OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

Newsletter No. 32 **October 2005**

Japanese panel with cranes and iris, Meiji period (1868-1912). Silk and gold-wrapped thread embroidery (satin, with couching, running and seed stitches on damask ground. 143.6x97.5 cm)
Spencer Art Museum, University of Kansas, no. 0000.2432. (See p. 20)

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Some of you will already know that, following a stroke, my husband has been in hospital for several weeks. I am glad to say he is improving and I hope he will be home within the next week or so. Owing to his condition, however, he will need a great deal of care and I think it probable that I shall not be able to get to the A.G.M.. This is, therefore, by way of being the report I would have made had I been there.

It is, as usual, a short report, for I always feel that the newsletter speaks for itself without any further words from me. There have been the customary three numbers during the year, 32, 28 and 30 pages, and I hope you have enjoyed them. It has for some time been my intention to stabilise it on 32 pages, but I cannot always manage this. To aim at something larger would mean four more pages and have the effect of increasing the postage, which could lead to raising the subscription, something that the committee does not wish to do.

There have been problems during the past year, of which you cannot be unaware, due to the increasing difficulty of obtaining photographs in the good old-fashioned form of prints, although these reproduce best. Digital photography is rapidly taking over, and even images that are in print form are often sent to me by e-mail. Even with high resolution the end results have not always been satisfactory.

I must apologise for the very late despatch of the last (June) number which, I know, led to some of you missing events you would have wished to go to because you did not hear about them in time. This was due to trouble with the printers. For various reasons, of which the quality of the illustrations was only one, the newsletters delivered to Joyce for despatch were in an unacceptable condition, and she and Ruth decided that the printers should be asked to redo them. Unfortunately this coincided with the firm being in a process of combining its two branches in Oxford and moving to a new site, so there was a delay of two or three weeks. I hope that with their new sophisticated machinery things will improve, and because they have been very satisfactory until recently, we are giving them one last chance, but if the quality of this issue is not up to scratch we shall have to look elsewhere.

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER
5.30 p.m.
A.G.M.
for members only.
6.15 p.m. Open meeting

Cloth That Lies: the Recycling of Clothing in India

An overview of how Indian clothing is transformed into sari products and western materials are processed into new products in India

by Lucy Morris

Textile Scholar, University College, London

To be held at the Pauling Centre, 58 Banbury Road, Oxford
Members free. Non-members £2.

* * *

WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER AT 5.45

Silk and Empire: A unique collection of Indian silks at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

by Brenda King

Lecturer, researcher and curator. Since gaining her doctorate from the Royal College of Art Brenda has continued to research collections of Indian silks in England. Her book *Silk and Empire* is to be reviewed in the February 2006 newsletter.

To be held at the Pauling Centre (details as above).

* * *

THURSDAY 26 JANUARY 2006 at 2 p.m.

Visit to the Ashmolean Museum

Pilgrimage: the Sacred Journey

Ruth Barnes will present a gallery talk interpreting her exhibition.

Numbers are limited. Please book with the programme secretaries as soon as possible and no later than 19 January.

For further information or to book places contact one of the Programme Secretaries:

Rosemary Lee, tel. 01491 873276, e-mail: rosemary.lee@talk21.com
Fiona Sutcliffe, tel. 01491 872268, e-mail: J.V.Sutcliffe@talk21.com

JAPANESE TEXTILES IN THE HORNIMAN MUSEUM

The Horniman Museum is an easy journey from my home; I think of it as my local museum. Little did I realise that their store was in North Greenwich, it seemed miles away! However, each day spent there revealed textiles of great interest, and the flavour of the collection differed considerably from the British Museum collection (see Newsletter no. 24). In particular, there were several groups of textiles, all parts of a particular costume. There were two large groups of formal clothes for men: one of ten items being part of a bridegroom's wedding outfit together with a photograph; the other, clothes and accessories given to a Miss Cole by the nephew of the Japanese prime minister in 1931 and subsequently bequeathed to the museum. Even the smaller groups consisting of three items – a kimono, *juban* (under-kimono) and *obi* (sash) gained importance from the sum of their parts.

The bridegroom's *haori* and kimono were conservative black, as would be expected, both with placement of five *mon* (in this case the five-leafed, notched cherry blossom) and a delicate drawing in *sume* ink on the half-lining of the jacket. But the surprise was the *nagajuban* (not *yukata* as suggested on the accession list) with a bold illustration outlined in black of five *daruma,* doll-like figures of a Zen Buddhist monk as a round, stern-faced, legless, red ball, whose head blends directly into his shoulders (illustrated opposite). The legend goes seven times pushed over, eight times it rises[1]. Appropriate for a groom, maybe? The accoutrements include various ties, straw sandals, cotton *tabi* (socks) and a very heavy iron fan with still paper (gold one side and silver the other) with a large red sun on each side.

The other formal set is more conventional – no colourful *juban* for example – but presents one puzzling feature. The heavy black kimono has two light-weight kimonos within it, one on top of the other, all three attached with a single stitch at waist height. (This could just have been a simple way to keep all three together as they moved from hand to hand.) The outer, heavier, kimono is plain black with five *mon* (the *yotsuma,* a tilted four-square-eye design); the other two lighter ones utilize two materials, brown, black and white check silk on the upper half and black on the lower. All three kimonos are half lined in white silk. I do not think the lighter weight garments are *juban* because they do not have the usual removable collar, but might they have been worn together one on top of the other? This set, like the other, includes a *haori,* silk ties, sandals and *tabi* but also a plain black silk jacket.

Amongst the women's wear there are various interesting groups of kimono, *juban* and sash. For example, a late eighteenth or early nineteenth century silk kimono, in this case *uchikaki* (over-robe) of white figured satin with a beautiful resist-dyed design of pine, bamboo and plum, the symbolic motif representing longevity known as Three Friends in Winter. The decoration combines embroidery with black ink drawing and stencilled *kanoko* dots. Lined in red, the lining is extended to cover the padded hem. Paired with this is a red and white *nagajuban.* The fabric of the red sleeves and lower half of the body are woven in figured gauze of stylised pine bark overlaid with flowers and leaves. An *obi-age* completes this set: it is a soft, silk *shibori* decorated scarf which, when worn, just peeps out from under the stiff *obi.* A pity the latter does not appear to be in the collection.

Left. *Nagajuban* (under-kimono) (1983.156)
Right. Detail of the shoulder area (back) of a *folded juban* showing the stylised butterfly (1969.24)

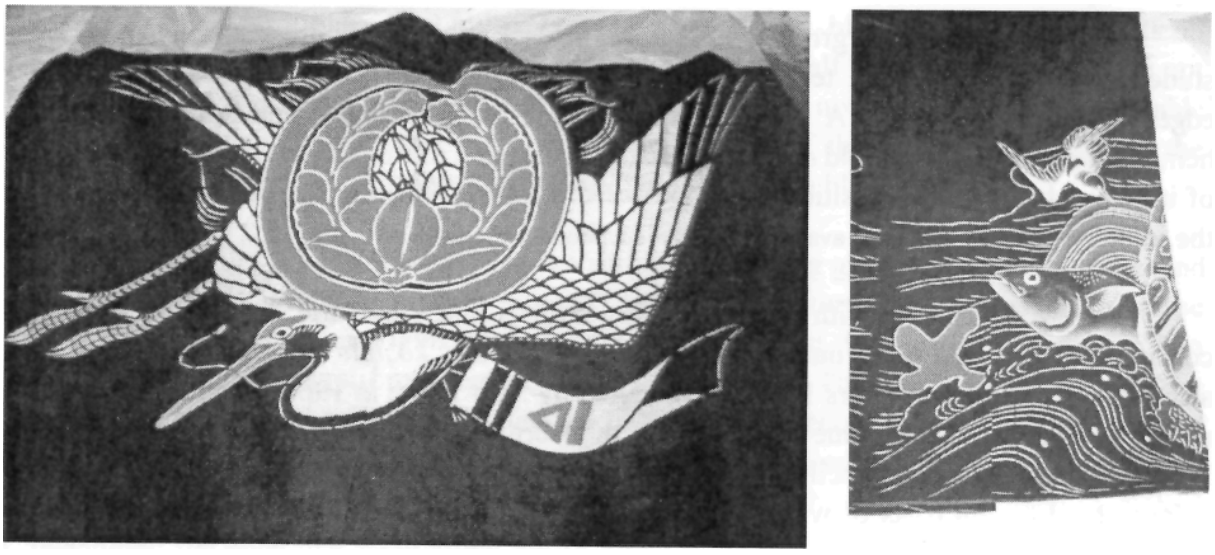
Another three-piece group is brightly coloured in the manner of *bingata* dyed clothes from Okinawa. As in the set of wedding clothes, the surprise in this trio is the *juban,* not the overall motif of delicate flowers and ripples of water in blue with touches of colour on a white ground of the body part of the garment, but the amazingly stylised pop-art image of a butterfly with outspread wings and staring eyes across the shoulders (illustrated above). I find this sense of fun, or drama, in underclothes unexpected.

Another interesting group consists of a black ceremonial dress for a fourth year student, dyed in the yuzen technique with asymmetrical floral arrangements on the lower edges of sleeves and hem. A pink kimono is attached to the inside and both have padded hems. There is a red and gold *obi* with a diamond design and the scarlet *obijime* worn on top of it. Completing the acquisition is a photo of the student wearing the outfit, which adds to the interest. [Unfortunately not available for reproduction – Ed.]

Before concluding with the less formal clothes and other artefacts in the Horniman collection, I must just point out an early nineteenth century *kosode* inviting comparison with a similar one in the Pitt Rivers Museum (donated by Noh Lowe in 1966). Both *kosodes* have resist-dyed ground colour, blue in the case of the Horniman example and pea-green in the Pitt Rivers. In each case the stencilled design of foliage appears in white silhouette on the ground colour, the different parts of which are then painted, or details added in *sumi* ink, or filled in with satin embroidery stitches. Because many of the white areas had been left untouched, I assumed that the *kosode* in the Horniman was unfinished, but on seeing the Pitt Rivers *kosode*, which is similar in that respect, it may not necessarily be so (illustrated overleaf).

Detail of a padded kimono dated 1830-33, showing the resist areas of the dyeing technique and embroidery. (1974.261)

Moving on from the selection of classical clothes described, we come to the country textiles: for example, three fishermen's and a doctor's jacket. The fishermen's ceremonial jackets have wonderful strong designs on the back across the shoulder bearing the family crest or symbol in white and red on a very deep blue-black ground. One of them has in addition a hand-coloured, stencilled design of fish, birds, tortoises and other motifs (illustrated below). (As it happens, the Museum has eight of these stencils, some showing they had been used for stencilling colour rather than the more usual resist paste. There are two more jackets (or happi coats) acquired separately. One of these has a strong white linear design on the back and unidentified characters on the lapels, all appliquéd on with tiny stitches, not the more usual resist dye method (illustrated overleaf).



Details from a fisherman's celebrity jacket. (3.5.53, 16)

Detail of white liner design appliquéd on to back of doctor's jacket. (NN 2345)

There is a group of what might be loosely called ethnic clothing: a vest made of tiny pieces of bamboo threaded diagonally to form the shape of the garment; a rain cape in which long grasses forming the pile are held together in a netted framework; and a pair of straw leggings. A fibre combined kilt and cape, also in the group, is probably Chinese rather than Japanese. There was one on view at the Hali show this spring.

Of course in an article like this there are many things left out, but I must just mention a wooden box with leather straps, lined with green felt, containing 108 hand-tinted photographic slides of Japan in excellent condition, accompanied by a list identifying the subjects. As a member of the Magic Lantern Society and a collector of slides, it makes me green with envy.

Ann Hecht

[1] Japan Culture Instituted *A Hundred More Things Japanese* 1980

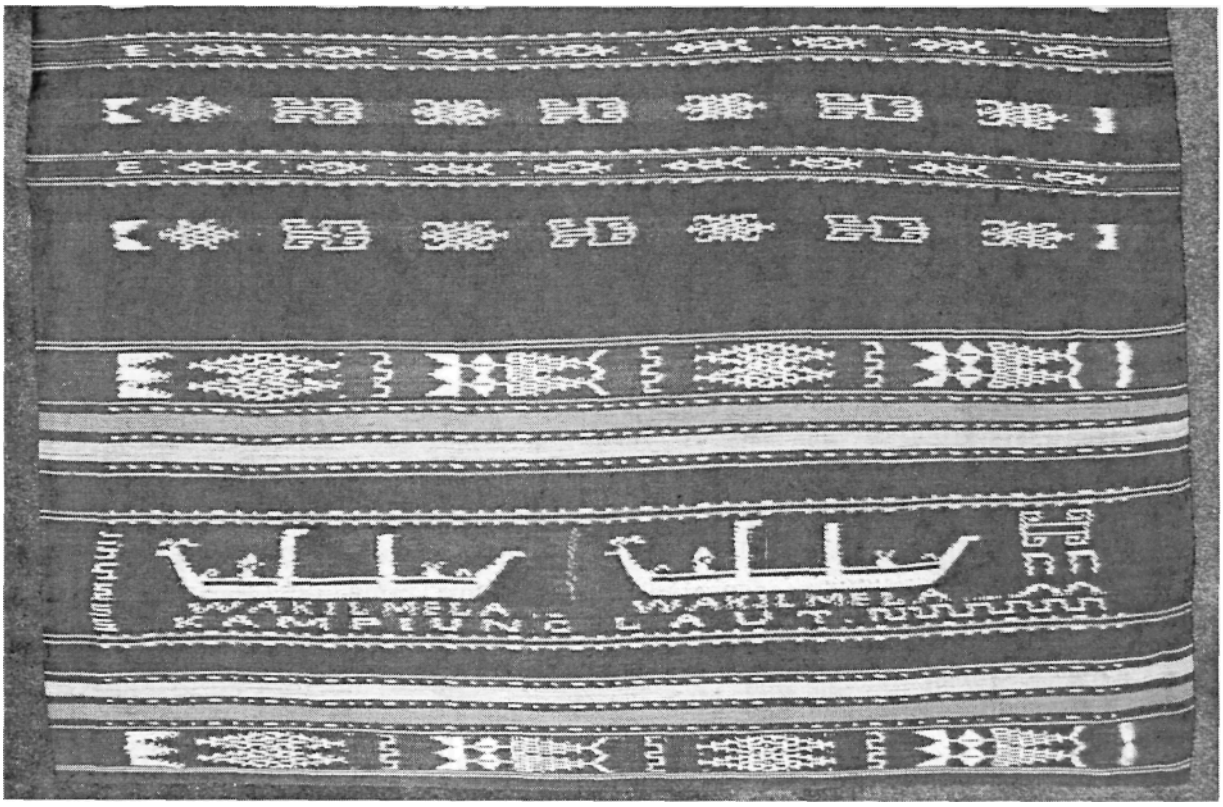
TEXTILES FROM EASTERNMOST INDONESIA

Last year we sailed on a small *pinisi* from Lembata to Papua, following the chain of volcanic islands that stretch across the Banda Sea. On our return we took a more southerly route, along the three island archipelagos lying east of Timor – Leti, Babur and Tanimbar – which make up the southern part of Maluku Tenggara.

These remote and rarely visited islands are not only home to one of Indonesia's ancient megalithic cultures but are also its easternmost outpost for the weaving of textiles. Only baskets are woven on neighbouring Aru and Kei.

These islanders still maintain a cult of ancestor worship, believing that the ancestors brought them to these islands by sea in the long distant past. Villages, and the households within them, regarded themselves as the crew and passengers on a boat, each having a specific

role such as helmsman, pilot or harpooner. Villages were even laid out in the shape of a boat and houses were built with a prow pointing out to sea. At Sanglia Dol on Pulau Yameda, we visited a stone boat built in the centre of the village with an intricately carved prow. Villagers were embarrassed that the top of the prow had recently been stolen, along with a pair of statues that once stood at the top of a steep flight of stone steps leading down to the beach.



Bottom half of an old black and white sarong from Tanimbar decorated with a panel containing boats and words indicating the village of origin – Kampung Laut. The word *wakilmela* means deputy raj or head.

The arrival of the Dutch in the 16th century had a catastrophic impact on the southern Moluccas, severing their traditional trade links and condemning them to isolation well into the 19th century. Protestant missionaries set to work, undermining island culture and destroying or purloining precious ancestor statues. In the early 20th century, Catholics from the Sacred Heart of Jesus mission came to make more converts. Today roughly one half of the population is Protestant, one quarter Catholic and one quarter Moslem, the latter being resettled Javanese. Despite the general poverty of the region (people survive on a basic diet of fish and maize), many small villages are dominated by huge wooden-built churches.

Traditional textiles were always woven by women on a back-strap loom, using either hand-spun, naturally-dyed cotton, or *lontar* palm fibre. Use of the latter died out in the 1930s. Two main techniques of decoration are employed: warp ikat and supplementary weft, although garments are sometimes embellished with appliqué and rows or crosses of cowrie shells.

Women wore a sarong made from two identical lengths of cloth decorated with narrow warp stripes and bands of warp ikat. These were sewn selvage to selvage and then fashioned into a tube skirt so that the warp stripes and bands were oriented horizontally, the top half of the sarong being a mirror image of the bottom half.

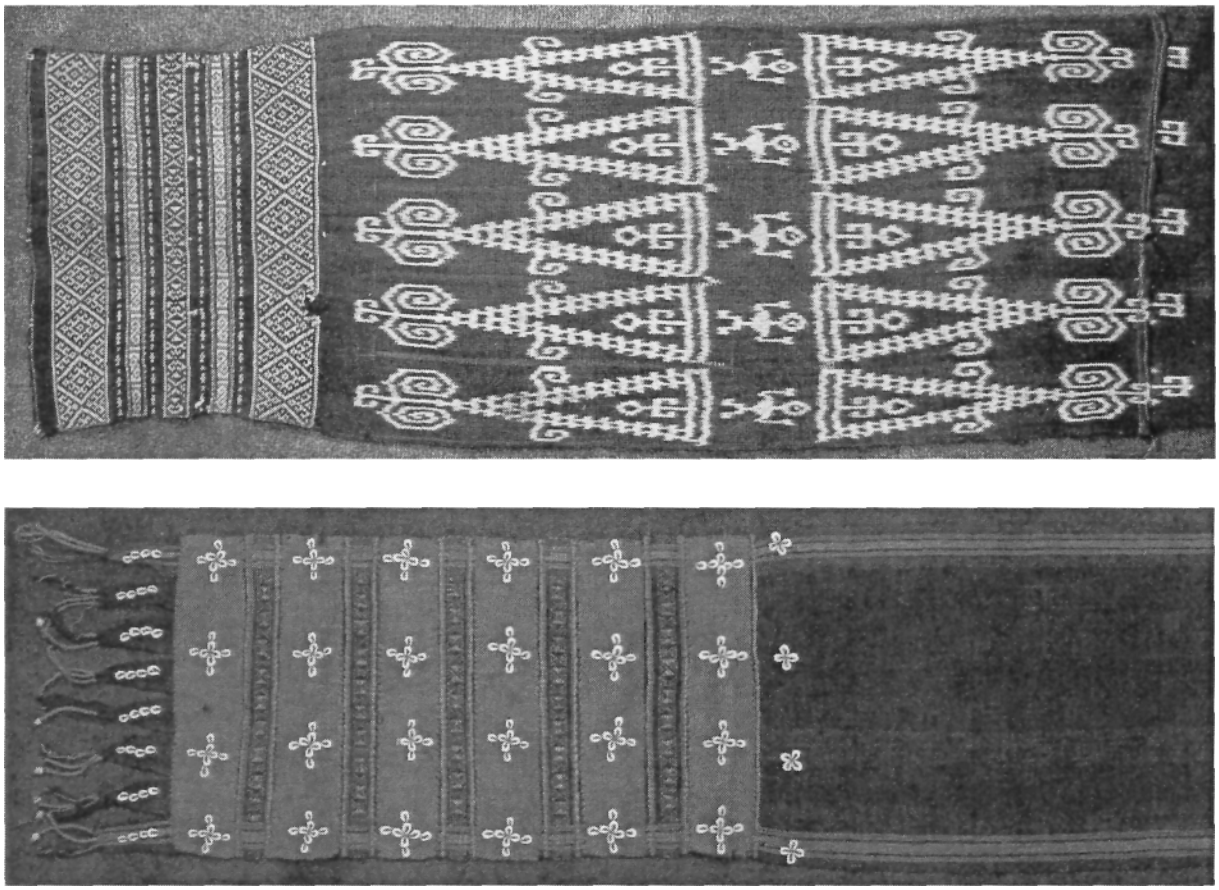
Sarongs were traditionally woven in sober colours, frequently black. Various styles were made, the classic design being a band of ikat at the top and bottom of the sarong and narrow stripes in between, although some had bands of ikat throughout. In some weavings the warp stripes consisted of dots and dashes. In others the individual warp stripes were separately tied and dyed so that together they formed a lattice-like pattern in the centre of the sarong.

Sarongs were worn with a shoulder cloth. For ceremonial occasions, wealthier women would also wear gold and ivory jewellery – arm rings, necklaces, earrings and a moon-shaped plaque on the forehead.

Men wore a loin cloth and a head cloth for everyday use, but for festive occasions they might also wear a chest cloth, a shoulder bag, necklace and earrings. Loin cloths were narrow and up to 5m long. They were generally black or indigo blue and could be decorated with ikat, or be plain woven with warp stripes along each selvage. The two ends were usually decorated with appliquéd strips of red or brown cotton or supplementary weft patterning, or sometimes both.

Today most men wear western-style (i.e. made in China) shirts or t-shirts and shorts, jeans or trousers. Women wear various tops or shirts with shorts or long pants and often cotton dresses. However, sarongs are still woven on all of the islands we visited, although mainly from chemically-dyed commercial cotton and not for everyday wear. In a few cases, we found modern sarongs woven in traditional dark sober colours with conservative ikat designs. However, the majority of modern ikats bore no resemblance whatsoever to traditional designs. Many included almost every colour of the rainbow. Probably the weavings from Pulau Leti were the worst, including every colour combination under the sun, the more vivid the better; for example pink, purple and orange.

Our greatest disappointment occurred on Pulau Yamdena, the main island in the Tanimbar group. We had arranged for the villagers of Olilat Lama to perform some traditional music and dance for us the following morning. Unfortunately there had just been a death in the village, so out of respect the event was staged close to a nearby beach. When we arrived at the arranged meeting place we looked in horror at the male dancers, all aged in their 60s or 70s, dressed in new Javanese-styled suits tailored from shiny polyester and garish ikat headdresses and sashes. A senior government *bupati* had advised them to modernise their performance, so they had obediently responded by ditching their traditional ikat. Fortunately two younger female dancers maintained their dignity by wearing striped sarongs, colourful shoulder cloths, ivory bracelets, gold moon-shaped headpieces on their foreheads and a stuffed bird of paradise pinned to the back of the head.



Two very different men's loin cloths, or *cawat,* from Sanglia Dol, Pulau Yamdena, Tanimbar.
The first is a length of indigo-dyed warp ikat cotton, the ends decorated with supplementary wefts. The second is a length of warp-striped indigo cotton, the ends decorated with strips of appliquéd brown cotton, narrow bands of supplementary weft, tassels, and small cowrie shells.

Fortunately not all new weaving is dreadful. Having spent a day of increasing frustration on Leti, as each family showed us a set of weavings even more horrendous than the last, we finally discovered some weavers living on a side street who were breaking the mould. They had set up a co-operative to make sarongs from hand-spun cotton, using natural dyes.

Whilst lacking the fine detail apparent in traditional ikat cloths, their sarongs were simple and attractive, combining bands of indigo with bands of ikat, dyed in earthy browns using dyes extracted from local tree bark.

As elsewhere in Indonesia, isolation has not prevented Bali-based dealers from vacuuming these islands almost dry for old textiles and other antiquities. Although it is still possible to find interesting textiles on the islands, Bali remains the main treasure house for collectors seeking ikats from particular regions, albeit for a price.

Kete Lotkery from the old part of the village of Serwaru, Pulau Leti, with her naturally dyed sarong.

Even so, some villages still value their traditions more than *ruphias*. The highlight of our visit was our discovery of a village where each family still retained its heirloom textiles – simple hand-printed cotton *basta* cloths from India, up to 5m long. They must have arrived as trade cloths at some time around the 18th century, possibly supplied by the Dutch. These valued textiles were preserved in stone jars kept in the loft of the house and were used as bridewealth cloths, up to three cloths being required in exchange for a bride, along with other items of exchange. The villagers knew nothing about the origin of these cloths, other than that they had been inherited from their ancestors.

The traditional material culture of these people is rapidly eroding in a world of cheap Chinese clothing. Their islands have been plundered and deforested, their soil is not fertile, education and health care are basic, and many have left for a better life in Ambon, Jakarta or even Amsterdam. Yet those who remain persist with their ancient beliefs and traditional social customs under a thin veneer of Christianity. The people seem happy and welcoming and retain a strong community spirit. As we upped anchor and sailed into the sunset towards

Local islanders wearing a variety of *basta* cloths in a toga-like fashion.

the non-weaving island of Wetar, we realised that these islands may not be paradise, but they are beautiful and fascinating none the less.

David and Sue Richardson

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Kal Muller, *Maluku, Indonesian Spice Islands,* Periplus Editions, Hong Kong, 1997.

Marianne van Vuuren, *Ikal from Tanimbar, Origin and meaning of ikat motifs from a group of islands in the Southeast Moluccas.* Published by the author, Holland, 2001.

O.A.T.G. SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW OVERDUE

Members are reminded that subscriptions were due on or before 1 October. Rates remain at £10 for individuals and £15 for two or more people living at the same address and sharing a newsletter. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE NOT YET RENEWED, THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER YOU WILL RECEIVE. If you want to continue to enjoy it and the other benefits of membership, contact the Membership Secretary, Joyce Seaman, at 5 Park Town, Oxford, OX2 6SN, Tel. 01865 558558, e-mail: e-art-asst@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

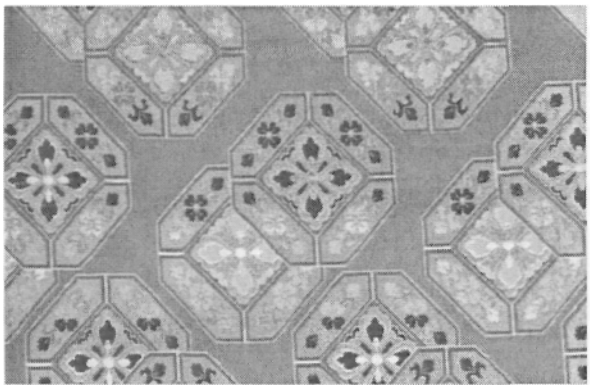
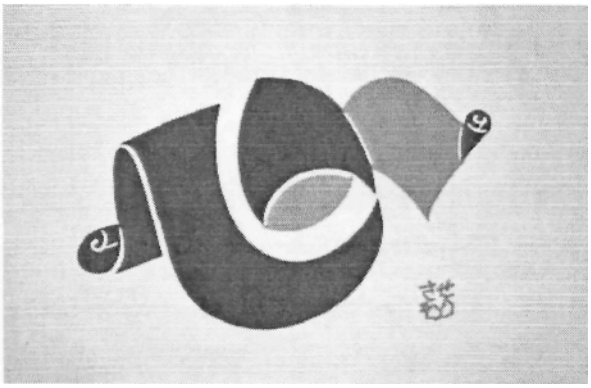
POWER, PATTERN AND PROTECTION IN JAPANESE TEXTILES

Looking around me in the 100 yen shop, I noticed that many of the cheap objects bore familiar patterns that were once the exclusive domain of Japanese nobles and samurai. For the original owners they were not merely decorative but had profound meanings. What was their significance to the samurai, those warriors who dominated Japanese life until the end of the Tokugawa (Edo) period in 1868?

The first of the Tokugawa shoguns, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1541-1616), was the subject of an impressive exhibition at the Royal Armouries in Leeds (June-August 2005). In preparation for my lectures there, I began to explore the rich legacy of patterns displayed on the many suits of armour, war fans, banners and other artefacts and to see how some of the symbols were used by the samurai (those who serve) to convey power and attract protection. My findings were presented in a short paper to the ULITA Ars Textrina conference (July 2005) and have been expanded for this article.

Power and protection are inextricably linked in samurai textiles. On the battlefield where the cult of the individual prevailed, samurai leaders needed, and wanted, to be easily identifiable by their peers who were also on horseback, and to the illiterate foot soldiers whose vision was restricted by helmets. To this end, the leaders applied patterns to garments, armour and battle flags whose conspicuousness and flamboyance accentuated their authority and status, and also increased their vulnerability. They sought to protect themselves with auspicious and influential symbols, exclusive colours and elaborate trimmings. A sixth century clay tomb figurine *(haniwa),* whose armour is decorated with a feast of bows and knots, may be an early example of this belief. Several centuries later samurai wore armour trimmed with expensive indigo blue, safflower red, and gromwell purple-dyed silk braids *(kute-uchi)* (see Jacqui Careys article in newsletter No. 14, October 1999). Their exposed chest, neck and shoulder areas were protected with designs of lions, dragons, chrysanthemums, lattices, and flower and bird diamonds. These designs were applied to deerskin using smoke and stencils *(kusube),* a technique which originated in India. Tortoiseshell hexagons *(kikko)* for longevity (10,000 years) (illustrated overleaf, left) appeared to be the predominant design for leg protection. Underneath this already dazzling display, samurai might wear silk brocade trousers and sleeves *(kote)* decorated with a range of auspicious designs including waves *(nami, seigaiha),* tortoiseshell motifs and overlapping circles *(shippo).* Underwear consisted of a white kimono and loincloth. A white headband *(hachimaki)* was worn under the helmet. White by its purity invoked blessings from the gods and ancestors.

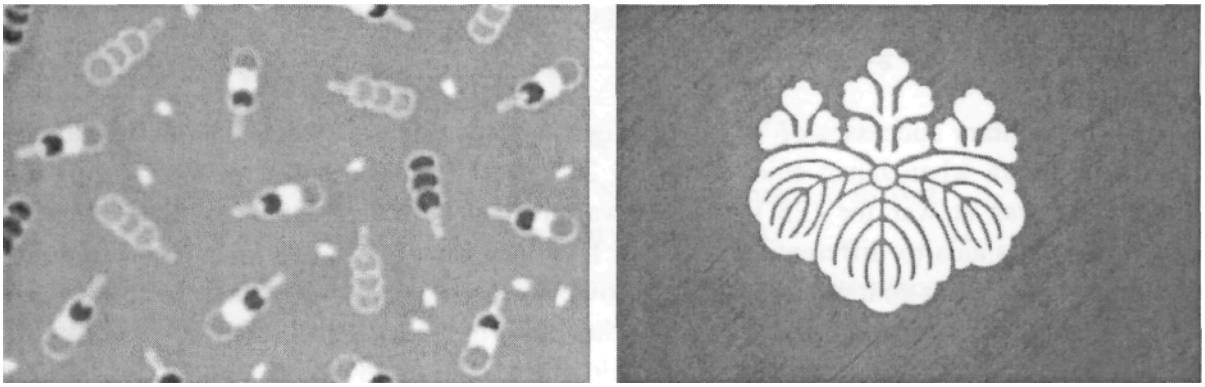
When the austere teachings of Zen Buddhism began to inform the samurai way of life from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, power was perceived to come from a balance of body, mind and sensitivity *(kokoro)* (illustrated overleaf, right)). This led to an aesthetic sense being cultivated both on and off the battlefield. Samurai studied calligraphy, flower arranging, garden design and the tea ceremony. The new sensitivity also extended to battle dress and the emergence of a predilection for small patterns *(komon)* on garments worn next to the skin. The *komon* often expressed hidden fears and covert appeals for divine aid and

Left: Overlapping tortoisehell hexagons decorated with flower diamonds *(hanabishi),* brocade.
Right: Heart *(kokoro)* representing the Samurai ideal of balance of body, mind, sensitivity.
Serizawa, on gilt cloth

protection, (bamboo, circles, ginger, iris, ray/shark skin), longevity (chrysanthemum and water, lightning, pine, tortoiseshell), prosperity (fans), and an acceptance of the transience of life (cherry blossom). Aesthetic sensitivity, together with a desire to communicate power, also influenced the choice of the costly Chinese brocades, exotic Indian textiles *(sarasd)* and imported woollen fabrics *(rashd)* used for campaign vests *(jinbaori)* put on over armour. A particularly stunning example in black and yellow wool, with a design of Mount Fuji (symbolizing steadfastness and, perhaps, divine inspiration), was shown in the KAZARI exhibition at the British Museum (2003). The V & A has an amazing peacock feather *jinbaori* (see Marion Kite and Audrey Hill's article in newsletter no. 14). Other remarkable survivals include a coat made of scraps of Chinese brocade worn by Uesugi Kenshin (1530-1578), and another, owned by Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536-1598), which features a tie-dye and painting *(tsujigahand)* design of paulownia and arrow feathers. My own favourite is a red satin kimono decorated with auspicious wood sorrel leaves intersected with swords (early 17th century).

The use of family crests *(mon)* thread markings for identification and decoration became popular during the Kamakura period (1185-1333). Many of these miniature masterpieces were based on plants and animals and are still in use and understood today. Their apparent simplicity was originally a visual shorthand for a complex sequence of ideas known to a select few, and this shared secrecy and playfulness (often based on puns and homophones) greatly enhanced their appeal. Dragonflies, plovers, praying mantis, joined circles, linked squares, gingko, and hares and waves are among the martial symbols whose effectiveness relies on puns. Depiction by suggestion is a recurring theme in Japanese art. A textile stencil *(katagamf)* in the ULITA collection featuring war fans, bridge posts and halberds, evokes the 12th century heroes, Benkei and Yoshitsune. Fans on a suit of armour



Left: Dumplings *(dango)* on skewers, representing the skewered heads of Oda Nobunaga's enemies.
Right: Pawlonia *(kiri)* associated with the Imperial family since the 13th century
and with Hideyoshi Toyatomi, who was granted the honour of using it in the late 16th century.

which belonged to Yoshitsune Minamoto (died 1189), celebrate the battle of Dan-no-Ura (1185) when the shooting down of a fan, usually shown decorated with a sun disk *(hino maru),* changed the course of Japanese history. The red and white flags of the opposing Minamoto and Taira families (*see erratum below) are recalled in the caps worn at school sports these days. The three-triangle fish scales *(uroko)* on Noh costumes, and those worn annually at the Gion festival in Kyoto, evoke the powerful Hojo clan who ruled as shogunal regents from 1203 to 1333. Also appearing at the Gion festival is the sliced melon flower *(mokko)* crest of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), which apparently symbolized a severed head. Dumplings on a skewer, usually associated with the familiar children's tale, Momotaro, in Nobunaga's case represented the skewered heads of his enemies! (Illustrated above left.)

Among the many crests *(mon)* seen in the Royal Armouries exhibition were the three hollyhock leaves *(mitsuba aoi)* of the Tokugawa shoguns, the paulownia *(kiri)* and chrysanthemum *(kiku)* crests of Hideyoshi, China flowers *(karaband),* wood sorrel *(katabami),* war fans *(gunsen, gumbai uchiwa),* Buddhist wheel *(rimbo),* 9 stars *(hoshi),* 2 feathers *(takanoha),* quadruple diamonds *(yotsu-bishf)* (sharp edges were believed to ward off evil) and sandbars *(suhamd)* associated with the Island of the Immortals. Another ULITA stencil shows a selection of auspicious patterns derived from some of the above, including chrysanthemums between undulating lines *(tatewaku)* within tortoiseshell grids *(shokko/ bishamori),* flower diamonds *(hanabishi),* nets *(ami)* and stylised waves *(seigaiha).*

Successful warriors often appropriated, or were rewarded with, the devices of powerful families. Both the paulownia *(kiri)* and chrysanthemum *(kiku)* motifs have been identified with the imperial family since the thirteenth century. The former appeared, together with a phoenix, on the costume worn by the present emperor for his enthronement in 1989. The honour of using the chrysanthemum and paulownia crests was bestowed on Hideyoshi

Toyotomi (1536-1598), the son of a foot soldier, when he succeeded in re-unifying Japan. (See illustration on previous page, right.) By association, the phoenix was believed to presage the coming of just rule and Hideyoshi lost no time in proclaiming his greatness by lavishly applying this crest to his many building projects, artefacts and suits of armour. At a humbler, but psychologically more endearing, level, Hideyoshi rallied his troops with a personal standard topped with a thousand gourds for each of his victories. The gourd also signifies abundance and good fortune .

The military successes of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the subject of the SHOGUN exhibition, ushered in an era when Japan enjoyed nearly 250 years of peace and isolation. During that time Britain was at war for 125 years. As warfare had ceased in Japan, patterns were no longer needed as aids to differentiate between foes and allies, and to serve as rallying points and to inspire reckless courage and loyalty. However, a unique system of control, introduced by the Tokugawa shogunate, ensured that the patterns, once used so effectively by the samurai on the battlefield, continued to be important and in everyday use. For 227 years, the practice of alternate attendance *(sankin kotai)* forced feudal lords *(daimyo)*, every other year to leave their families behind as hostages and converge (each with up to 3000 followers) from all over Japan to defend the newly-established capital – Edo (Tokyo). The daimyo and samurai had to dress in full armour and everyone and everything in the long processions had to be readily identifiable by means of an awe-inspiring display of crests and patterns. Although these patterns, and almost every other sphere of life, were regulated by the 101 sumptuary laws enacted during the Edo period (1603-1868), they soon began to appear on garments worn in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters and by Noh, Kabuki and Kyogen actors. When the samurai were finally disbanded in 1868, one lord, Katakura, was still so attached to their symbols of power and protection, that he had his crest of sparrows and bamboo embroidered on the back of his linen frock coat in 1870!

The Japanese have always been justifiably proud of their artistic and cultural heritage. Symbols still encountered on ordinary household utensils and decorated papers *(chiyogami)*, at the numerous festivals (especially the Shingenko, Toshogu Haru-no-Taisai (in honour of Tokugawa leyasu), Jidai and Hakone Daimyo matsuri), on ukiyo-e prints and in the Noh and Kabuki theatre have a history that dates back to the early days of the Heian period (794-1185). It was the demand of the samurai for patterns of power and protection, and, above all, the alternate attendance system of the remarkable Tokugawa shoguns, that has ensured the survival of these historic symbols and patterns for our enjoyment today!

Marion Maule

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See also references to Japanese textiles in OATG newsletters Nos. 8, 10, 14, 21

Erratum In my article in OATG newsletter No. 21 (February 2002), victory was awarded to the reds (Taira). The whites (Minamoto) won! Sorry!

BUILDING A COLLECTION

Asian Textiles in the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas

The Museum of Art at The University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, was founded in 1928 when Sallie Casey Thayer, doyenne of Kansas City collectors and widow of a prominent Kansas City businessman, donated her collection of more than five thousand objects to the University to encourage the study of fine arts in the Middle West. Mrs. Thayer's founding gift was far-ranging, and included art objects in many media from Europe, the Americas, and Asia including Coptic textiles, Venetian glass, Japanese prints, Impressionist paintings, American quilts and Native American moccasins. In 1979, the Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer Foundation funded a new museum building to house the rapidly growing collection. The Helen Foresman Spencer Museum of Art opened fifty years after Mrs. Thayer's founding gift.

Chinese man's coat *(long pao),* 1880s. Silk, Gold-wrapped embroidery. Museum no. 0000.1035)

Chinese Daoist priest's robe, late 19th or early 20th century. Silk, gold-wrapped thread, kesi. (1946.0028)

Over the years, successive generations of directors and curators built the Museum's holdings around the founding gift, expanding and deepening the collections. One core component of the founding gift, however, lay dormant except for an occasional donation: the collection of Asian textiles. Although the textiles were well housed, there was seldom a curator with interest in this aspect of the collection, although Mrs. Thayer herself had been keenly interested in it.

In 1991, Andrea S. Norris, Director of the Museum, asked me to do something about the Asian textiles in the Museum's collection, in conjunction with other responsibilities in the Department of Asian Art. As I began to look through the collection of Persian textiles, Kashmir shawls, Indian embroideries, Chinese court costume, and Japanese Buddhist textiles, the image that came repeatedly to mind was that of a hidden jewel. Dr. Norris soon found funding to focus on the Asian textiles and we began a several year process of documenting, cleaning, conserving, photographing, researching, exhibiting and publishing the collection. Several mini-exhibitions along the way convinced us of public interest, and further exploration of the collection only underscored my initial appraisal. Until the textile project began, the Museum had seldom (perhaps never) added to the Asian textile collection by purchase. As the project progressed, however, and we realized the strength of this part of the collection, the Museum began to add deliberately to its holdings in this area, including a Ming dynasty

imperial woman's badge, a seventeenth century Buddhist *kesa* and a collection of nineteenth and twentieth century Japanese folk textiles.

As it stands now, the Spencer's collection of Asian textiles includes about three hundred objects, including court, merchant, military, theatrical, and folk costume; temple and household furnishings; and numerous examples of discrete pieces of complex weaving, embroidery and dyeing. The textiles range in date from the fifteenth to the late twentieth centuries. The largest number come from China, followed by Japan, the Indian subcontinent, Iran, Indonesia, Central and West Asia, and Korea. Several areas of emphasis, each with considerable depth, balance the breadth of the collection. These include late Persian textiles; Kashmir shawls; embroideries of northwest India and Pakistan; Chinese court costume; Buddhist and Daoist costume and temple furnishings; and Japanese cotton and bast fiber costume, furnishings and festival textiles.

The project will conclude with an exhibition at the Spencer Museum in the spring of 2006. *Flowers, Dragons and Pine Trees: Asian Textiles in the Spencer Museum of Art* will open on January 28 and run through May 28, 2006. Museum hours and programming can be found on the Museum's website: www.spencerart.ku.edu.

Research and writing support for *Flowers, Dragons and Pine Trees: Asian Textiles in the Spencer Museum of Art,* the catalogue of the exhibition (and of the collection), was provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with a mandate that the book be written both for the specialist and for an interested general public (see below p. 29).

Mary Dusenbury
Guest Curator of Asian Art, Spencer Museum
& Past President of the Textile Society of America

OBITUARY

Oliver Impey

Dr Oliver Impey, who died on 7 September, was a curator in the Ashmolean's Department of Eastern Art for 36 years, and a leading authority on the arts of Japan. A lifelong collector himself, he energetically built up the Museum's Japanese collections to their present high international standing. He was one of the Ashmolean's most gifted, versatile, productive and colourful curators of recent times.

As an undergraduate at Oxford he read Zoology, but maintained that an Oxford graduate should be able to turn his hand to any subject at will, and himself gave proof of this. After serving for a time in the Coldstream Guards he returned to Oxford to complete his doctoral thesis and then started work at Sotheby's in the furniture and textiles department. After two years, however, he returned to Oxford for good when he was appointed Assistant Keeper for Japanese Art at the Ashmolean in 1967.

The keynote of his curatorship over nearly four decades was his astute and tireless acquisitiveness of new objects, which hugely expanded and enhanced the Museum's Japanese holdings, especially of the Edo and Meiji periods and in export art for the Western market, for which he was skilled in finding generous benefactors.

One of the donors he befriended was Gerald Reitlinger (after whom the Museum's gallery of Islamic art is named), who gave his great collection of some two and a half thousand oriental ceramics and other works to the Museum in 1978. Then came a tragic fire, which devastated Reitlinger's house with the collection still inside it, and hastened his death not long after. Equipped only with sleeping bags and wearing saucepans on their heads for protection, Oliver and another curator camped for days in the burnt-out and water-logged ruin, carefully salvaging objects and collecting the sherds of broken pots for restoration, thus saving some nine-tenths of the collection.

In 1969, together with Ian Lowe, he started the Friends of the Ashmolean, and with Arthur MacGregor organized the major international conference on the origins of museums to mark the Ashmolean's tercentenary in 1983.

A stream of scholarly books and articles poured from his pen over the years, as well as a large body of lucid and accessible writing for a wider public. He was a fluent and inspiring lecturer and taught University courses on Japanese art for many years and his former pupils are now curators of collections in major museums worldwide; one of them, Clare Pollard, is to succeed him at the Ashmolean (see below p. 26). As a colleague, he always enlivened any meeting or occasion with his robustly expressed common sense and superlative gift for anecdote. In spite of his normal good humour, his demeanour could at times seem forbidding. The bark, however, was worse than the bite and both within the Museum and far beyond it he was held in the greatest affection and respect.

Andrew Topsfield

PANELS WITH CRANES AND IRISES

An essay presented in memory of Oliver Impey

Dr Oliver Impey, discussing the collection of Meiji decorative arts in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, wrote Purely in terms of skill, the art/crafts of Meiji and Taisho Japan have rarely been equalled, even by Fabergé. Nor has it been generally realised that the majority of the finest of Japanese decorative art of these periods was made for export. [1]

One of the key works that Impey discussed was a magnificent needlework hanging depicting a group of cranes in various poses set in a landscape of grasses and wisteria. The subject and style of the Ashmolean hanging is very close to the two Spencer Museum hangings depicted opposite and on page one.

These two large embroidered hangings of red-crowned cranes in an iris marsh were made for export to a Western audience fascinated with the beauty of traditional Japanese craftsmanship. They exhibit the skill of Japan's professional embroiderers and the high

Japanese needlework panel, cranes and irises, early 1900s.
Damask silk, gold-wrapped thread embroidery. (Museum no. 0000.1111)

quality of hand-reeled, lustrous silk embroidery floss. They were the product of a superb needlework tradition that can be traced back to the eighth century[2]. At the same time, they shared many concerns with contemporary painting such as an interest in realistic depiction, including naturalistic representation of flora and fauna, experimentation with Western notions of shading, and a believable description of three-dimensional space.

The cranes are depicted in careful detail with the textures of breast feathers, wing caps, and primary and secondary wing feathers skilfully rendered in a variety of embroidery stitches. The primary stitch is satin, a long stitch used to fill an area. Satin stitch is well designed to show off the luxurious glossy embroidery floss and reveal subtle colors to best advantage. Different textural effects can be achieved just with satin stitch by varying the length and direction of the stitches as, for example, in the breast and wing feathers of the single standing crane. For additional textural effects, the artisan has employed other stitches including couching, running, and seed stitches. In couching, a heavy thread is laid over the surface of the fabric and secured to the surface with small, inconspicuous stitches that encircle the couched thread. Here couched threads are layered on top of a satin stitch ground and used to define the veins of leaves. Seed stitch is a term used to describe a variety of knotting techniques, especially the Peking knot, a variant of a French knot. The hard, tight three-

dimensional surface of the seed stitch provides a strong contrast to the lush softness of satin stitch. A densely packed group of seed stitches is used here to define the crowns of the cranes. They draw attention to those solo points of bright red that identify the crane as the red-crowned, one of three species of crane indigenous to Japan[3].

The ground and framing fabrics of both hangings are patterns associated with the Buddhist establishment. The framing fabrics are considerably older than the images, and the fragile condition of the ground fabrics suggests that they may have been recycled as well. It is puzzling that a fragile ground should have been chosen for these finely worked embroideries. There would have been no particular meaning attached to using old Buddhist fabrics for the ground and framing of a secular image created for a Western market. The answer may lie in the circumstances surrounding their manufacture.

In the early years of the Meiji period, Buddhism was attacked by ascendent nativist forces that declared the primacy of Shinto, Japan's indigenous ancient religion. They advocated the division of the closely intertwined Shinto and Buddhist establishments, the persecution of Buddhist temples, and the total separation of Buddhism from the state[4]. The difficulties of these years had a devastating impact on the financial stability of many Buddhist temples, on their position within society, and even on the priests evaluation of their heritage. Temples that did not lose their sculpture, paintings, textiles, and temple furnishings often sold them. In 1876, for example, the Horyiji temple donated some of their seventh and eighth-century treasures to the Imperial Household in exchange for money for seriously needed repairs. Many Buddhist artifacts found their way into foreign collections at this time. In 1878 Ernest Fenollosa, a young Harvard graduate, accepted a post in philosophy at Tokyo University and stayed until 1886. During the first six years of his eight year stay, Fenollosa made the acquisitions that were to form the basis of the Japanese collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, although he wrote Edward Morse, probably in 1884, that he was ambivalent about bringing some of Japan's greatest treasures out of the country[5]. Many of these treasures were Buddhist artifacts, acquired from temples that were desperate for funds and priests who undervalued their heritage of statues, paintings, scrolls and textiles. Fenollosa could not have made the same collection if he had started even a decade later. Partly as a result of his urging, the Meiji government promulgated the first law requiring registration of all important works of art as *kokuho* or National Treasures in 1886, the same year Fenollosa's collection entered the museum.

In the Meiji period, temple treasures, including *kesa* and other Buddhist textiles, old secular paintings, woodcuts, screens, ceramics, Noh costumes, *kosode,* kimono, accessories such as *netsuke* and *inro* as well as contemporary crafts found their way into Western collections. European and American collectors were intrigued by the wonders and mystery that they perceived in the Orient and justly aware of the quality and beauty of many of the works of secular and religious art that they were able to purchase. The Meiji government, always in need of foreign exchange, was eager to promote contemporary art/crafts and facilitated their exhibition at international fairs in Europe and the United States where they received wide recognition.

Although, as yet, it has not proved possible to trace the history of these two hangings, it seems probably that the choice of fragile, probably recycled, Buddhist textiles for the ground fabrics is related to the impoverished circumstances of Buddhist temples in the Meiji period. But whether a temple sold the textiles to a professional workshop that, perhaps, bought them because they were less expensive than new cloth; whether an atelier associated with a temple, monastery or convent produced the embroideries to raise funds for the institution; or whether there is a completely different explanation for this unusual choice of ground fabric is, at present, unclear.

These two embroidered pictures of two icons of Japanese art, the crane and the iris, are closely related and were probably made in the same workshop, perhaps as part of a series. It is possible that the hanging in the Ashmolean Museum is also from that workshop. All three hangings are closely related in theme, style, subject matter and presentation.

If anyone knows of similar embroidered panels and/or has more information about them, please contact the author at mdusen@ku.edu

Mary M. Dusenbury

[1] Oliver Impey, *Reflections upon the Crafts of Meiji Period Japan with reference to the collection of the Ashmolean Museum,* Oriental Art 42, no. 3 (Autumn 1966) p. 11

[2] A mid-8th century banner preserved in the Shoso-in repository of the Todaji temple in Nara, for example, depicts a standing peacock with grasses and a flowering tree. The image is rendered in a difficult double face enbroidery technique in which the image appears identically on both the front and the back of the banner. See Matsumoto Kaneo, *J daigire,* pp 120-121, pl. 100.

[3] The other two species are the white naped and the hooded crane. See Mary Griggs Burke *The Delights of Nature in Japanese Art,* Orientations 27, No. 2 (February 1996).

[4] The following discussion is based on the work of James Edward Ketalaar. See in particular his *Interpreting Persecution: Law of the Buddha; Law of the King* in his book *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution*, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp 4-14.

[5] Walter Muir Whitehill, *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston A Centennial History,* Cambridge, Mass., The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970, p. 13.

REPORTS OF O.A.T.G. MEETINGS

Visit to Brighton

On Wednesday 10 August members enjoyed a visit to Brighton Museum to view the collection of Burmese textiles in the James Green Centre of World Art. After an introduction by Sarah Posey, who told us how the collection was presented, on long loan, to the museum in 1992 we entered via photographs pre-World War 2 Burma. James Henry Green served as a recruiting officer for the Burma Rifles. Most of his work took place in the northern Burmese state of Kachin. It was here that his interest in anthropology led him to study and photograph the way in which dress played a part in the customs and beliefs of different ethnic

groups. The textiles we examined were divided between those collected by Green and those commissioned by the Centre under the recently introduced Kachin Textile Project, which encourages traditional weaving techniques, many using the backstrap loom.

Several skirt lengths were displayed from the early 20th century, ranging from the plain indigo dyed tabby weave to elaborate appliquéd and bead decorated pieces which were lined in plain cotton. All were lengths as opposed to the more common *longyi* (tubular skirt) generally found in Burma. Dating from the Green era and actually featured in a photograph was a his and hers outfit. The male costume, mainly of undyed hemp with decorative bands of indigo dyed hemp, consisted of a long jacket, leggings and hat with an upturned brim. Attached to the hat was a queue (whether of human hair or not was uncertain). The effect was very Chinese hinting at cross-border influence. The woman's outfit was a short jacket and circular skirt in undyed cotton with indigo weft woven pin stripes.

There were several modern Kachin wedding costumes, commissioned by the James Green Centre (see Lisa Madigan's article in newsletter no. 23, October 2002). A cotton satin outfit in red and yellow favoured by the Lisu was highly decorated with wool bobbles, beads, cowrie shells and silver coins. A wedding jacket for a Hkahku woman in black velvet had decorative bands of silver rupees and beads falling from the neck. Also popular as a wedding jacket decoration was the incorporation of a patterned border using orchid fibre, but this is very expensive. For many, a highlight was the Shan 19th Century hood. Strips of red brushed wool were appliquéd on to a plain cotton long hood. It was edged with Chinese flower patterned silk brocade and decorated with inserts kalaga.

We then moved on to the James Henry Green Gallery. The gallery which is divided into three sections – makers, believers and collectors – is a treasure house of Asian and African artefacts. The collectors section had a number of modern Burmese skirts and, of much interest, a sampler woven in cotton (chemically dyed) of a variety of popular traditional patterns mainly using the preferred Hkahku base colours of black and purple. Also displayed was a Shan bag of the type still seen all over Burma woven in cotton with dyed silk weft presented to Green to mark Burmese independence in 1948. Finally in this section were three Akha headdresses, highly decorated with coins beads and bells. Each one was from a different country China, Burma and Thailand showing how tribal groups transcend national boundaries.

Penny Davidson

[It is planned that the June 2006 newsletter shall be a special Burmese number, which will include more about the Brighton collection. – Ed.]

Asian Textiles at Auction in the Seventeenth Century

Anthony Farrington, former Head of the India Office Library and Records, spoke to the Group on 28 September on *Asian Textiles in the London Showroom: East India Company Auction Records of the Seventeenth Century*.

He explained that the archives include records of the number of textiles brought into England by the Company. He has been synthesizing thousands of pages of auction records, which date from the 1620s to 1709, and organizing the data into a variety of groupings. The

handouts he provided include lists of textile types, and amounts imported each year. A page with auction details gives amounts per single cargo with price and purchaser. His lists of auction buyers, recording specifically who bought what and when, provide a chain of information that could be followed from resale to potential final uses. Anthony emphasized that he has knowledge of archives though not of textiles, and suggested that this information could open up interesting research possibilities in the field. He asked that audience members ask questions and offer their expertise.

The East India Company (EIC) was formed in 1500 but did not reach South East Asia until 1602. The first destination was Bantam in Java where there was already a busy trade market. The English were trading for spices, but as English broadcloth was too heavy and therefore of no interest in this region it was decided that Indian textiles would be a good item for barter. Consequently, in 1610 and 1611, two trading posts were established on the western and Coromandel coasts of India for retail in S.E. Asia. By the 1620s cargoes that included these trade textiles were coming back into London where they were put up for sale. Every sale was recorded in the minutes of the Court of Directors for the EIC but in 1709, due to the increasingly large volume of entries, this practice stopped and was replaced by printed sales lists. In 1834 when the Company stopped trading, new management destroyed the lists from the 18th and early 19th centuries.

The early sale of textiles was at public auction by inch of candle where bids could be received only while the candle was still burning. In the 1620s sale was also possible by private treaty though this was later outlawed. Purchasers could buy on credit and goods were released from the warehouse if payment was made in full within six months, with the option to release fifty percent if half was paid within three months. Refunds were available if goods were found to be faulty. From the 1660s auctions had become regular events, occurring twice annually in Spring and Autumn, and moving on average 300 lots in a day. Regular buyers included many significant figures within the EIC and London, and also foreign merchant strangers who could pay with cash only. Niche markets included the court and aristocracy with particular items such as chintz quilts seeing periods of popularity. Most textiles purchased from the EIC were exported for resale, although customs records for the Port of London show only the value and not volume of textiles leaving the country in this way. One destination was West Africa, where the resale of very large amounts of Indian textiles fuelled the purchase of slaves.

From 1675 Chinese type textiles started coming into England when the EIC settled in Taiwan close to Hanoi and established the manufacture of silk textiles for export. Another example of the manipulation of traditional techniques for export to the UK market also occurred in the 1670s when, due to the unavailability of black cloth in India, English dyers were sent to Bengal to teach local dyers how to achieve a good black using indigo.

By 1682 textile import amounts had reached over one million a year and in the 1690s numbers had to be limited by the EIC due to competition from the UK textile markets. Rioting occurred among, for example, the Spitalfield weavers, who raided the EIC Offices. The Company was forced to take action and started to import raw materials such as silk from

Iran and cotton from India for use by the UK weaving industry.

Identifying textiles from the sales lists is problematic as the same names were applied to textiles of different types depending on place of origin, and often refer to place of export rather than manufacture. The handouts Tony provided list *mulmuls*, identified as finest quality Bengal muslin used by the English for petticoats; *peniascoes* from N.E. India which were mixed cotton and silk and often striped; *tanjeebs* were silk embroidered muslin. He has been advised to publish the data he has put together and would like illustrations to accompany this, but very few textiles from this time are still in existence. Mughal miniatures and 17th Century portraiture could be potential sources, and the Ashmolean was suggested as a source for more information on textiles identified as *bird eyes.*

Tony hopes to finish production of the available data, which includes all commodities imported and not just textiles, in the next eighteen months and would like to publish it; he has already published volumes on English trade with Japan. He asked for the support of the OATG in seeking funding and publication for this project.

Martha Brundin

MUSEUMS ROUND-UP

News from the Ashmolean is that a large number of delectable objects are already under wraps, and much of the time of the staff of the Eastern Art Department – including members of the O.A.T.G. – is involved with bubble wrap, sticky tape, labels, string and boxes. The Eastern Art galleries are the ones most affected and will probably already all be closed by the time you read this, though you may still be able to snatch a last glimpse of some of the goodies if you are quick and lucky. Only the grade 1 listed building facing on Beaumont Street will survive and its collections – mainly Western Art and Ancient Egypt – remain open. When we shall be able to visit the rest again in its new glory – including a textile gallery – remains to be seen.

Meanwhile there are staff changes of interest. James Allen resigned as Keeper of Eastern Art in the summer to devote himself to other things, and his place has been filled by Dr Oliver Watson, recently returned from Qatar where he was helping to set up a new Museum of Islamic Art in Dohar. Before that he worked for 25 years in the V.& A., finishing up as the Museum's Chief Curator of Ceramics and Glass.

Clare Pollard has been appointed Curator of Japanese art in succession to Oliver Impey, and will take up her post in the spring. She comes to the Museum from the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin where she was Curator of the East Asian Collections; members will remember that she wrote an article on the Chinese textiles there for the newsletter (No. 20, October 2001).

The V.& A. has set up a comprehensive new website for knitting enthusiasts. It contains examples of hand knitting and knitting tools from the Museum's collection,

information about regional knitting, and a large amount of practical advice for knitters, including patterns. All can be found at www.vam.ac.uk/knitting.

The Textile Society is hoping to instigate the establishment of a network of specialists on textiles who would be available to advise on textile collections in museums and around the U.K.. An internet site would be established as a central resource which would map the collections as well as include a big bibliography and list of experts. The website is not yet established, and we look forward to hearing more about this exciting venture in due course.

Last year the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., received funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Charles H. Stour Foundation to create a searchable online catalogue of the Museum's 20,000 volume Arthur D. Jenkins Library. Work on the project has advanced apace, and is already accessible via the Museum's website, as well as the Online Computer Library Center, a worldwide library co-operative. The Arthur D. Jenkins Library contains publications —many one of a kind or out of print —detailing the history of rugs, textiles and dress, as well as manuals with information on techniques for creating, colouring and embellishing fabric and clothing. The Library's collection of cultural history literature parallels the Museum's collection of textiles from the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Visit www.textilemuseum.org/education/library.htm.

A museum devoted to embroidery, primarily from East Asia, has been opened in South Korea, named the Chung Young Yang Embroidery Museum after the distinguished Korean embroideress and author. I am hoping to be able to find out more about it to publish in a later newsletter.

Editor

BOOKS

Pacific Pattern

Susanne Kuchler and Graeme Were, *Pacific Pattern*, Thames and Hudson, 2005, 28.5 x 24.5 cm, 208 pp, 327 col. illus., ISBN 0500 51237X, hb. £24.95

A book about the Pacific, reviewed in an OATG newsletter? I hesitated when Phyllis Nye asked me if I would take this on. However, I had always been fascinated by the idea that it was the island-hoppings of South-East Asians that led to the eventual colonisation of the Pacific Islands. Also I have found that cross-referencing of material – however familiar – makes us think about things in a new light: Ruth Barnes unravelling of evidence for the date of an Indian textile by reference to architectural motifs in a temple has stayed with me vividly. I was sure that in studying *Pacific Pattern* I would come away with new ways of looking at the textile world that could be applied to Asian examples.

After a historical overview, chapters of the book are dedicated to various aspects of pattern: traditional pattern, contemporary pattern, pattern in architecture, and patterns on the body. The final chapter, on patterns of the mind, considers the theory that ideas and memories may be linked to pattern. At the end of the book is a clear map, a good bibliography, and some useful Web addresses.

I found it exciting to look at the culture and history of the Pacific through the lens of pattern. For too long, items were collected from exotic lands and displayed, like trophies, in neat lines in museums and private houses, with no reference to their original context. The reader is now persuaded to see all kinds of connexions with new eyes. For instance, in the Society Islands the same motif is used for tattoos and for patterning bark cloth ponchos. History is told again and again via textiles and patterns. In eastern Polynesia, after the London Missionary Society had put an end to the use of ritual use of bark cloth, creative energies were focused on making *tovaivai* (patterned quilts) using imported cloth. (Interestingly, there has been a recent move within an Auckland-based Cook Island community to make designs using linoleum stencils rather than piecing the quilt – which suggests a pleasing link with bark cloth patterning.)

In contrast to Asia, there is no loom-woven textile tradition in the Pacific. However, I was pleased to read discussion of the patterns achieved by using the leaves of coconut palms and pandanus – both plant materials common throughout Asia and the Pacific. Although these materials are commonly used for quickly made functional containers, in some areas very fine patterns are plaited using coconut fronds, and there are villages in Papua New Guinea, for instance, where coconut palm bags are regarded as a key way to identify the village of the user. I was also delighted to learn that, in Hawaii, very finely patterned pandanus mats were greatly valued for their association with rank and lineage, and were carefully stored in treasure trunks and redistributed at the death of the owner.

The book is beautifully illustrated, and the pictures are well captioned. The text accompanying the contemporary photographs often includes the names of the people portrayed, giving a sense of true field work and not merely a library-based publication. The juxtaposition of contemporary photographs with archive photographs, and also images of objects in museums, emphasises that pattern – ever changing with social conditions – is very much alive and still evolving in the present day. For my own taste I felt that some of the coloured text pages were too bright, and the use of semi-ghost images was not always successful. But this is a small niggle, and the wealth of coloured illustrations adds great vibrancy to the theme of pattern. However, this is no coffee table book in the derogatory sense of the word, and the text is well researched and very accessible.

Felicity Wood

[Photographic exhibition, *Pacific Pattern,* at the Clore Education Centre, British Museum, 1 November-31 December. See below p.31.- Ed.]

Shorter Notices

Grace Beardsley in collaboration with Carla M.Sinopoli, *Wrapped in Beauty: The Koelz Collection of Kashmiri Shawls,* University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, Anthropological Paper no. 93, 2005, includes CD-ROM, ISBN 0 915703 60 2, $28

This richly-illustrated volume examines the remarkable Kashmiri shawls of the Walter Koelz Collection of the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology. Part I presents the history, production, and forms and ornamentation of Kashmiri shawls, focusing on how

the social contexts of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries and the advent of the Jacquard loom impacted shawl development. Part II is a detailed descriptive catalogue of the shawls in the Koelz Collection. An accompanying CD-ROM includes colour illustrations of the shawls in the collection, as well as a transcribed manuscript by Koelz. The book has been published to coincide with an exhibition of the shawls (see below p.31) and can be ordered direct from the Museum of Anthropology, website www.lsa.umich.edu/umma/publications or tel. 001 734 998 0732.

Mary M. Dusenbury, with an essay by Carol Bier, *Flowers, Dragons and Pine Trees: Asian Textiles in the Spencer Art Museum*, Hudson Hills Press, New York and Manchester, 2004, 312 pp, 30.5 x 23 cm, 124 colour plates, 5 maps. ISBN 1-55595-238-0, hb, $75.

This book by a member of the O.A.T.G. is published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name. It is a well illustrated publication, introducing a little-known but outstanding collection of Asian textiles. Ninety-five of the Museum's 300+ textiles from the Indian sub-continent, Iran, China and Japan are described. In addition to new research on several objects in the collection, the book examines a number of issues raised by the collection such as: interconnections between local tradition and regional and international trade; the role of the court or government in textile production; the use of textiles to designate rank, status, and power; the ritual use of textiles to legitimate, to protect, and to bless ; interconnections between fashion, technology, and production; and the diverse functions of Asian textiles in nineteenth and twentieth century Asian and Western collections. The book includes a glossary, bibliography, and a full catalogue listing for each of the 300+ objects in the collection. It is written for both the specialist and the general reader.

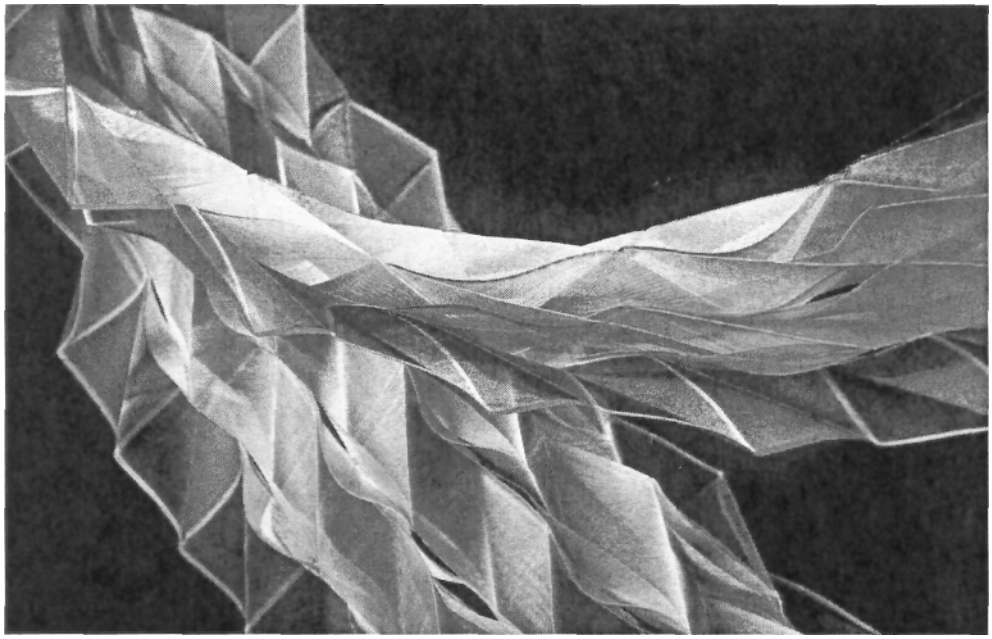
Mattiebelle Gittinger, *Textiles for this World and Beyond: Treasures from Insular Southeast Asia*, Scala, 2005, 28 x 23 cm, 144 pp., 110 colour illustrations, ISBN 1857593766 pb., $39.95

This lavishly illustrated book, published to accompany the recent exhibition of the same name at the Textile Museum, Washington DC, presents a fascinating overview of the use of cloth, its function in society and the messages contained within colour, pattern and technique. Encompassing Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Indonesian and Malaysian societies, it describes how they all share a common heritage by their extraordinary sense of the power of cloth: whether as a sign of benevolence from the gods to a ruler, a supreme honour to the dead, symbols of contractual alliances or as items of beauty and conceit.

EXHIBITIONS 21:21 -- The Textile Vision of Reiko Sudo and NUNO

NUNO is at the heart of the new textiles that have emerged from the rich textile tradition of Japan. That tradition, based in the natural fibres of cotton and silk and nurtured through labour-intensive craft skills, has provided fertile ground for some of the most exciting and energetic forces within the 21st century world textile and fashion community. The NUNO Company was founded in 1984, and since 1987 Reiko Sudo, as Artistic Director, has led the company to a position of international pre-eminence. NUNO fabrics are instantly recognisable through the innovative use of materials and finishing processes.

2005 marks the 21st anniversary of the founding of NUNO. In celebration, the first major exhibition in the UK of the work of Reiko Sudo, *21:21 —the textile vision of Reiko Sudo and NUNO* , will open at the James Hockey Galleries in Farnham this month*, with a fully illustrated, bi-lingual publication to accompany the opening.



Origami pleats

Reiko Sudo is passionate in her championing of traditional practice and has pioneered collaborations between time-honoured artisan methods and highly contemporary industrial design processes. She is keenly aware that without the skills and understanding available from those practitioners, who continue to work with materials and techniques handed down through generations, she would be unable to realise the fantastic cloths of her imagination. Equally, the high tech industrial finishing processes she employs are vital components in this realisation. Bringing these two elements together, to create beautiful textiles that resonate with both tradition and innovation, has been one of her major triumphs. For example, NUNO's *Green Fabric* combines the latest technology in creating polymer fibre from plants, in this case corn, with spinning techniques developed for traditional crepe silk, and industrial heat finishing processes.

At the time of writing, we are in the final stages before hanging the exhibition - an installation that will display the work as a giant forest of 35, 5-metre high columns of fabric. There will also be two walls of fabric, one a tensile structure approximately 7 x 3 metres, highlighting the architectural use of NUNO fabrics. The second will be a touch wall of fabrics, offering the chance to engage with the textiles through the fingers. The exhibition will also contain video presentations of other NUNO installations and a specially commissioned documentary film in which people from all walks of life discuss the importance of cloth in their everyday lives.

Reiko Sudo and NUNO make cloth, simply that; however, these beautiful textiles occupy what Reiko Sudo describes as, an in-between space: On the one hand NUNO

fabrics are just material; on the other, they approach art. NUNO fabrics are definitely artistic, but they re not art. I hope that this exhibition will afford the opportunity to enter that in-between space and to make a textural journey through the years of Reiko Sudo's involvement with NUNO.

Lesley Millar
Reader in Contemporary Craft Practice
University College for the Creative Arts
at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester

*The exhibition will be on show from 17 October to 15 December at the James Hockey and Foyer Galleries, University College for the Creative Arts at Farnham, Falkner Road, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7DS, (Tel: 01252 892646). A book of the same name, priced £18, accompanies the exhibition, and the following events are associated with it (for further information and booking forms, visit www.2121vision.surrart.ac.uk.)

11 November – Symposium *Ambiguous Spaces,* Keynote Speaker: Matilda McQuaid, Curator of Extreme Textiles , Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York and Co-Curator of Structure and Surface , Museum of Modern Art, New York

9 December – Seminar *Ambiguous Spaces 2,* for curators and makers to discuss the profile of textiles in museums and galleries

Other Exhibitions in the U.K.

Pacific Pattern – a photographic exhibition in the Clore Education Centre at the British Museum, 1 November to 31 December. Not strictly Asia but near enough to interest most members. See Felicity Wood's review of the book of the same name, above p. 27

China: The Three Emperors, 1662-1795 – Royal Academy, 12 November to 17 April 2005, a blockbuster focusing on the reigns of the most powerful rulers of China's Qing Dynasty: Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong, the first and last of whom ruled for 60 years each. The more than 370 treasures from the Palace Museum in Beijing on show will include textiles in the form of costume and palace furnishings. Tel. 020 7300 8000

Overseas Exhibitions

Contemporary Clay and Contemporary Cloth – 21st Century Japanese ceramics and stoles by Minagawa Makiko at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass., now until 9 July 2006. From diaphanous, floating fabric to a stole that molds to the body and hangs gracefully, weighted down by long horsehair fringe, these cloth objects, along with the clay, represent exquisite craftsmanship and vision. Tel. 001 617 267 9300

Peacocks, Blossoms and Cypresses – at the Rietberg Museum, Zurich, 14 October- 5 February 2006. Woven, dyed, printed and embroidered textiles from Qajar period (1788-1925) Iran, including luxury and regional domestic textiles and dress, www.rietberg.ch , tel. 0041 44 261 96 52.

Classical Chinese Carpets, *1400-1750* – at the Museum of East Asian Art in Cologne, 15 October to 15 January 2006. Sixty rare and precious masterpieces drawn from European and U.S. museums and private collections representative of the peak of carpet art in China before the age of mass production Included are at least three monumental Imperial Palace carpets from the 16th century. Associated exhibits show how similar patterns were used in other media. Tel. 0049 221 94 05 18-0

Two at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C:

Silk and Leather: Splendid Attire of 19th Century Central Asia – including 38 garments and accessories intended to please the wearers and express political power, wealth, group identity, or marital status in a multi-ethnic region, few of which have been previously exhibited or published. Now until 26 February 2006.

Rozome Masters of Japan – featuring 15 contemporary Japanese artists working in this traditional wax-resist technique, including folding screens, scrolls, panels and kimonos. Complementing their work will be several textiles made using other traditional Japanese resist-dyeing techniques. Now until 12 February.

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

Japanese Style and Culture in Cloth – in association with the *Rozome Masters* exhibition (see above), this symposium will explore the role of textiles in Japan and the variety of textile dyeing techniques for which the country is known. At the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., 21-23 October. Tel. 001 667 0441, ext. 64

Sign Post to a New Space: Concept, Collection, Collation – at the Queen Suite, International Halls, Harrogate, Yorkshire, 24-25 November. Textiles form an unbroken tacit tradition, a collective memory, that encompasses narrative, displacement, renewal, recycling and ritual. *Sign Posts to a New Space* explores this fact in a two day symposium in which 16 leading international practitioners, curators and historians discuss the possibilities for creative expression arising from the interplay between collections, collecting, collective memory and collective constructions. The time and place for the symposium has been chosen to enable participants to enjoy the *Knitting and Stitching Show,* which is being held in Harrogate at the same time. Tel. 0208 692 6699

Chinese Things/Chinese People – at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, 2 December, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Bringing together specialists in Chinese arts, contemporary art and museum curatorship, this one-day conference will investigate the links between collections and communities and the role of artists in museums, and explore issues around the formation of historical collections of Chinese material culture in British museums. Speakers will include Anna Jackson (Deputy Keeper of Far Eastern Art, V.&.A.), Erica Tan (Artist/Curator at Brighton Museum) and Katie Hall (Research Fellow in Modern Chinese Visual Culture, University of Westminster. Further information can be obtained from helen.mears@brighton-hove.gov.uk , tel. 01273 292863

LECTURES AND EVENTS

The Knitting and Stitching Show

will be at the Alexandra Palace, London, 13-16 October
RDS, Dublin, 3-6 November; Harrogate
International Centre, 24-27 November

At least 300 stall-holders; 100 workshops; several special exhibitions, including *Fushiginoiroito,* an experimental Japanese knitwear exhibition. Visit www.twistedthread.com/knittingandstitchingshow

Asian Art in London – 5-12 November. As usual a great many dealers will be participating, and Christies will be holding a Chinese textiles sale on 10 November. For further information tel. 020 7499 2215.

The London Antique Textiles, Vintage Costume, Tribal Art and Antiques Fair — at Hammersmith Town Hall, Sunday 6 November, Tel. 020 8543 5075

Textile Society of Hong Kong Annual Bazaar and Exhibition – Saturday November 12 at the Fringe Club. For further information visit dsilkstone@cr.gov.hk

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