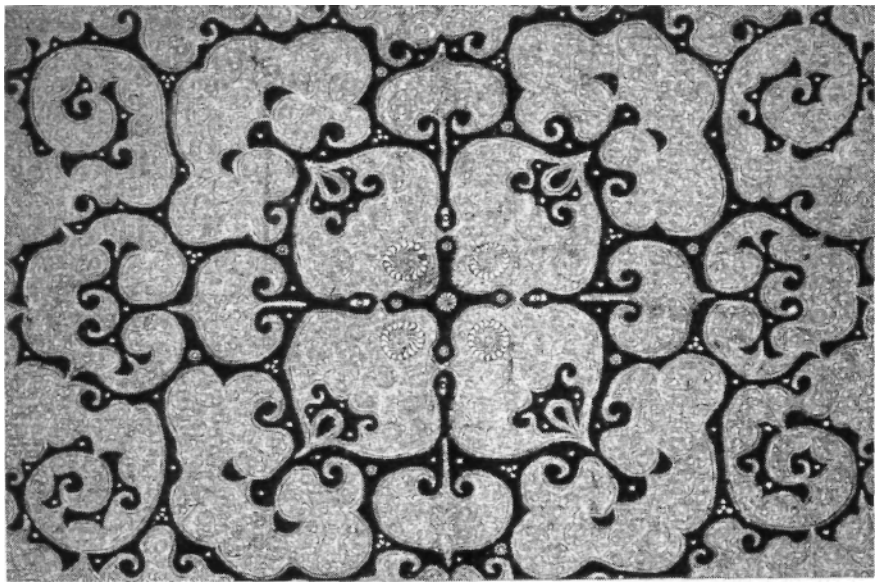

Fig. 5 Batik on factory-made cotton in the style of Zhuchang

The batik is traced using small instruments with bamboo handles and copper blades. Depending on the surface of the cloth, slightly different methods may be used. Sometimes the small blade is heated and then rubbed on the wax to trace the design, sometimes it is the wax that is heated before being incised by the knife. There are different types of blade in use; in the west of the province, copper combs are used to draw the lines and dots; in the east, the Miao of Biasha trace lines on their skirts in the wax with the aid of a fine bamboo nib.

The portion of cloth forming the reserve, once covered by the wax, the batik is soaked several times in a bath of indigo and then dried in the air. When the desired tint has been obtained, it is boiled to melt the wax, which can be recovered and reused. The wax disappears, the design appears in white on a blue ground (or, which is more difficult, in blue on a white ground). If it is wanted to make part of the design a pale blue, the corresponding part of the wax is removed and the fabric given another dipping in the indigo bath. This is known as three-colour batik : dark blue, light blue and white (fig. 6).

Fig. 6. Sleeve decoration in three-colour batik in the style of Hualipo in the district of Anlong, south-west Guizhou

Autumn is the preferred season for making batik because the weather is dry without excessive heat. The harvest gathered in, the women are then free from work in the fields, and it is also the time of maximum yield for the indigo plants. In many localities dyeing is practised in family vats, but in certain villages of Qian Dongnan, such as Wanhu (Kaili prefecture), they are very big and owned collectively.

Once it has been dyed indigo, other colours, if desired, can be added to the white parts of the cloth. Characteristic of the style of Pu'an, the polychrome batik produced by the Bailing Miao of Danzhai and Sandu has a beautiful decorative effect (fig. 7) Until about 20 years ago, polychrome batiks could also be found in the region of Anshun and among the "Miao of the ravines" (districts of Liuzhe and Shijin). The fashion has passed, but in some other places, for example for baby-carriers in the manner of Zhuchang (Zhijin district), or at Guiding, the batik is sometimes enhanced with coloured silk thread embroidery.

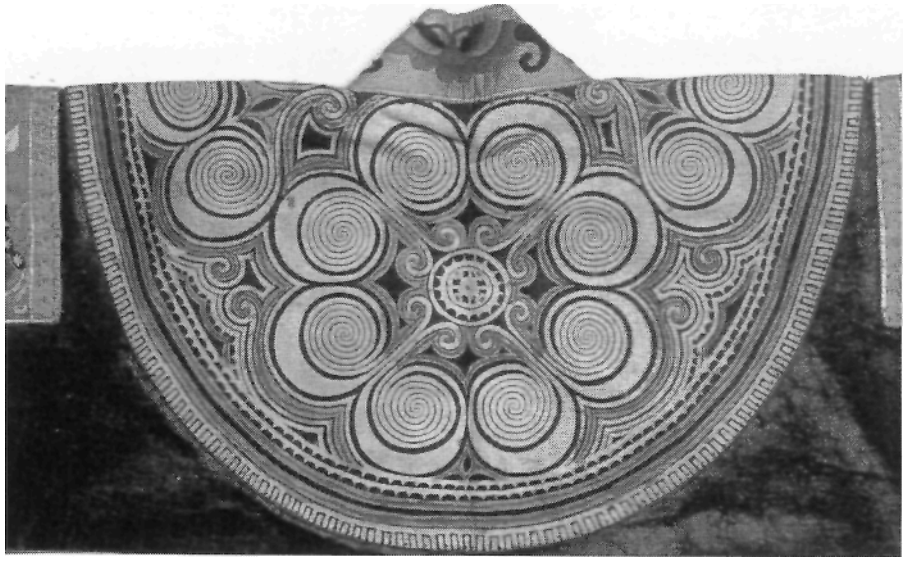

Fig. 7. Batik on a cotton fabric, with the addition of yellow and red on the parts left white. Bailing Miao, in the style of Pu'an, Sandu district.

Among certain groups, for example the Bailing Miao, batik is restricted to precise uses: the back of the sleeves of women's costume, baby-carriers or blanket covers. Elsewhere batik, the motifs of which are often the same as those of embroidery, decorates hempen or light cotton clothes, more comfortable to wear in summer than embroidered ones which are more difficult to launder.

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THE SYMBOLISM OF ORNAMENT ON MIAO COSTUME

It is fair to say that the Miao have a reputation for their sense of art. The decoration of their clothes is remarkable for its aesthetic qualities, but perhaps more so for its diversity and the richness of its iconic language. Miao groups have no economic organisation of power and do not have an artisan class employed by the wealthy. In fact, dress has nothing to do with the degree of wealth of its wearer. Each garment is made to fulfil a personal or family demand, and not for commercial purposes. Among certain groups the motifs in weaving, batik or embroidery, are figurative, others are stylized, but whatever they represent, they have an immense diversity, every one being different, even in the same style. The stories women tell through the ornamentation of their dress are not limited by the written word and can only be constrained by the imagination and the soul of the designer. In the same way that the stories are not limited, the women never make two identical motifs. The designers evidently desire originality and it is this that leads to the variety of design.

Often the significance of the decorative elements is ill-understood, in as much as their meanings are subject to innumerable variations from one locality to another. Hitherto few systematic studies have been devoted to the symbolism of Miao costumes, except for those concerned with the figurative motifs of the Qian Dongnan, which have been studied more than those of other regions.

As a result it is very important to conduct inquiries in the field and record the local differences to try to understand how young girls acquire the language of the embroideries and batiks and how they memorise and transmit them, and finally to listen to the villagers (men and women) recounting in detail the content of each design and to describe it in like manner. Certain stories have been transcribed, translated into Chinese and published by local researchers but the wording of such work being all intended for outsiders, also contributes to the work of assimilation which guides the authorities in whom the will of unification is evident. Film interviews, deciphered with reference to the locals, reveal that each individual has a different understanding of the embroideries and memorises and describes them in his own way with a multitude of variants. It is therefore particularly interesting to conduct the interviews at the same time as collecting the images.

Fig. 1. A man in festival dress (hemp or ramie) sumptuously embroidered.
"Miao of the ravines", Dawan village, Liuzhi district, 2000

The stylised motifs recall myths and legends, the pattern of life or the daily routine of the women. Often there are aspects of the landscape: mountains, rivers, tracks, fields, trees and flowers, as well as animals, which are generally represented by a single detail, such as, say, a chicken by an eye, a dog by a pair of ears or a tiger by a paw. Other designs include the cross (fig. 1), which excited and intrigued Christian missionaries in the last century, but which, in fact, represents a hand-shake, in the form of a star with eight branches, or the cross or half cross, which enables the turning of the cylinder on which the cloth is rolled at the front of the loom in weaving. The archaeologist Wang Xu has written an article on this eight-branched star with a hole in the middle (fig. 2), frequently represented on neolithic pottery, which he suggests implies the existence of fixed frame looms already at that time.

Mrs Torimaru Sadae has analysed some 30 stylised designs on woven baby-carriers of the Miao from Zhouxi (Kaili). All these designs demonstrate the wish of the mothers to attract the best possible fortune for their children. It is here that one finds protective animals: the royal tiger represented by a paw, the eye of the dragon-buffalo, the dog represented by the imprint of its foot, the falcon by its eye. There are also flowers which bring good luck: alpine (wealth of nature), pear blossom (medicine for stomach ache), pimento flower (promise of a long lineage). Some auspicious symbols are: cypress leaves (eternal life), two-headed birds (wealth), large-winged birds (for reaching heaven), grains of rice (symbol of life and its continuation), butterflies (the ancestors), millipedes or frogs (abundance), an insect on the surface of water as in a paddyfield (a good harvest), similarly with a bird flying over a

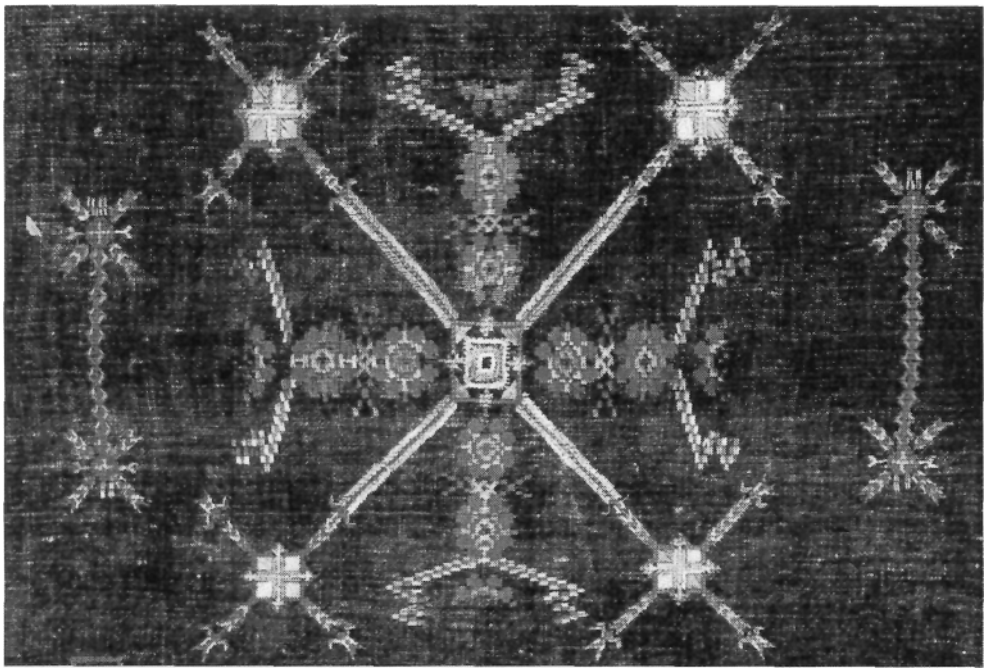

Fig. 2 Back of an antique garment embroidered on indigo-dyed cloth with silk threads

paddyfield, a crab (probably the reincarnation of a water god), and maple leaves, which come from the sacred *Liquidambar* tree. In the main, secondary motifs fill the remaining spaces on the cloth completely. Nothing is left blank.

Fig. 3 *Posi xiu* embroidery executed with an extremely fine silk thread

Highly developed in Qian Dongnan, especially in the district of Taijiang, are figurative motifs (fig. 3). These draw on well-known legends and on poetic visions of the universe and man's search for harmony with it. They demonstrate a love of and respect for nature, a nature rich in birds, butterflies and familiar animals, but also frequented by demons and fantastic beings (fig. 4) who are intermediaries between humans and the spirit world. Each area has its own system of depicting these images and it is not possible to generalize, but as for the stylised motifs, which can be found everywhere, it is the desire for beauty and good luck which stimulates each maker to multiply the beneficent signs in order to eliminate misfortune.

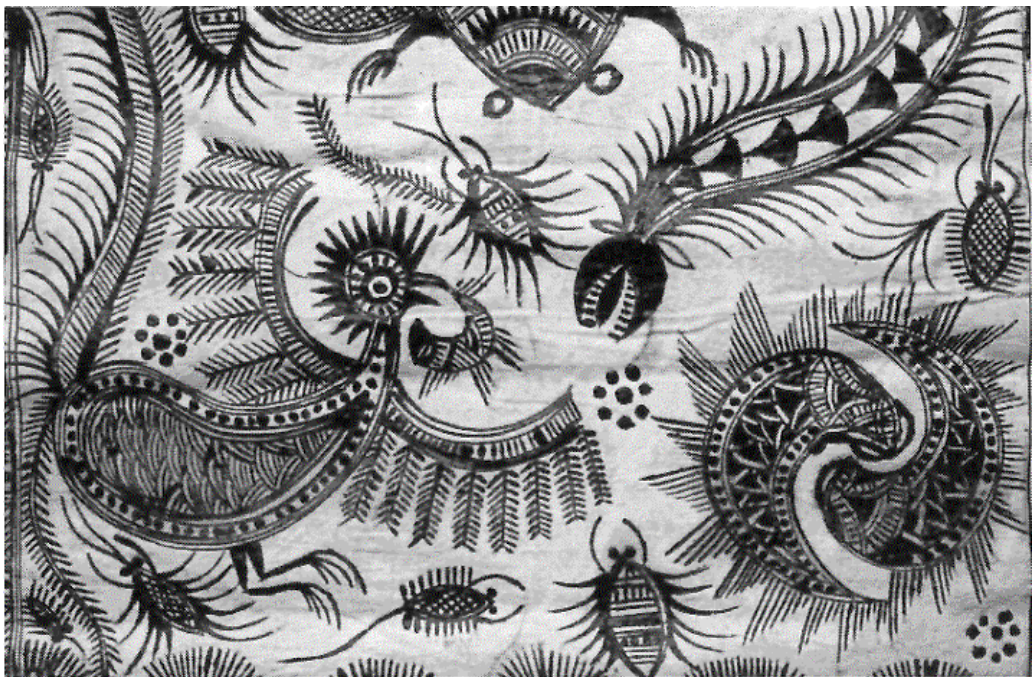

Fig. 4 Batik creatures on a banner used in the festival of the ancestors
Rongjiang, liping district, Qiangdongnan

The poetic expression of the motifs on the costumes is a veritable language which enriches daily life with a multitude of messages. Unfortunately, the imagery created by this graphic language is disappearing completely with the abandonment of traditional costumes in favour of modern dress which has no more than a practical function.

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THE BRONZE WEAVER

A Recent Acquisition at the National Gallery of Australia

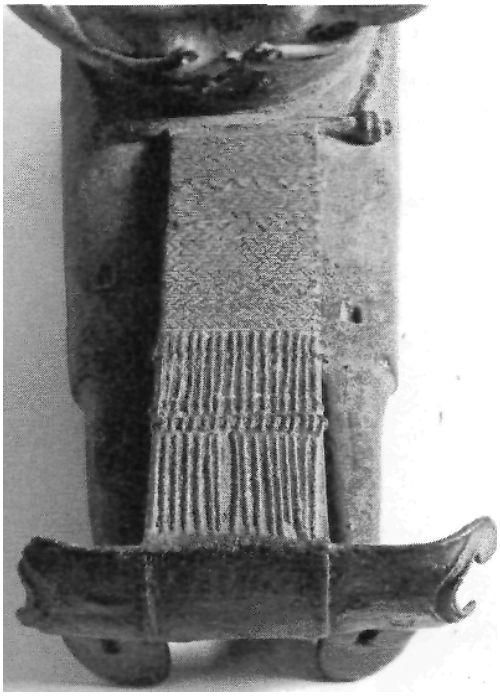
Textile production has a long history in South-East Asia, with linguistic evidence for the Proto-Austronesian word for loom weaving (as distinct from basket weaving) pointing to a time depth of 4,000 years. The best evidence for the early patterning of cloth comes from Javanese sculpture from the 9th century onwards, both in stone and metal, where meticulous attention is often paid to the representation of textile ornaments. Indian trade textiles, many of which go back as early as the 14th century, survive from Eastern Indonesia, and their influence on local textiles has been well demonstrated. The cultural importance of cloth, especially in maritime South-East Asia, is well known. Yet there is relatively little firm archaeological or early historical material that can illustrate the developments in design and technology.

For this reason a recent acquisition by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, is of great importance (see opposite and p. 1). Last year the Gallery bought a bronze figure of a woman seated at her loom, with a partly woven textile in front of her; she is shown nursing a small child. A recently published brochure written by Robyn Maxwell, the Gallery's curator of Asian art, describes the sculpture in detail and sets it into a cultural context (Maxwell, 2006)[1]. The figure was reportedly found in a cave in East Flores (eastern Indonesia) and became an heirloom to a local clan. The weaver sits 25.8 cm high, and from her back to the loom at her feet she measures 22.8 cm. The figure is cast in the lost-wax process *(cire perdue)* and retains its clay core. This has recently been dated by thermoluminescence to between 556 and 596 AD. The combination of date, subject matter and technique make it a unique object in the history of South-East Asian art, of equal importance for the region's metal work and textile traditions. Bronze sculptures of its size are rare for the outer islands of Indonesia. The precisely depicted technical details of textile and loom also provide information significant for the history of weaving in Indonesia.

The loom represented is a body-tension (backstrap) loom, where the tension to stretch the warp ends is applied by the weaver's body. Usually the warp moves between a fixed warp beam at one end, and the cloth beam which lies in her lap. The latter is tied to a belt or yoke behind the weaver's back. She alternately leans back against this 'backstrap' to give tension to the warp, which brings up one part of the shed, and relaxes the hold and opens the second shed with the help of shed sticks, at least one of which is inserted into the warp. In the loom shown here it probably is the stick that is closest to the weaver's feet.

The body-tension loom often uses a continuous warp which is wound from cloth beam to warp beam and back again, continuing for the full width of the textile. This is certainly the case here: the warp threads are shown as continuing beyond the warp beam, coming back towards the weaver's lap. Usually the warp beam is tied to poles beyond the weaver's feet, and she uses a separate footrest to press against when she manipulates the shed. Here the warp beam is a flat board kept in place by the weaver's outstretched feet. In the history of the backstrap loom, this is considered to be an early form, now rarely found, and only in remote regions of South-east Asia. In this context the location of the figure's discovery becomes especially interesting. The present-day weavers of East Flores, where it was found, do not use the foot-braced body-tension loom, but one that is technologically very close to it: warp-beam and foot-rest are tied to the same set of poles, at a distance determined by the length of the weaver's legs. This is a very curious coincidence, as there is no evidence for the bronze figure to have been made in the East Flores region. Also of interest is the backstrap itself, which is clearly made from strips of palmleaf, exactly as is still in use in the region.

The textile depicted in the weaver's lap (see overleaf) is shown with astonishing detail of geometric patterns, shifting and alternating in rows. Two very thin sticks are inserted between the shed stick and the weft beater; one of these must be the heddle which allows for the manipulation of the two sheds. It is impossible to say if the second one might be a weft pattern stick, although the regular movement of warp threads over and under it make this unlikely. It is more likely to be the alternative shed stick, also inserted into the warp. It is impossible, therefore, to say anything definitive about the patterning technique used here. The clearly raised aspect of the fine geometric design, following the weft direction, suggest a



supplementary weft technique. This is, of course, one of the most ancient techniques in weaving worldwide, and well represented in South-east Asia, including Indonesia.

The figure's existence has been widely known for almost 30 years. It was first published in 1979 by Marie Jeanne (Monnie) Adams in *Asian Perspectives* (her article appeared in Volume 22, 1977, which however did not get published until 1979)[2]. At the time she identified it as an heirloom object owned by a clan in East Flores (eastern Indonesia), without further provenance. She analysed the figure stylistically and pointed out similarities to woodcarvings from Indonesian cultures which had remained relatively unaffected by the Indic influences that shaped much of Java and Bali's visual arts.

As the regional location given by Monnie Adams closely coincided with my own research area at the time, which covered the islands East Flores, Solor, and Lembata, I enquired about the figure locally during my field research in 1982.1 was dismayed to hear that it had disappeared from the village, apparently sold and made available on the art market. Rumours about its appearance were heard in Jakarta circles in the summer of the same year. Shortly after in 1984, the core of the figure was analysed for dating at Oxford's Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art – needless to say, not to make the information accessible to interested scholars, but as a private contract that was to give legitimacy to the art market price sought by the dealer involved. The dates arrived at then were considerably later (860-1170 AD) than the recent test carried out by the Canberra Gallery. It would have been valuable if Robyn Maxwell had explained the discrepancy in her publication on the bronze weaver. Anyway – the figure disappeared into a private collection for the next twenty years and was rarely heard of again. I referred to it in two publications, lamenting the displacement of the object from its cultural context, but also stressing that if an object of such historical importance became alienated from its social significance, it should find a place in a location where it was accessible to the people who once held it to be of importance, to scholars with an interest in these peoples' history and culture, and to a wider

public audience (Barnes 1989[3]; 133-34; 1994[4]: 23-25). This has now happened for the Flores Weaver, and I am delighted that it has found such a distinguished and accessible home.

Ruth Barnes, Ashmolean Museum

1 Maxwell, Robyn, 2006. *The Bronze Weaver. A masterpiece of 6th century Indonesian sculpture*, Canberra: National Gallery of Australia.

2 Adams, Marie Jeanne, 1977, *A 'Forgotten' Bronze Ship and a Recently Discovered Bronze Weaver from Eastern Indonesia. Asian Perspectives* 22: 87-109.

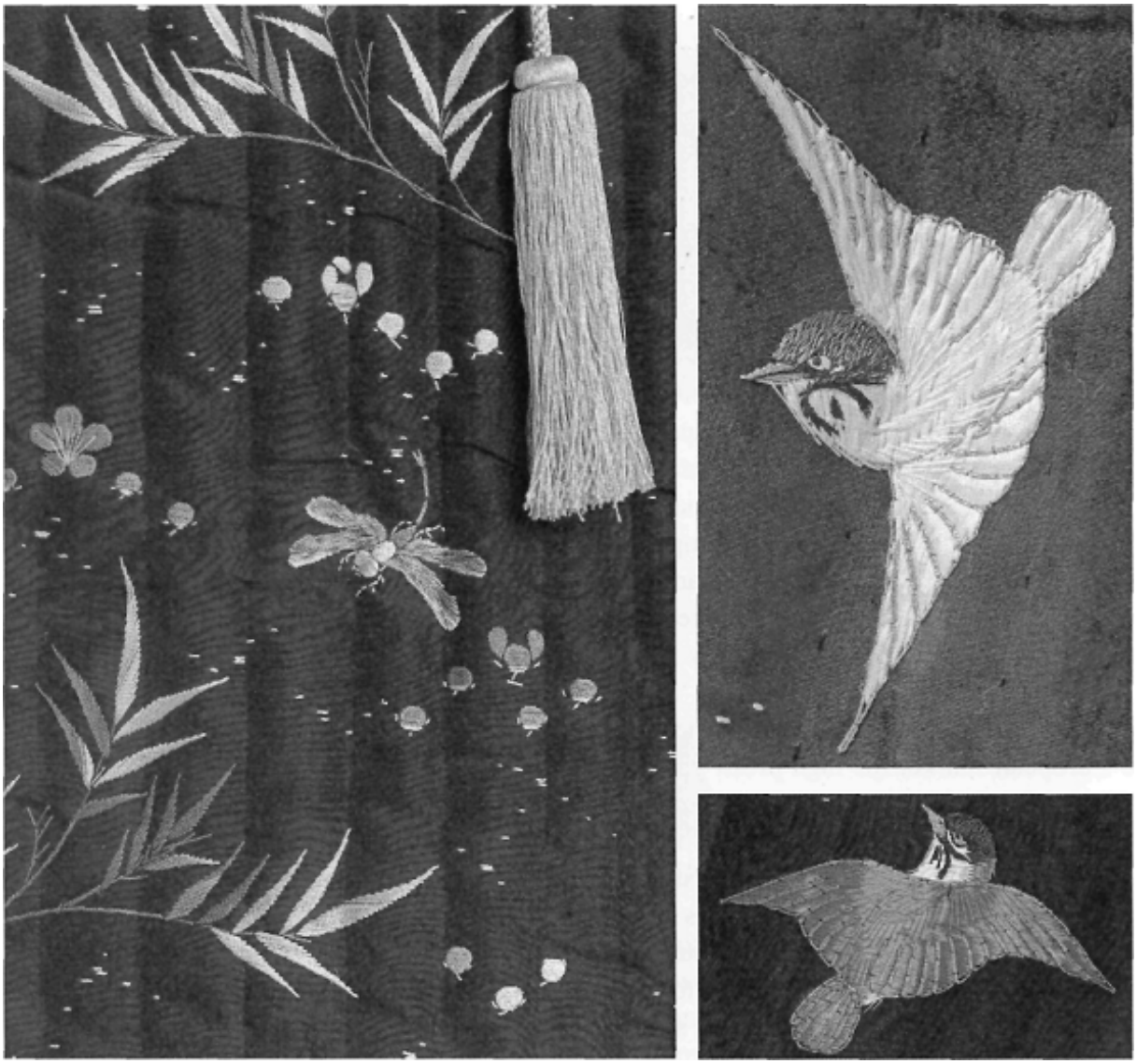
3 Barnes, Ruth, 1989. *The Ikat Textiles of Lamalera. A Study of an Eastern Indonesian Weaving Tradition.* Leiden: E.J. Brill

4 Ibid., 1994. "Without Cloth We Cannot Marry": The Textiles of Lamaholot in Transition. *In* Paul Taylor (ed.) *Fragile Traditions – Indonesian Art in Jeopardy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press

A "JAPANESE GOWN"

This robe was donated to the National Trust's collection of textiles and dress at Killerton, Devon, in the early 1980s. Said to be of Chinese origin it belonged to the donor's grand-mother, who was born in 1855. Unlabelled by maker or dealer, any known details of production or connexions with the Far East were left unrecorded.

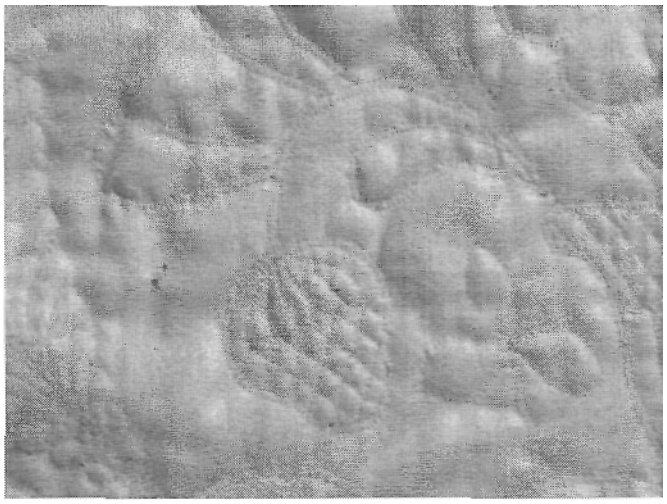
The embroidery is clearly Japanese in style. While lacking the quality of craftsmanship associated with traditional Japanese techniques, it is nevertheless a stunning example of a piece styled for the Western market. The distinctive shape of this garment dates it to c.1875. The buttoned peplum, shaped to fit over a bustle, and the slightly trained skirt are features of fashionable Western European dress of the period, as are the deep cuffs, patch pockets, and high revered collar. However, the materials, embroidery designs and quilting techniques are Japanese.



Details of the embroidery

Vivid purple watered silk, lined with pale pink habutae, is embroidered all over in polychrome silks and metal thread. The padded hem resembles that of a kimono, while the frogging, fastenings and girdle are pink silk *kumihimo* or Japanese cord. Intended as a cosy dressing gown, the garment is wadded with cotton, and quilted in simple channels with large straight stitches, as in *sashiko* (Japanese quilting) (illustrated opposite). Motifs reminiscent of traditional designs include blossom, leaves, butterflies, dragonflies and sparrows.

The hand stitching was designed to be completed quickly. The clumsy arrangement of patch pockets, fastenings placed carelessly over motifs, and mis-matched embroidery is unusual for traditional Japanese work. The collar facing is the only area stitched by machine. Perhaps the embroidered sections were packed for assembly and finishing in Europe. After all, flat packed pieces would have been easier to ship than finished garments.



The pale pink quilted lining

Similar dressing-gowns at Japan's Kyoto Institute and the Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum, New York, date from c. 1875 to 1885. Both embroidered and plain quilted silk dressing gowns are catalogued.

Without documentation it is impossible to establish a maker, but it seems likely that the gowns were produced for merchants around Yokohama such as Shiino Shobey whose business, established in 1858, flourished after the port opened up in 1859. With the end of Japan's isolation in 1868 high quality silks became a major export. A gown in the Kyoto collection bears a paper label stamped 'S. Shobey silk store Yokohama'. Shobey travelled to the 1873 International Exhibition in Vienna by authority of the Meiji government to research the European market for high profit silk products. As a result he had the idea of making a "Japanese gown", a silk dressing-gown cut in fashionable European style.

Often advertised as suitable Christmas presents, London and provincial department stores continued to stock Japanese silk dressing-gowns into the 1930s. Liberty & Go's *Yuletide Gifts* catalogue for 1898 shows some of the most splendid for gentlemen and ladies, in a choice of eight colours with or without embroidery or with partial embroidery. "The shapes are reproductions of models sent out to Japan by Messrs Liberty & Co for the guidance of the native manufacturers. The shapes, styles and fittings are adapted for western use."

Shelley Tobin
Costume Curator

The National Trust, Killerton House

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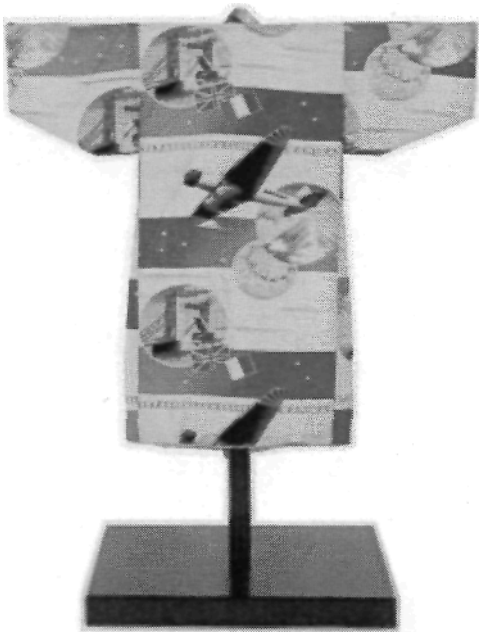
Akiko Fukai et al., *Fashion, A History from the 18th to the 20th Century*, The Collection of the Kyoto Costume Institute, Taschen, 2002

Akiko Fukai, 'Japonism in Fashion' in *Japonism in Fashion*, exhibition catalogue, Tokyo, 1996.

KIMONO WITH A HISTORY

In the 1930s kimono for young boys were often patterned with highly graphic propaganda images. Unusually, this example commemorates an actual event, the first aeroplane flight from Japan to Europe. The plane, called the *kamikaze-go* (‘divine wind’) took off from Tokyo on April 6th 1937 and, after various stops, landed at Croydon airport on April 9th to an enthusiastic welcome from a large crowd of spectators. The record-breaking trip caused a sensation in Europe and made the pilot, Masaaki Iinuma, a hero on both sides of the world. This wonderful kimono is decorated with images of the low-winged monoplane and, in circles, Mount Fuji, Tower Bridge and the route of the flight. The design also features the flags of Britain and probably France, although the latter is upside down, and block letters which read *1937 Aorenraku 15000*. ‘Aorenraku’ roughly translates to ‘connections across the blue’ and 15000 is the approximate distance of the journey in kilometres.



Kimono for a young boy, printed wool, made in Japan 1937. (Copyright V.& A. Images)

The motifs used to decorate kimono often have complex and auspicious meanings. The Japanese belief in the literal, as well as figurative, power of images is seen particularly in garments designed for festival and celebratory occasions. In boy’s kimono of the 1930s, traditional symbols, such as Mount Fuji, were commonly combined with those that emphasised Japan’s progress and modernity. The motifs on this kimono not only serve to commemorate great achievement, bravery and loyalty to the nation, but are a reflection of parental hopes and the conviction that wrapping the child in such auspicious imagery will bring about a magical transference of similar attributes.

Anna Jackson
Asian Department, Victoria and Albert Museum
(Copyright V. & A. Magazine, Issue 12, Spring 2007)

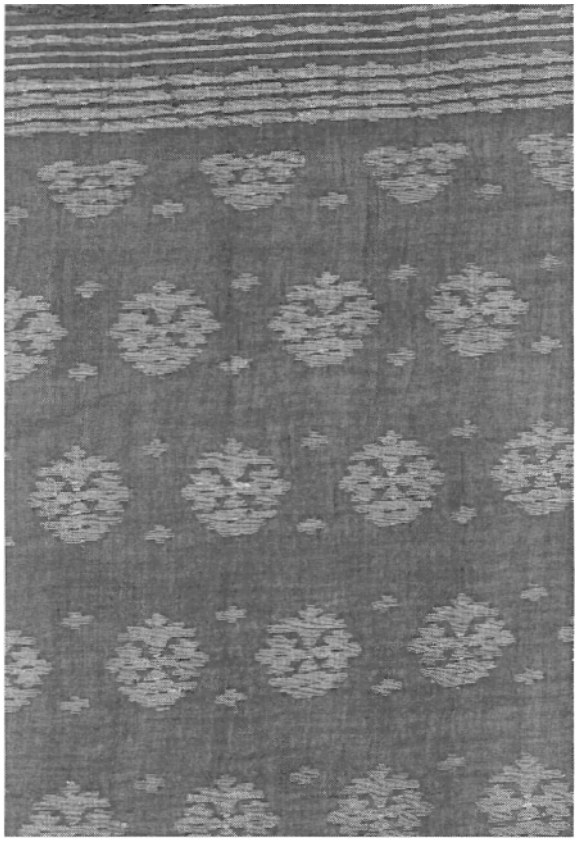
RESOURCE CENTRE FOR WEAVERS STUDIO, KOLKATA (CALCUTTA)

Weavers Studio was established on December 7th, 1993 with a mission statement "to use as many hands as possible". In the past 13 years, the Studio has collected approximately 2500 books and journals on textiles, art and craft and more than 400 old and rare textiles from various parts of India and abroad. To bring the collections to the public domain, "Weavers Studio Resource Centre" has been registered as a Trust and will be run professionally as a not-for-profit organization.

The Resource Centre is scheduled to open in 2 phases. Phase 1, the Gallery, will open in August this year and will be used for fund-raising events to sustain the WS Resource Centre. Exhibitions of textiles and other arts and crafts, experimental exhibitions, interactive sessions, book and music launches, talks, seminars, film previews and other cultural events will be held.

The second phase, the Resource Centre at the Kasba Industrial Estate should be ready by October 2008, and will house the library, textile gallery, reserve collections, research and documentation unit, a restoration and conservation laboratory, computer aided design centre, conference and workshop facility, a vocational training centre along with production facilities in hand block print, hand embroidery, handloom weaving, tie and dye and hand-crafted traditional techniques.

Typical of the work promoted by Weavers Studio is this *kantha.* Created with just a needle and the simplest of fabrics, in the smallest of spaces, even while keeping an eye on kitchen fires and children, it is a quintessential embroidered-cum-quilted textile, literally a patched-cloth, that seamlessly combines both needlework expressions. Motifs are sourced from a rich living tapestry of beliefs, mythology, nature and the everyday life of rural Bengal.



Jamdani, a finely textured muslin with floral motifs woven on a handloom. Originally made in Bangladesh & West Bengal, *jamdani* is used for saris, scarves, handkerchiefs etc. It is believed to be a fusion of the ancient cloth-making techniques of Bengal (perhaps 2000 years old) with Middle Eastern influences brought in by Muslims from the 1300s onwards.

The Resource Centre would like to promote people's awareness of the protection of their history, material culture & the art and craft traditions, and aims to:

- facilitate textile and design students to do their internship and projects;
- promote an improved public understanding and awareness of our vast textile heritage by the exhibition, documentation and publication of other private collections;
- organise textile tours;
- develop a vocational training centre and offer scholarships and support to crafts people to upgrade their skills and their children to be initiated into the field;
- support literacy and health-care programmes;
- provide design and development of contemporary products etc.;
- invite textile artists, scholars, experts from India and abroad to conduct training programmes and other related educational activities.

The Resource Centre would like to appeal to organizations, individuals, councils and funding agencies to donate funds, books, films (textiles, art, craft, ceramics, photography), maps, drawings, paintings, lithographs, etchings, postcards to add to the existing collection which would be duly acknowledged at the Resource Centre.

We would like to connect with experts in the fields of conservation, restoration and curating of textiles. We are looking to link up with organizations who have expertise in conducting awareness campaigns and workshops for health and hygiene for the crafts people

we work with and their families. Any assistance or collaboration whether tangible or non-tangible, educational or vocational, would be useful to the centre, and we would welcome the help of volunteers who could offer their services for specific events.

We are committed to meet this challenge through productive partnerships and to ensure that the valued collections, whether works of art, textiles, historical documents, scientific specimens, library collections or other forms of material culture, are preserved for future generations.

Darshan Shah
Director

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Website: - www. weavers studio.com

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

Treasured Textiles

Regrettably this visit to the Pitt Rivers Museum intended to take place on 21 February had to be cancelled due to the death of Julia Nicholson's father. It has now been rescheduled for Wednesday 11 July. See above, p. 3. – Editor

Heroes and Monsters

In her talk *Heroes and Monsters* on 21 March, Penelope Woolfitt opened our eyes to the intricacies of men's costume as shown in the series of paintings commissioned by the sixteenth century Mughal Emperor Akbar to illustrate the *Hamzanama* (or *Adventures of Hamza).* The Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, had become the hero of popular legends told by story-tellers who transformed him into an intrepid warrior travelling the world fighting infidels and dragons and other strange creatures in many diverse adventures.

Stylistically, Akbar's *Hamzanama* shows the fusion of Indian and Persian art which came to characterize the Mughal style. With the help of excellent slides and close-ups, Penelope pointed out features of dress which demonstrated this fusion. She guided us through details of cut, fabric, colour and the way garments hang, giving us a fascinating insight into men's dress and, even more importantly, encouraging us to look at the detail.

The adventures of heroes and monsters alike gave us opportunities to see every element of their wardrobe literally from head to foot. A swimming scene allowed us to see the structure of the baggy *shalwar* (pants) and also close details of his *chakdar* (coat) and fastenings. *Shalwar* are often rolled up above the knee to allow more freedom of movement: the master spy Khaja Umar is frequently shown in this way, fleeing trouble. Over the pants Khaja Umar wears a short jacket, the *choga.* Hamza himself wears a longer coat, the *chakdar.*

Penelope also pointed to important details such as the way the coat or jacket is fastened. This is not consistent in the *Hamzanama*, which allows art historians to date the paintings to the period before Akbar decreed that Hindus should fasten their *chakdar* on the left, Muslims on the right. No rest were we given from feasting our gaze on the rich fabrics and colours, for Penelope directed our attention to the *patka*, or belt, which is tied over the coat or jacket in a half-bow loop, but which at different periods would be fastened differently.

Some of our heroes and villains are barefoot, others wear neat slippers with a tab at the back, seemingly hardly sturdy enough for their mighty exploits. Others wear close-fitting boots. Riders on horseback are shown with their slippered feet in the stirrups.

All the men, apart from a few monsters, wear headgear, with turbans mostly white and often, depending on the mood of the scene, wildly unravelling.

Some characters sport broad collars at the back, which career drunkenly in some of the scenes, again presumably to indicate movement.

The question of artistic convention and sartorial verisimilitude arose regarding the four trailing pointed tails of the *chakdar*, which are generally depicted as flaring out at the hem even when characters are at rest. Penelope had drawn patterns of the garments to illustrate how they might be constructed. Did the tails have a purpose, such as to tie up the garment for riding? Or, a member of the audience suggested, might they have originally been used to indicate movement, and later became a convention of the genre, influenced as it was by Persian miniature painting?

Alongside dragons so beautiful as not to be at all fearsome, the monsters of the title appear in various types of garb. Some wear short pleated skirts, others sport Chinese silk brocade coats tied with a tiger-tail belt or are in armour made up of separate, painstakingly-depicted plates.

Penelope's all-too-brief talk opened up exciting prospects of marvels yet to be discovered in miniature painting. She left us eager to practise feasting our newly-opened eyes on a small exhibition of miniatures currently at the Bodleian.

Vickie Abel

Early 19th Century Textiles from Eastern Indonesia in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden

A fascinating thread ran through Ruth Barnes' talk on May 9, linking her recent research at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden to an earlier visit to the Museum in 1983, and connecting it with visits to Eastern Indonesia from 1969 onwards and the emergence there in the 1990s of a "new" textile rooted in historic memories.

Recently Ruth and her husband visited Leiden as fellows of the International Institute for Asian Studies, where Ruth used her time to reacquaint herself with an early collection of textiles from eastern Indonesia. The cloths were collected by Salomon Muller and Heinrich Christian Macklot during a natural history expedition to the region in 1828-9, supported by the Dutch government and organised via scientific societies in Batavia (Java).

Ruth had studied the material in 1983, while reviewing museum collections for her D.Phil., but although impressed by the early date of the collection, she found it otherwise not especially interesting. Now, however, these plain textiles, all white with red or blue warp stripes, had acquired a new importance for her.

In 1969/71 Ruth and her husband spent two years in a hamlet, halfway up an extinct volcano in Kedang, Lembata, Eastern Indonesia, a community with traditional ways where the older people lived (and described by Ruth in her article *Thirty-five Years of Textile Studies in Eastern Indonesia* in newsletter no. 28, June 2004). The hamlet is part of the larger village of Leuwayang.

On a return to Leuwayang in 1996, Ruth's husband wanted to buy a dark maroon sarong of the type that he had worn during their 1969-71 stay, but was unable to do so. Instead, plain white hand-woven cloth with warp stripes was favoured by older men in powerful positions at ceremonies.

On this return they also heard that a major ceremony had been revived eight years earlier in response to illness in the village and dreams that ceremonies were needed to return the community to prosperity. Ruth and her husband returned to Leuwayang in July 1998 for this harvest ceremony, *A Utan*, when the male genealogies of everyone alive in the village going back 30 generations were chanted. The entire recitation took about 18 hours, and the ceremony lasted for three days.

There was a requirement for ceremonial cloth but no tradition in weaving in the village due to a historic prohibition. There was, however, one woman, in her forties who was weaving, Asma Pisang Ape Woren. Her mother, who came from a region which traditionally had supplied textiles to the village, had married into Leuwayang. It was now acceptable to weave, at least in the large settlement at the beach, and Asma, a spinster with no strength to work in the fields, made her living through weaving, and when approached to provide ceremonial cloth she initiated a women's weaving co-operative to meet the need, encouraging the use of natural dyes.

Returning to the Leiden collection, Ruth showed us slides of items in the collection and of plates from Muller's book - there is a striking similarity between the new cloths now woven in Kedang, and the old collection found in Leiden. Asma said that she arrived at her choice of design after talking to her elders. As Ruth said, we cannot really know if these women and men could have referred to the appearance of cloth which had not existed for at least five generations (approximately 150 years). However, in a society where until very recently its history was remembered by oral transmission rather than written records, memory can be a powerful tool.

The collection in Leiden has not been studied much. It is well kept and the museum staff are helpful, at least to visiting scholars. Casual visits cannot be accommodated. From the 1828/29 expedition only very few objects are on show in the Museum's Indonesian gallery. The storage is not in Leiden, but on the other side of The Hague, and there is a lengthy appointment system in place to view items. Website: http://www.rmv.nl/

Pamela Cross

A NEW BOOK ON KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan, Text by Klavdiya Antipina, Photographs by Rolando Paiva, Watercolours by Temirbek Musakeev, 2006, by Skira, Milano, (U.K. distributor Thames & Hudson), ISBN 13 978-88-8491-970-0 or 10 88-8491 970-3, £34.95.

When Klavdiya Antipina died in 1996 aged 92, her work on the ethnography of the Kyrgyz, particularly their fabrics, was hardly known outside a small circle of Soviet specialists. Over the last 10 years her reputation has grown enormously as scholars and collectors have come to recognise the important contribution she made to the subject. Much of it is in Russian, but already a book has been dedicated to her memory and more and more of her works are being translated into English. With the publication of this book Antipina's reputation will finally be given the recognition it deserves.

Antipina spent most of her life in Kyrgyzstan, taking a particular interest in the nomads of the south-west of the country whose magnificent embroideries, while retaining a clear identity of their own, mixed the bold, graphic, animalistic style that came from the Kyrgyz original homelands of southern Siberia and the Altai mountains, with the flair for embroidery as practised by the surrounding Tajik, Uzbek and Tatar peoples of the Ferghana Valley.

To illustrate her written essays, she commissioned beautiful watercolour illustrations from leading artists such as Temirbek Musakeev, many of them based on early photographs taken at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was always intended that her final work should be published. Incredibly, after her death, her manuscripts disappeared for a time, although some of them surfaced in a book published in Turkey two years ago. Sadly, Antipina was not given full credit for the work and it included little of her writing.

This new book, however, is a fitting tribute to Antipina's work. With an introduction by Stephanie Bunn and Damira Sartbaeva, the beautiful illustrations and superb photographs of Kyrgyz costume will do much to correct the imbalance that has sometimes led to Kyrgyz fabrics being overshadowed by others in the region. Antipina's text explains the origin, technique and significance of particular items of clothing with great assurance and facility.

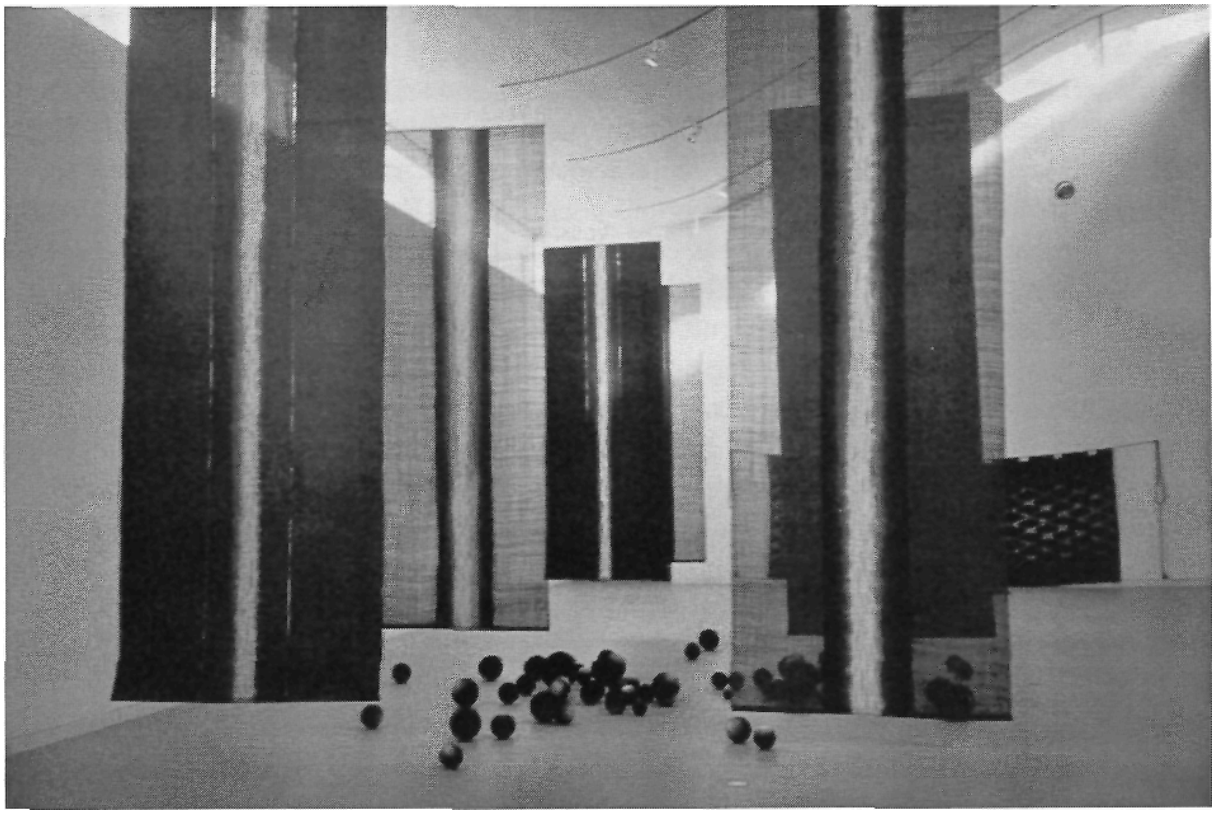
Kyrgyzstan is not a comprehensive study – it contains little on the more northern tradition of *shyrdaks* (felts) and does not discuss household embroidery, for example – but it will do much to introduce Kyrgyz fabrics into wider discussions. There are still huge gaps in knowledge in this region, such as the precise nature of the relationship between the cultural artefacts and fabrics of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs – not to mention the Mongols – but these can wait for another day.

The book itself would not have been produced were it not for the dedication of Mateo and Luna Paiva, the photographer's children, who made a promise to their father that they would complete the project. To them should go our heartmost thanks.

Nicholas Fielding

EXHIBITIONS

Two Indigo Shows



Installation by the Japanese indigo artist Hiroyuki Shindo created especially for the exhibition *Indigo: a Blue to Dye For*

The major touring exhibition, *Indigo: A Blue to Dye For*, featured in the last newsletter, has moved to the Plymouth City Art Gallery and Museum (tel. 01752 304774), where it will remain until I September, and will then transfer to Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (tel. 01273 292841), where it will be on show from 29 September to 6 January 2008.

The Spirit of Indigo is a selling exhibition, which will be on show at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey Tracey, Devon, from 18 August to 2 September and will feature two of Britain's leading textile artists, Jenny Balfour-Paul and Lucy Goffin. It will include archival indigo cloth and other items of Susan Bosence, who was a considerable influence on the work of Jenny and Lucy, as well as retrospective garments, textiles and pictures from both artists, including many items for sale. This show will tie in with the *Indigo: A Blue to Dye For,* exhibition while it is being shown in Plymouth.

Lucy and Jenny will be in the shop at Bovey Tracey throughout 18 August, so take this great opportunity to come and meet the artists.

The Brighton Museum and Art Gallery has not enough space for such a large exhibition as *Indigo: A Blue to Dye For,* especially as the installation pictured above will occupy most of one gallery, so the overflow will be shown at the Hove Museum and Art Gallery, where the more modest *Spirit of Indigo* will join it.

Jenny Balfour-Paul

SURPRISING FINDS AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY

I went to the *Sacred* exhibition at the British Library expecting it to be just a lot of books and manuscripts, but it turned out to be much more than that. The exhibition is about the three faiths "of the Book" - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - and it is true there were lots and lots of books and manuscripts but some other things as well, including, to my surprise, a few textiles.

Judaism offered as examples of synagogue furnishings a sumptuous late 18th century Ark curtain from Turkey or the Balkans decorated with oriental motifs embroidered with silver thread, sequins and mica, some of the motifs being padded. There was also a Portuguese Torah mantle (cover for the Torah scroll), also richly embroidered in metal threads. Dating from about 1719, it was made for one Moses Mocotta, and has been in his family ever since. Less spectacular and not so easily seen as it was suspended high above us, was a Jewish bridal canopy made no farther east than London and no earlier than the 20th century, but splendid nonetheless with its gold and bronze thread embroidery on ivory silk dupion worked by "ceremonial embroidress" Tamara Ziotogaura.

From Islam came a curtain formerly used to cover the Ka'bah door in Mecca, made in Egypt in 1858. It was richly ornamented with a number of cartouches and segments containing Quranic inscriptions and the calligraphic signature of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmajid I, all worked in metal threads on silk.

Finally there were contemporary wedding dresses from each of the three traditions. Islam was represented by Jemima Khan's antique gold silk *salwar-kameez* made for and worn by her at her Muslim wedding in Paris in 1995. The traditional Western style (not specifically Christian) took the form of a white-embroidered white net dress and stoll. But the most interesting was a modern recreation of a traditional red and gold Moroccan Jewish wedding dress comprising a wrap-around skirt, jacket and bodice in red silk velvet with ample gold decoration in the form of embroidery, braid and cloth of gold.

The exhibition continues until 23 September.

Elsewhere in the Library, I was attracted to the current display in the Ritblat gallery, which includes a picture of a Chinese winter court robe for a duke in an album of 1759, *Illustrated Ceremonial Objects of the Court* describing everything from ceramics for temples to raincoats and rainhats worn by the emperor. Courtiers of the rank of duke were entitled to decorate their robes with the imperial dragon (with five toes), but not to wear yellow which was exclusive to the emperor.

Next to this volume are two of Wang Shuhi's paintings commissioned in 1947 to record existing robes kept in the Forbidden City collection. One of them is of a prince's hat and the other his gown, similar in style to that in the 1759 volume but yellow (!) and fur-lined. The hat is of finely woven bamboo with a thick fringe of red silk.

Nearby is a Japanese book of most attractive kimono designs by Shimomura Gyokuku (Kyoto 1905).

Phyllis Nye

Other Exhibitions in the U.K.

Batik Transitions: From Classic to Contemporary – until 12 August at the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, featuring examples of traditional batik from China, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Indonesia, as well as contemporary work by members of the Batik Guild. Tel. 01225 464640

The Hornsey Casson Collection: Treasures from Tehran – This collection was made by an English doctor working in Tehran and given to Nottingham in the 1880s with the idea that it would help people in this country to learn about the industries and culture of Persia, as Iran was then called. It is having one of its rare public appearances at the Brewhouse Yard, Nottingham, 2 June - 29 August. The exhibition includes some embroidered textiles as well as illustrated manuscripts, fine metalwork, jewellery and watercolours. Tel. 0115 915 3640

Jun Tomita: Ikat – at the Daiwa Foundation, Japan House, Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, London, 10 September to 25 October. Tel. 020 7486 4348

Quilty Secrets – an exhibition exploring the use of quilting in garments from the 18th to the 20th centuries includes "an outstanding piece of Japanese export embroidery and quilting in the shape of a bustled dressing-gown of the 1880s". (see above p.18), at Killerton House (National Trust), Broadclyst, near Exeter, Devon, until 4 November. Tel. 01392 881345

Wrapping Japan – at the Horniman Museum, Forest Hill, London, until 24 February 2008. From simple indigo-dyed farmers' coats to sumptuous silk kimonos, rope sandals to ladies' platform shoes, discover the costumes of Japan and the technical artistry and elegance of these textiles. Tel. 0208 699 1872

Exhibitions Overseas

Embroidered Multiples – 18th & 19th century Philippine dress from the Rijksmuseum voor Volken kunde, the Netherlands, until 30 June at the Auala Museum, Makati, Philippines. An exhibition celebrating the unprecedented five-year loan to the Museum of the Brejard collection of these extremely rare costumes, www. ayalamuseum.org

Beauty in Asia: 200 BCE to To-day – until 23 September at the Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore This exhibition with a pan-Asian focus comprises 300 artefacts including sculptures, paintings, jewellery, headdresses and textiles. Tel. 00 65 6332 7798

Dragons of Silk, Flowers of Gold – textile treasures of the Chinese Liao dynasty (907-1125) at the Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisburg, Switzerland until 22 November. Tel. 00 41 31 808 12 01

Material Choices: Bast and Leaf Fiber Textiles – at the Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, 26 August to 30 December. Bast and leaf fibres are notoriously difficult to process and weave into cloth. This exhibition shows an unusual array of textiles made from these challenging fibres, and examines the current revival of the traditional methods of making them which became almost extinct in the mid-20th century. Tel. 001 825 4361

Arts of Japan: the John C. Weber Collection – at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass., 22 September to 13 January 2008. This exhibition of about 80 masterworks ranges in date from the early twelfth to the mid-nineteenth centuries and comprises paintings in both scroll and screen format, ceramics, lacquer and textiles, including men's and women's garments.

SYMPOSIUM

Indigo: in Context – A one-day symposium at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, Saturday 13 October.

To coincide with the exhibition *Indigo: A Blue to Dye For* at the Museum (29 September - 6 January 2008), this symposium brings together a range of specialists to explore the uses of indigo in world textile traditions, past and present. Speakers include Jenny Balfour-Paul (renowned authority on indigo and author of

Indigo, (British Museum Press, 1998), Dominique Cardon (specialist in archaeological textiles and plant dyes; author of *Natural Dyes,* Archetype Books, 2007), Noorjehan Bilgrami (textile historian and artist, Pakistan), and Philip John (Professor of Plant Biochemistry, University of Reading). Tickets: £40 (£20 concessions) including tea and coffee. Information from and cheques (payable to Brighton and Hove City Council) to: Paula Wrightson, Museums Learning Officer, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, 4-5 Pavilion Buildings, Brighton, BN1 1EE. Tel. 01273 292864, e-mail: paula.wrightson@brighton-hove.gov.uk

APOLOGIES

I'm sorry to say that there were two errors in Judith Gussin's report on Sheila Paine's talk to an O.A.T.G. meeting in the last newsletter. First, the photo on p. 23 is of a cover for the holster of a pistol, not for a Lee Enfield, which is very much longer. Secondly, the purple Pashtun dress was from eastern Afghanistan, not from Makran, which is part of Baluchistan. Sheila was not doing very well in this number, for her name mysteriously changed from Paine to Payne in Nick Fielding's review of two of her books on p.29. And while on the subject of names, Penelope Woolfitt's on p.3 appeared as Woolfit. My humble apologies to the two ladies, to the two contributors and to you all.

Editor

O.A.T.G. WEBSITE

This is by way of a reminder to members that we have a website at **www.oatg.org.uk** The aims of the group and the names of its principal officers can be found at "about us". Perhaps the most important page to bookmark is the "programme" page which sets out details of the current programme and has links for contacting the Programme Co-ordinators. Every effort is made to keep this information up-to-date and to note any amendments or cancellations which occur after publication of the programme in the newsletter. There is a page on "membership" where an application form can be printed off and with a link to contact the Membership Secretary. The "newsletter" page outlines the contents of the current issue and has links to contact the Newsletter Editor and to pages summarising the contents of all back numbers with photos of their cover pages to help easy identification. There is a "links" page to museums, collections and textile organisations which have been mentioned in the Newsletters.

Pamela Cross

O.A.T.G. SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is to remind you that subscriptions are due on or before 1 October. In view of several recent increases in our costs we have been obliged to raise the subscription this year. The new rate for individual members will be £15, or £20 for two members living at the same address and sharing a newsletter. Payment may be made by sterling cheque drawn on a U.K. bank, Euro Cheque drawn on an E.U. bank, U.S. dollar cheque, international money order or bank transfer to the Membership Secretary. In addition, from October this year, we are also

accepting payment by the PayPal method, for those who are unable to make payments in sterling only. Please refer to our website for more details on this method. You may, of course, continue to pay by banker's order as before - please instruct your bank to pay the increased amount from October. If you would like to start paying by banker's order this year, please ask the Membership Secretary, Joyce Seaman, for a banker's order form. Her address is 5 Park Town, Oxford, OX2 6SN, tel. 01865 558558, e-mail: e-art-asst@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

Helen Adams

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Contributions should be sent to Nicholas Fielding, address as above

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