

# OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

Newsletter No. 22

June 2002

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Ainu robe in which the patterns have been cut out of a large piece of applied white cloth in the technique known as *kaparanip* (see p.10 )

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## EDITORIAL

Who would choose to live in the over-crowded south-east of this island when there are such exciting happenings up north, as can be seen elsewhere in this issue? I mention just two here.

First the Manchester-based Chinese Arts Centre, established in 1986, has received a lottery grant of £2.2 million, the largest grant ever devoted to Britain's Chinese community. A large part of the money will be used to buy and convert a building in Market Street enabling it to expand and become the national centre for Chinese arts and culture. Sarah Champion, the Centre's Chief Executive Officer says it makes sense to have the national centre in the north-west because Liverpool has the oldest Chinese population in Europe, and Manchester itself has the second largest in Britain. Even before this grant, the Centre was making itself known on an international as well as a national level.

Part of the new premises will incorporate two exhibition galleries, enabling the Centre to lay on a continuous programme of exhibitions instead of the four a year run on a shoestring in one small gallery that is all they can manage at present. They also hope to generate touring exhibitions. Until recently their staff has comprised only three and a half people and lack of resources has meant that potential work has had to be turned down.

As well as exhibitions, the Centre covers education, performances, training and promotion of work by British artists of Chinese descent. One of the two galleries will be devoted to these; the second will act as a showcase for work by Chinese artists worldwide.

Also based in Manchester is Shisha, the international agency for contemporary South Asian crafts and visual arts. It has brought out an ambitious programme of international residences, a conference (see p.25) a publication and international exhibitions at four separate venues in the north-west (see p.24). Under the title *ArtSouthAsia*, the programme, the first of the kind to be held in Britain, is linked to the Commonwealth Games Cultural Festival and runs from July to September. It claims to be "visually vibrant, bringing together three streams of contemporary practice - the rural-tribal, the urban popular and the urban modern."

Despite the distance from Oxford, I am always pleased to hear of enterprises burgeoning in other parts of the U.K.; London always seems to me to have too large a share of the cultural cake.

## PROGRAMME

### **Monday 1 July at 2 p.m.**

at the Victoria and Albert Museum  
Cromwell Road, London, SW7

#### **Old Friends Revisited**

#### **Valery Garrett**

will talk on and show selected items from the  
reserve Chinese costume collection  
and will tell of her experiences when collecting these costumes  
in Hong Kong and China

Meet at 12 noon in the V.& A. restaurant  
for lunch with Valery and Museum staff  
or  
at 1.45 p.m. in the main entrance hall

Cost £10

Bookings and inquiries to Fiona or Rosemary, addresses below

## **FUTURE PROGRAMME**

Wednesday 30 October

A.G.M. and talk on  
*Carpet Weavers and Their Patterns*  
by Jon Thompson

Late November

*Iranian Regional Dress - Beyond the Chador*  
Talk by Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

Details of both events in the next newsletter

Bookings should be made with the Programme Secretaries,  
from whom further information can also be obtained:

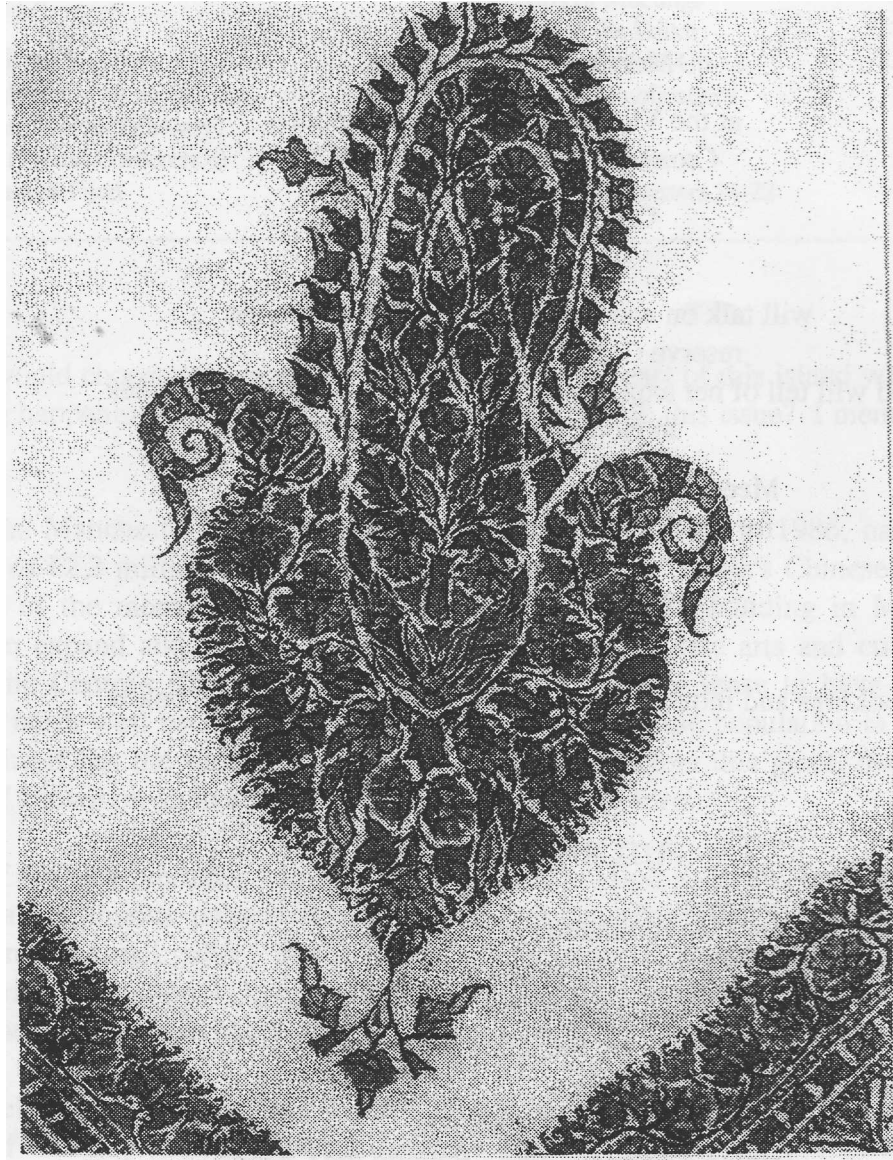
Rosemary Lee, The Garden House, Thames Road, Goring-on-Thames, Oxon, RG8 9AH

Tel. 01491 873276 e-mail: [rosemary.lee@talk21.com](mailto:rosemary.lee@talk21.com)

Fiona Sutcliffe, Heath Barton, Manor Road, Goring-on-Thames, Oxon, RG8 9EH

Tel. 01491 872268 e-mail: [j.v.sutcliffe@talk21.com](mailto:j.v.sutcliffe@talk21.com)

## ASIAN TEXTILES IN THE BAGSHAW MUSEUM, YORKSHIRE



Indian shawl: detail of embroidered corner panel. Donated by Miss V.M. Bagshaw

The textile collections of Kirklees Community History Service are extremely varied, reflecting the wide-ranging nature of its museums. The service manages two historic houses - Oakwell Hall and Red House - three museums - Tolson Museum, Bagshaw Museum and Dewsbury Museum - as well as a scheduled ancient monument - Castle Hill. Each site has its particular features and strengths.

Bagshaw Museum, in Batley, is housed in a Victorian gothic mansion built for a local mill owner, George Sheard, in 1875-6. It became a museum in 1911. Walter Bagshaw was its first honorary curator and on his death in 1927 the museum was named after him. He had travelled extensively and built up a collection that represents a variety of societies from

around the world. His daughter Violet continued to travel and acquire objects for the museum until her death in 1993 at the age of 103.

Bagshaw Museum continues to represent a range of world cultures. The displays today include material from Ancient Egypt, South America, Asia and Africa. They cover history, mythology, the arts and natural history. Asian textiles are featured in more than one gallery, though there are no dedicated textile displays.

The museum service's Asian textiles have been acquired from various donors over the years, ranging from the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Imperial Institute, who made donations in the 1920s and 30s, to private individuals who have given single items. Violet Bagshaw also gave a variety of Asian textiles, collected during her travels in Persia, Afghanistan, India, Japan and China. They include a fine woollen shawl with the borders embroidered in the Kashmiri pattern with butta cones (illustrated opposite).

The quality and nature of the collections is hence very diverse, but includes some fine material. There are a small number of embroideries and costume from Malaya, Thailand, Burma and Indonesia. There are larger collections of textiles and costume from China and India.

In 1929 the museum organized a display of Japanese and Chinese material from the collection of John Hilditch, the well-known orientalist and eccentric. John Hilditch was fanatical about all things oriental, and especially Chinese. He named his Manchester house "Minglands" and over thirty years amassed a collection of more than 60,000 pieces of Chinese and related material. These included pottery, lacquer ware, jade and wood carvings, as well as textiles. In the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition at Bagshaw, Hilditch wrote "none can afford to despise or make light of the great art of the Chinese race without revealing a spirit which - whether of ignorance or arrogance - is devoutly to be pitied".

When Hilditch died the items from the exhibition were bequeathed to Bagshaw Museum. Sadly, a large part of the collection was stolen in 1997. However two fine textiles from the Hilditch collection have survived and are on display at Bagshaw. The first is a panel of early nineteenth century Japanese origin. It was purchased in Osaka and is entitled *The Tiger and the Waterfall*. It measures approximately 2.5 x 1.5 m. Hilditch described it in the catalogue that accompanied the original exhibition:

The tiger in the foreground is the companion of the five Buddhist Saints or Arhats who, with their distinctive attributes, are gathered under an ancient pine. Near it is the waterfall from which the dragon soars. In black, gold and soft tinted browns and blues. The hands and faces of the figures are wrought in flesh colour.

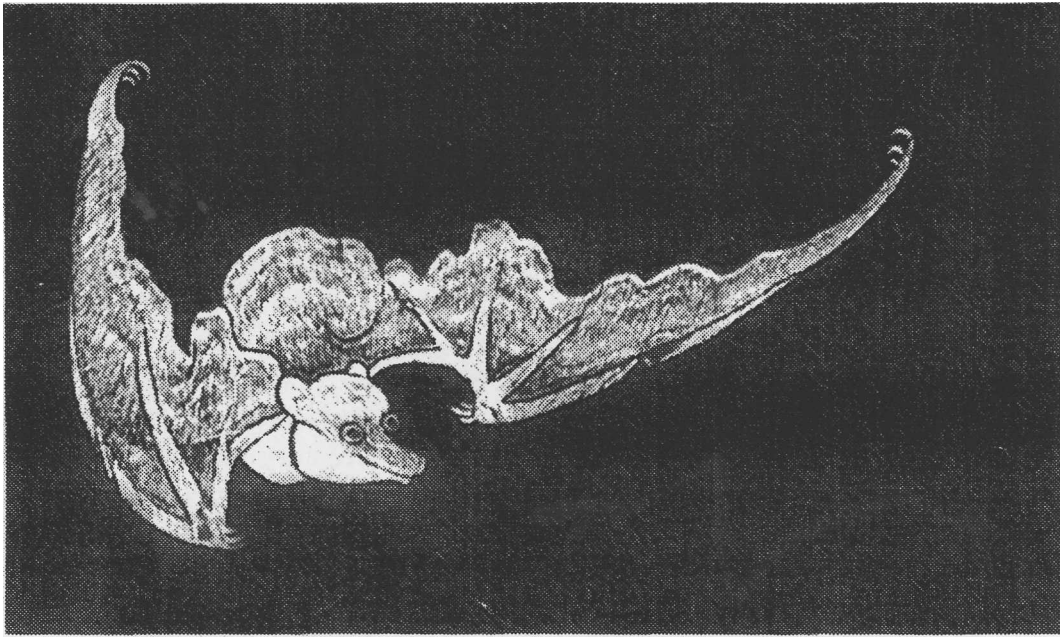
The second piece is an embroidered Chinese panel dating from the early Kangxi period (1661-1722). The piece measures approximately 2 x 1.25 m and depicts Shou Lao, the god of longevity (illustrated overleaf). He holds the staff of Buddha and the peach of immortality, and is accompanied by his attribute a deer. Three charming bats circle above him (illustrated p.7). Hilditch commented in the catalogue:





Chinese embroidered panel of Shou-Lao (detail), Kangxi period. From the John Hilditch collection.

The face of the deity, with its laughing eyes and dome forehead and the sumptuous robe with its long-life symbols are examples of exquisite work. The colour scheme is of soft fawns, blues and earthly pink, against a background of dark self blue.



Detail of Shou-Lao panel, showing bat

The Community History Service is now concentrating on collecting material that reflects the cultural backgrounds of the local people. Kirklees has significant communities originating from Gujarat, Punjab and Kashmir in India and Pakistan.

Recent acquisitions have included a collection of twentieth century domestic textiles and clothing from the Kachchh (Kutch) area of Gujarat. There are a number of items of women's and children's clothing which feature heavy mirror embroidery. This includes an open-backed woman's bodice from Bhuj in Gujarat, which is embroidered in chain stitch with peacocks and parrots. There is an *odhani* veil, tie-dyed in the Bandhani style and made by a women's co-operative set up by Judy Frater in Sumraswar.

There are plans for a gallery dedicated to the central south-Asian area around India and Pakistan. Costume and textiles will form an important part of the displays. Current research and documentation is concentrating on this area, and more items may be acquired to fill gaps. However, there is scope for further research into all the Asian collections.

Anyone interested in viewing the collections not on display may do so by appointment.

Katina Bill  
Collections Assistant, Kirklees Community History Service

## AN OTTOMAN VELVET AND OTHER GOODIES

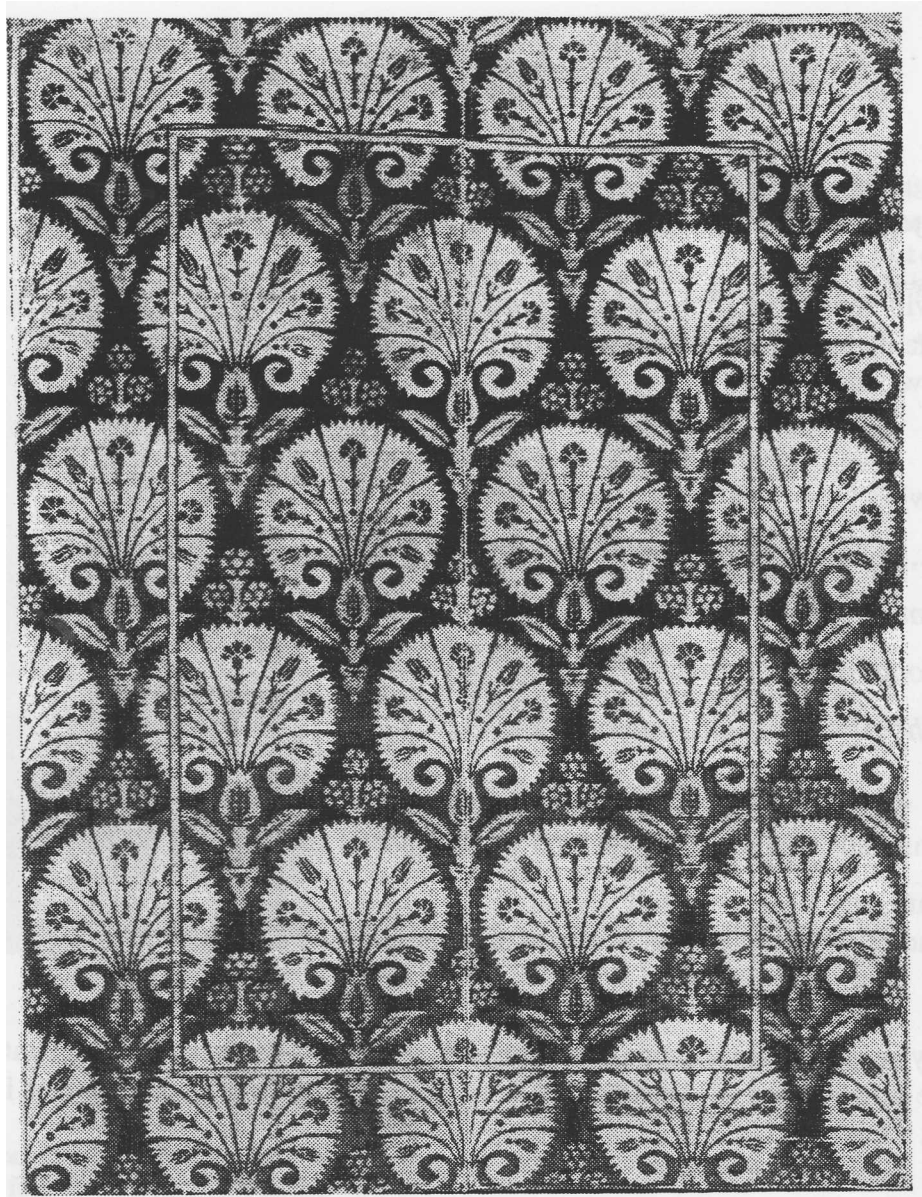
On May 29 the Ashmolean Museum opened its newly refurbished Islamic gallery (called the Reitlinger Gallery after the major benefactor to its collections). The renovation had to be done mainly in-house with a limited budget, so in general there are no new high-tech display cases - with one splendid exception: a large state-of-the-art case suitable for textile displays.

Until the end of June it houses a loan of two Spanish carpets which relate to the May Beattie lecture that was given on the same day (see letter p.17). They will, however, be replaced in early July by a sumptuous velvet that the Department of Eastern Art has recently acquired. It is a fine silk cushion cover, of a type that is representative for early to mid-seventeenth century textiles produced in Bursa, a town that along with Istanbul was the major weaving centre for luxury cloth in the Ottoman Empire. The silks were produced for a cosmopolitan clientele, and patronage for luxury textile products came from the highest level of Ottoman society, first and foremost the Sultan's court. Velvet (*kadife*) was produced for dress fabrics in the sixteenth century, but the Bursa manufacture began to shift towards furnishing materials around 1600. From the early seventeenth century onwards the velvets woven were especially intended for cushion covers (*yastik*) and curtains; velvet summer carpets (*nihale*) were also produced.

The textile (illustrated opposite) is typical for this period, both in design and technique. Two loom widths are sewn together to create a large cover; an internal rectangle gives the impression of a frame, although this does not break the design. Carnations (*karanfil*) were the most popular floral design for this kind of furnishing, usually - as here - arranged in staggered rows. The large flower heads have seven petals, each enclosing an additional single flower. These single, finely stemmed flowers alternate between carnation and another Ottoman favourite, the tulip. The large carnation is supported by a short stem from which two serrated leaves emerge, and it has a trefoil finial. The textile is similar to one at the Deutsches Textilmuseum in Krefeld (inv.no. 16233), although that does not have the framed device, and has a stylized palm-tree finial.

Ottoman velvet textiles often have a three-dimensional surface, with only parts covered in projecting pile, while the satin weave foundation is exposed on other areas. This is known as voided velvet. The parts not covered with pile were originally entirely filled with silver or gilded thread, woven as a discontinuous weft and bound by every third warp thread of the foundation weave, in a 1/4 twill weave. The silver used to fill in the large carnation petals was wrapped round a white silk core, while the formerly gilded (but now mostly tarnished) thread woven over the stems, serrated leaves, and small trefoils has a pale yellow core. This now creates a subtle change in colour in the voided areas. Only fragments of the silver and gilded thread remain, so that the present-day appearance of our velvet is dominated by the cream-coloured undyed silk, contrasted by the crimson colour of the velvet pile, used for the background and the small flowers set into the large carnation blossoms. An insect dye was used to achieve the crimson, possibly from the lac dye made from the species *Kerria Jacca* Kerr, which had its source in India or South-east Asia and was traded to Turkey. Dye analysis has detected its presence in many Ottoman textiles.





Ottoman velvet cover, early 17th century, Bursa (Turkey). Silk pile and satin weave with silver and gilded metal thread brocade. Two loom width, warp 166 cm, weft 123 cm. Purchased with the help of the National Art Collections Fund and the Resources/V & A. Purchase Grant Fund (EA 2001.149)

The new acquisition is not the only textile on view in the Reitlinger Gallery. One of the long wall cases is dedicated to mediaeval Egyptian ceramics and textiles. This is a wonderful opportunity to show a small selection of fine embroideries from the Newberry collection, with which many of our members will be familiar from last year's exhibition *A Stitch in Time*. On display now is the small child's tunic - remarkable for its outstanding condition, considering that it has a late fourteenth century date - as well as two *tiraz* one showing the complete inscription, and three very fine embroidered fragments. A patchwork cap and small bag are also on show.

I hope members will take the time to see and enjoy the new display. We think it has given a sparkle to a gallery that had begun to look rather tired since the loan of the Nuhad-es-Said metalwork collection was removed to the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Ruth Barnes

## AINU TEXTILES AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF SCOTLAND

Readers will remember that, owing to Murphy's law or a gremlin in the post, I was unfortunately unable to include the illustrations to Jane Wilkinson's article under this title in the February newsletter. I am happy to publish them now, plate 5 on p.1 and the others below.

The following list of references cited by Jane also missed the deadline:

Munro, N.G. ed., Seligman B.Z., *Ainu Creed and Cult*; London 1962

Ohtsuka, K., *Ainu Moshir-World of the Ainu Through Their Design Motifs*, Osaka, 1993

Philippi D.L., *Songs of Gods, Sons of Humans*, Tokyo, 1979

Sternberg, L., *The Ainu Problem*, *Anthropos* 24, 1929

Jane also writes that the most recent general reference book on the Ainu, and one which she recommends as a good introduction for the general reader is:

Fitzhugh, William, and W.O. Dubreuil Chisato (Eds), *Ainu, Spirit of a Northern People*, Arctic Studies Centre. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 1999

I am sorry readers were disappointed not to have these references and illustrations to refer to with the article when it appeared, but hope you have all kept your February issue so that you can put them together now.

Editor

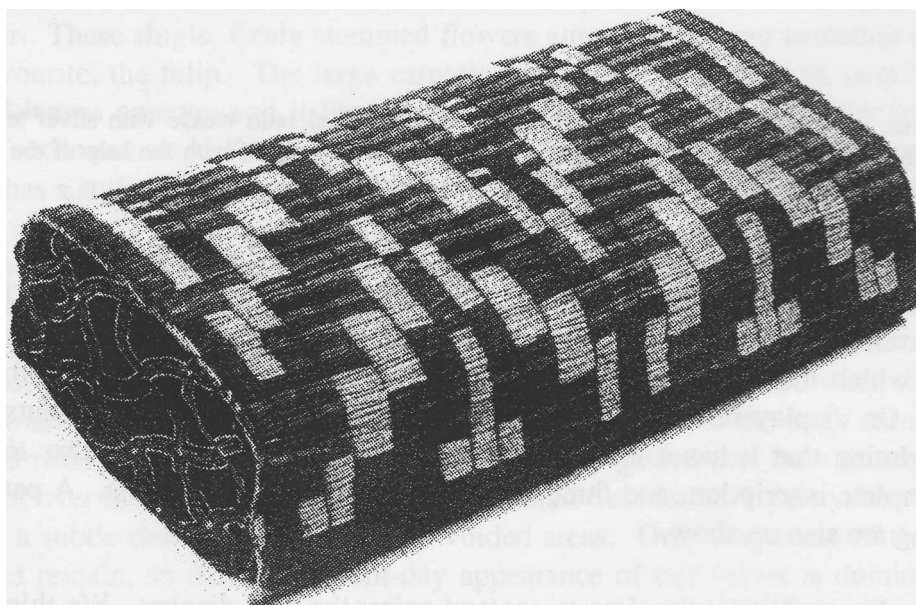


Plate 1 (Reg. no. 1886.15) A travelling bag with the long lid decorated with a pattern produced through natural plant dyes. The linden warps show where the bobbins on the upright loom have been spaced at regular intervals to weave in the weft rushes.

Ruth Barnes

Plate 3 (Reg. no. 1909.499.48) Ainu *attush*  
or elm bark coat, showing the added cotton  
strip to the bast of elm warps.



Plate 4 (Reg. no. 1914.221) Blue and red silk  
has been used for the *ruunpe* patterns on this  
cotton robe.



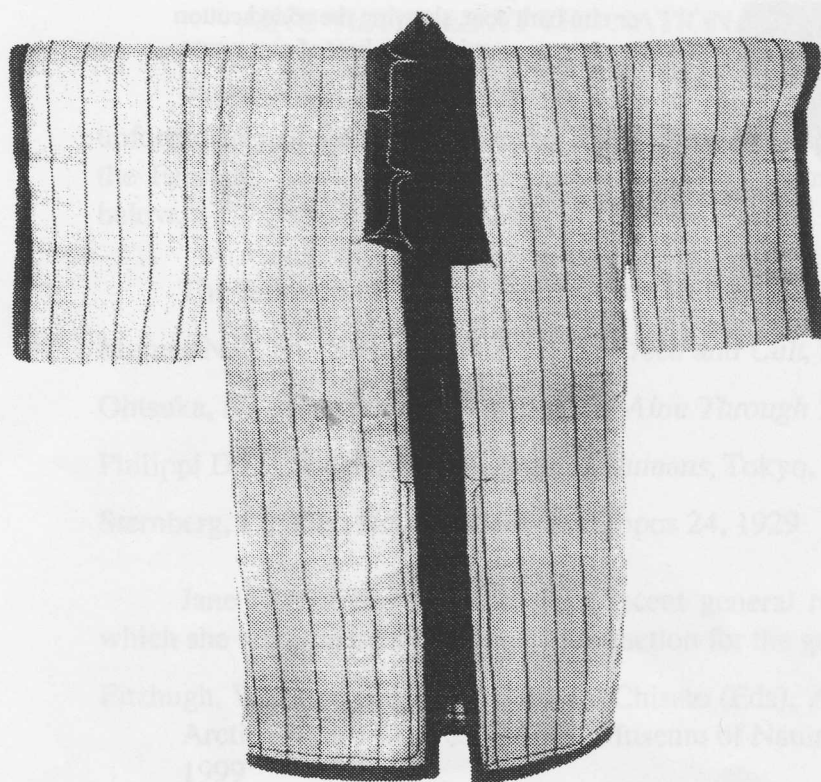


Plate 6 (Reg. no. 1882.22.1) The brackets can be seen clearly on the faded collar of this plain *attush* robe with kimono type sleeves. It was donated to the Museum by Isabella Bird Bishop and probably made for the Japanese tourist market.

Plate 7 (Reg. no. 1886.1) An Ainu *attush* or elm bark coat with appliqué embroidery. At the corners on the end of some of the applied strips, extensions of the embroidered line can be seen in the form of a thorn or tongue.





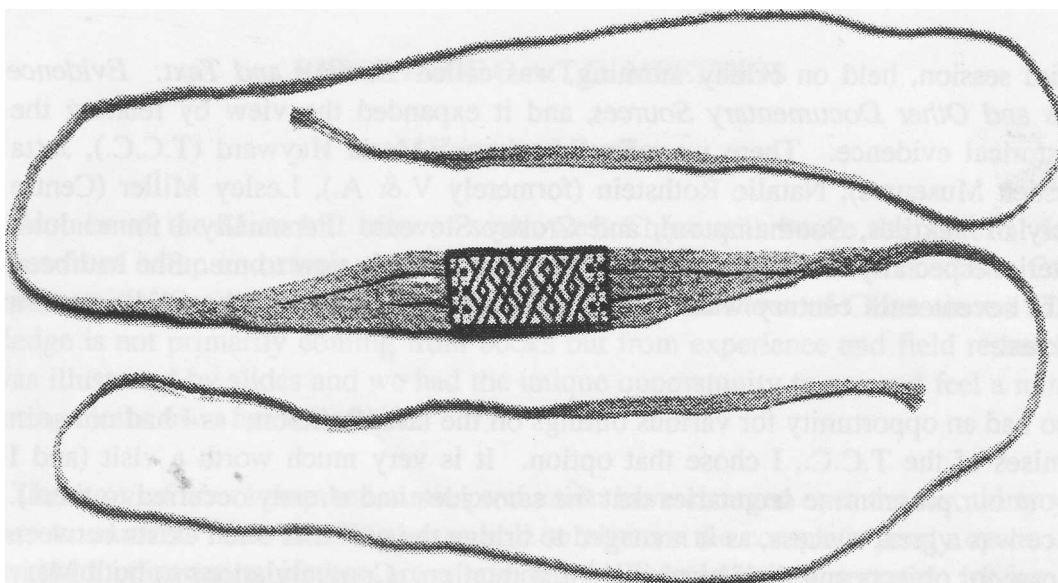


Plate 2 (Reg. no. 1909.499.44) A forehead band used for carrying loads, but in this case having three strands, so only used for carrying the dead. Everyday loads were carried using forehead bands with four strands.

#### TEXTILE MATTERS THE PASOLD CONFERENCE IN WINCHESTER, APRIL 2002

The Pasold Research Fund organizes regular conferences in all fields of textile history; this year it supported a symposium entitled *Textile Matters - Object-based Research: the Contribution of Conservation to Textile History and Research*, held on 18 and 19 April on the Winchester campus of Southampton University. This is also the location of the Textile Conservation Centre's new premises, officially opened in November 1999, and one may say that this conference occasion was to some degree a fine show case of what has become the T.T.C.'s role in textile studies. Mary Brooks, who is current Head of Studies and Research, co-organized the conference with Mary Rose, the Pasold Fund's Director.

The symposium was divided into three sessions, starting with Thursday morning's *Evidence from Textiles*. Santina Levey, formerly at the Victoria and Albert Museum, gave the keynote address, in which she spoke about *Looking at Objects*. It was an eloquent and beautifully presented lesson on what we can learn by studying museum objects in detail, but it also addressed the pitfalls of preconceived assumptions and concepts. The next two lectures were by Dinah Eastrop (T.C.C.) and myself. Dinah spoke about several of the Textile Conservation Centre's projects, the most interesting of which is one on deliberately concealed objects discovered in old buildings in various parts of Britain. Typically these are garments, and they may have had a protective function for the inhabitants.

The afternoon session on *Revelations from Conservation* presented three detailed case studies, by Kate Gill, Amber Rowe (both T.C.C.) and Anne Javer (who trained at the T.C.C.). It was the most object-based part of the conference.



The third session, held on Friday morning, was called *Textiles and Text: Evidence from Textiles and Other Documentary Sources*, and it expanded the view by relating the objects to historical evidence. There were five speakers: Maria Hayward (T.C.C.), Jutta Baumel (Dresden Museums), Natalie Rothstein (formerly V.& A.), Lesley Miller (Centre for the History of Textiles, Southampton), and Crosby Stevens. Personally I found Jutta Baumel's material especially interesting, because it was completely new to me. She had been working on the seventeenth century wardrobe of the kings of Saxony, and her slides were a feast for the eyes!

We also had an opportunity for various outings on the last afternoon; as I had not seen the new premises of the T.C.C., I chose that option. It is very much worth a visit (and I understand from our programme secretaries that the same idea had already occurred to them). The conference was a great success, as it managed to bridge the gulf that often exists between the practical care for objects and their historical interpretation. Congratulations to both Mary Brooks and Mary Rose for creating such a congenial ambience and stimulating programme.

Ruth Barnes

#### THE PASOLD RESEARCH FUND

As some of our readers may not know what the Pasold Research Fund is or does, I thought a short explanatory note might be useful.

It is a charitable trust established in 1964 by Eric W. Pasold, O.B.E., whose special interest was the history of knitting. Its object is to provide support for research into all aspects of the history of textiles, including their economic and social history, their technological development, design and conservation, as well as the history of dress, the interface with fashion, culture and consumption, and other uses of textiles. The current director is Dr Mary B. Rose, Senior Lecturer in Business History at the University of Lancaster.

The Fund owns the journal *Textile History* and also publishes Pasold Studies in Textile History, in collaboration with Oxford University Press. Recent publications include a history of the Leeds clothing industry and a history of the small-scale hosiery and knitwear industry in Britain. A major work to be published next January will be *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles* in two volumes, edited by David Jenkins.

As well as organizing conferences, such as the one Ruth attended, the Fund runs an annual Pasold lecture series held in a range of different venues. It also offers grants in support of research and conference attendance, and has a Ph.D. bursary scheme.

Further information can be obtained from Dr Rose at the Department of Economics, The Management School, Lancaster, LA1 4YX, e-mail: [m.rose@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.rose@lancaster.ac.uk) or from the Fund's website: <http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/pasold>

Editor

## REPORTS OF O.A.T.G. MEETINGS

### Hemp and Ramie

Women of the Miao hill tribe of south-west China still weave the material for their costumes from hemp and ramie they have grown and prepared themselves. Gina Corrigan, who spoke to the Group on 20 February, has travelled to this area of China since 1973. Her knowledge is not primarily coming from books but from experience and field research. Her talk was illustrated by slides and we had the unique opportunity to see and feel a number of interesting cloths from her collection.

The story of how hemp and ramie production have changed over the last thirty years is not easy to unravel. You are not always able to observe the complete yearly cycle: people will withhold information if they are afraid you will "steal" their secrets; having to use translators (who are not textile experts) makes things more difficult; and last, but not least, the Chinese language itself does not make things easier - *ma*, for example, is the word for hemp as well as for ramie!

Ramie (*bohemia nivea*) is a nettle-like plant, a perennial which is largely insect-free and lasts 20 years. It can be cropped three times a year and is three times as strong as hemp. In cloth it absorbs moisture and dries easily. It goes whiter than hemp and has a lustre almost like silk. It dyes really well and makes a very nice contrast to indigo.

Hemp (*cormalis salva*) has very few advantages over ramie. It is often grown in courtyards as it cannot stand wind, but it does grow at altitudes over 1200 metres (which ramie does not). The seeds provide an extra industrial crop and can also, of course, be used to put you in a good mood and for headaches. Hemp fibres are longer than ramie fibres.

Hemp and ramie are processed in broadly similar labour-intensive ways (but in slightly different ways in different regions). The outside is cut away and you are left with the fibres; these get soaked and then dried for many days to get rid of the pectin. The long dried strips of hemp or ramie are then spliced (joined): women tuck the fibre lengths in their waist and splice whenever they can. The material is then washed, dried and pounded over and over again; to make it softer still you pummel it. Then you weave it, and even once woven the material may be calendared again to make it softer still. In reality it is often very difficult to distinguish ramie from hemp. (Gina brought in some skirts which proved that.)

Traditionally hemp is used for skirts and for mourning (you would also want to be buried in hemp). Growing hemp is forbidden in this part of China now because of the drug scene, but there is hemp still (largely grown higher up the mountains). Commercially China is a big exporter of ramie. In addition to ramie and hemp, a lot of cotton and nylon is used by the Miao these days, especially by younger people who want to follow fashion.

### Themes and Symbols in Japanese Art and Textiles

Marion Maule's talk on 24 April served in part as a visual follow-up to her article on *Japanese Textiles in Festivals and Celebrations* in the last newsletter. On arrival, we were confronted with a table laden with possibly a hundred objects from Japan, each one used either to mark the seasonal changes, to celebrate a special event, or simply in everyday life as an amulet.

Marion began with a whirlwind explanation of, or an anecdote about, each object, and then settled down to tell us the more fundamental reasons why some of these things exist. Life in Japan is similar to "life on a precipice" - very precarious. The success of the rice harvest is of paramount importance. The power of the native gods is ever present, thus many ceremonies and rituals have developed in order to invoke their protection and to ensure their pleasure at all times.

Shinto, the indigenous "religion" predates Buddhism, which was introduced into Japan in the sixth century. Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples exist side by side and participate together in many of the traditional festivals. Shinto, however, looks after those relating to birth and marriage and the rites of passage in between, and Buddhism takes over when rituals for death or the afterlife are to be marked by a ceremony.

Marion spoke in detail of the symbolic significance of many of the designs on the objects she brought, of the choice of colour for certain occasions, of the superstitious significance of certain numbers and of links with regional festivals. Those of us hoping to see textiles were rewarded with her most striking exhibit, a wedding robe (*uchikake*) embroidered with symbols of happiness, longevity, fertility, faithfulness and those asking for protection.

The talk finished with slides of many of her pieces, of shrine rituals, of the colourful Gion Festival in Kyoto and, among many others, of the Emperor and Empress of Japan undertaking two of their annual ritual duties: planting rice and inspecting silkwork cocoons.

Joyce Seaman

### O.A.T.G. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are 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. If you do not wish your membership to lapse, please send your subscription to the Membership Secretary, Joyce Seaman, or better still, ask her to send you a banker's order form and save yourself the annual hassle. Address: 5 Park Town, Oxford, OX2 6SN, tel. 01865 558558, e-mail: [mjseaman@hotmail.com](mailto:mjseaman@hotmail.com)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

### **Carpet Studies in Oxford - Summary of Progress and Appeal for Books**

In 1999 the Department of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean Museum received a substantial bequest from Dr May Beattie (1908-1996) (first discussed by Dr Jon Thompson in newsletter no. 17, October 2000 pp 4-5). Over the past year, Jon and I have been laying the foundations for what we hope will establish Oxford as the international centre of excellence for research and teaching in carpet studies. We have a number of projects in progress designed to raise the profile of carpets and carpet studies at Oxford.

John Mills gave the second May Beattie Memorial Lecture in Carpet Studies on 29 May, entitled *From Glory to Decadence: Rug-weaving in Southern Spain up to 1700*. The lecture was very well attended and we are delighted at the very positive reaction we have received to the Spanish carpets and fragments on display to complement the lecture. The pieces were very generously lent by the Wher Collection and will be available in the Department until the middle of July for anyone who is interested in coming to have a look at them.

Also on display that evening was a new object purchased by the Department from a private collector. It is a large felt of uncertain age, probably nineteenth century, with an intricate inlaid floral pattern. Such felts are extremely rare and this example is closely related to three similar felts in the shrine complex at Ardabil. In addition, the Department has recently acquired an early twentieth century Kereman pictorial carpet (333 x 224 cm) generously given by Dr Hassan A. Diab, which will strengthen and complement its collection of carpets to which May Beattie contributed over 120 pieces.

This year has seen the inauguration of the first full lecture series in *Carpet and Textile Studies* as part of the postgraduate and undergraduate degrees in Islamic Art and Archaeology, given by Ruth Barnes and Jon Thompson. The ongoing work of the Beattie Archive is the cataloguing of May Beattie's large image and technical analysis archive. We are developing a website which will give registered users access to all of the images and technical analysis sheets in the archive, along with related images, research notes, bibliographic details and related articles. While the site is currently under construction, a brief summary of May Beattie and her archive can be found at <http://beattiearchive.ashmol.ox.ac.uk/>

We have a list of modest publication projects planned for the future which aim to further Dr Beattie's wish in making the results of research in carpet studies more widely known. Imminent projects include sulphur-isotope analysis of wool samples; translations of classic works; detailed notes on carpets held in the Ashmolean.

The Beattie Library is seen as a fundamental facility in bringing our ideas and May Beattie's wishes to fruition. A good collection of basic works was given as part of the Beattie

Bequest, and we have been adding to that over the past year, but we still require many more volumes to complete the collection. As funds are limited, we thought that some members may be in a position to give duplicate or unwanted copies of relevant works to assist us in this aim, and would greatly appreciate any donations to the collection.

We are particularly looking for donations of the following titles:

Any individual issues or complete runs of the following catalogues for carpet and/or textile sales: Lefevre, Edelmann, Nagel, Phillips, Bonhams, Butterfield, Skinner, Rippon Boswell, Rudolph Mangisch and Sotheby's and Christie's (London, New York and San Francisco).

Individual issues or runs of: Hali, Oriental Rug Review, Ghereh.

Carpet books in general (please check with me beforehand).

We are also anxious to find a donor who would be willing to buy and donate to the library the latest and most expensive carpet book from Ertug & Kocabiyik - *Anatolian Carpets: Masterpieces from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art* by Walter Denny and Nazan Olcwe. The cost would be approximately £700

If you would like any further information about any of our projects, events or resources, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Emma Dick  
Beattie Archive Project Manager

Department of Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford, OXI 2PH  
Tel.(direct line) 01865 278076; e-mail: emma.dick@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

Dear Editor,

### **Weaving Using Salvaged Threads**

I wonder if any of your readers may be able to offer some suggestions regarding research I am currently undertaking. I am presenting a paper this autumn to the Textile Symposium of America on the topic of woven fabrics that are constructed, in part, from the threads of fabrics which have been unpicked from other fabrics in order to salvage a certain colour or thread. These unpicked threads are then incorporated in the new woven design. I have found examples of this occurring in several areas of Africa, among the native American Indians and the Maori of New Zealand. If any members of the O.A.T.G. have come across such works, I should welcome any information they might be able to give. In addition to information, I am trying to assemble a collection of images depicting examples of this technique.

Jessica Hemmings

876 Van Nuys St, San Diego, CA, 92109, U.S.A.  
Tel. 001 858 337 9284; e-mail: hemmingsj@aol.com



## MUSEUMS ROUND-UP

Those of you who live in or visit Oxford frequently will probably have noticed that the Pitt Rivers Museum's Balfour Galleries at 60 Banbury Road have been closed for some months. The reason for this was to enable the Museum's extensive collection of textiles to be moved there. Further plans for the building have now been made, including the transfer there of the Conservation Department. It is hoped to reopen the Balfour Building this autumn as a research and study centre for musical instruments, textiles and clothing.

One of the *ArtSouthAsia* exhibitions initiated by Shisha (see above p.2 and below p.24) is being held at Gallery Oldham, a wonderful new gallery that opened in Greaves Street, Oldham, in February as part of a government-led plan to develop a Cultural Quarter in the town. Designed by architects Pringle Richards Sharratt, the building, illustrated below, makes extensive use of modern materials including glass, concrete, metal and terracotta. There are three exhibition spaces in the new building and a fourth in the original Victorian gallery building to which it is linked by a bridge. An interesting variety of exhibitions is planned, including one of samplers, tapestries and needlework from the eighteenth century to the present day, but apart from the Bangladesh one, no Asian textiles - though given the ethnic mix of the town, it is surely only a matter of time.



Talking of building, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery reopened last month after a long closure and a £10 million redevelopment which has transformed it with a total gallery redisplay and a new entrance in the Royal Pavilion gardens. Some Asian textiles are currently on display in the Fashion Gallery and the World Art Gallery, as well as in *Collecting Textiles and Their Stories*. They include some from the James Green collection of

Burmese textiles which, those of you who went to Sandra Dudley's lecture on *Burmese Textiles in Museum Collections* in March 1999 will remember her mentioning. In fact, she and Elizabeth Dell, Keeper of World Art and Anthropology at Brighton Museum, are working on editing a book on Burmese textiles, due to be published later this year.

A number of projects collecting new textiles in the parts of Burma Green was working in have been carried out, most recently a project commissioning new textiles from weavers in Kachin State co-ordinated by Lisa Maddigan. The commission comprises seventeen wedding outfits to designs chosen by the weavers and relating to the six main Kachin ethnic groups. Each outfit has been made to the highest standard and has been thoroughly documented with the weavers, including a series of photographs and interviews recorded at different stages of the project. You can obtain further information from Lisa at the Museum (4-5 Pavilion Buildings, Brighton, BN1 1EE) or e-mail her at [lisa.maddigan@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.maddigan@brighton-hove.gov.uk) She has sent me a (photocopied) booklet prepared for the project, which I shall be happy to lend to any member who would like to see it. Either she or Elizabeth Dell is going to write an article on the Asian textiles in the Museum for next June's newsletter.

After three years of mess and upheaval, the Horniman Museum will reopen, transformed, on Friday 14 June. As well as providing extra galleries and facilities, the new building has been designed to realise Frederick Horniman's vision, when he founded the Museum in 1902, of linking the Museum with the 16 acres of gardens - only a hundred years late! A display of 100 years of collecting opens a full programme of exhibitions and events, but I am not quite sure what interests us. Wait till February, however, when the Newsletter will contain an article on the Asian textiles in the Horniman.

The British Museum has recently commissioned and acquired a collection of 49 Turkish felt textiles, funded by the Friends of the Museum. They were collected by Selcuk Gurisik, a London Ph.D. student from Istanbul, who last year made a 5000 km journey around Turkey in search of the twenty or so craftsmen who still make decorated felt textiles. Sarah Posey has promised me an article on them for the next newsletter - so if you don't want to miss it and the ones from Brighton and the Horniman mentioned above, don't let your subscription lapse!

Editor

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

### Thai Textiles

Susan Conway, *Thai Textiles*, 2001, British Museum Press, 105 colour & 55 b/w photographs, paperback, ISBN 0 7141 2506 7, £18.99

It is always good news when a textile book is reissued, and even more so for this excellent volume, first published in 1992. When the British Museum Press started their series of books on ethnographic textiles, they were frankly uncertain of success and patently

unaware of the enthusiastic market that existed. Their venture paid off, and we have all benefitted from the results, with a range of beautifully illustrated books at modest prices.

Many people with greater knowledge of Thailand than mine will have reviewed Susan Conway's book when it first appeared, and I cannot pretend to comment in depth on all the aspects covered, but I can say that it is one of the most comprehensive and well-balanced textile books that I have read.

Susan Conway was trained as a painter. Living in Thailand in 1982, she began noticing the costumes and fabrics depicted in temple wall-paintings. From this encounter she became interested in the historical and cultural context and present-day production. She took a postgraduate course in textiles and dyeing at Goldsmiths College, and then followed many years of research resulting in the present volume.

Her chapters follow a well-ordered progression, starting with the peoples of Thailand, their history and culture, and religion and society. Two chapters on the more technical side cover the production of silk and cotton, dyeing, looms and weaving techniques, all of it shown as an integral part of daily life. Then we move on to a discussion of costume and ceremonial and household textiles, and finally three chapters on regional variations. Many superb illustrations, a bibliography, glossary and index complete the book. It should be noted that the many and varied "hill-tribes" of Thailand are not discussed - that's another whole volume, if not several!

If you did not buy, or read, this book when it first came out, do so now. Even if at the start you know little about Thailand, you will learn and be fascinated by the integration of textiles with the culture and religion of this beautiful country.

Veronica Johnston

### **Two Publications from Oxford Museums**

Ruth Barnes, Emma Dick and Jon Thompson, *Textiles Through the Ages*, Ashmolean Museum, 2002, ISBN 185444 184 1, 24 pp, pb, £3.95

Felicity Wood et al, *Basketry in the Pitt Rivers Museum*, 2001, folder, 55p

These two small publications are a must. The Ashmolean book is a wealth of colour pictures with descriptions, not only of actual textiles, but of sculpture and paintings in which they feature - such as the lady wearing a gorgeous Kashmir shawl on the front cover. Examples are taken from all cultures covered by the Museum, and Asia is well represented -by, among others, the recently acquired Ottoman velvet discussed by Ruth above, on the back cover. Not all the textiles illustrated or described, are regularly on display, but, curiously, the four large tapestries that are, do not get a mention.

The Pitt Rivers leaflet also comprises pictures, though in the form of line drawings, with explanatory notes and maps indicating where they can be found in the Museum. If you share my belief that basketry is akin to textiles, then this is for you.

Editor

# EXHIBITIONS

## Forbidden City - Treasures of an Emperor



Qianlong Emperor in ceremonial armour on horseback. Attributed to Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766)  
Hanging scroll, oil on silk, 1739-59

This exhibition is a real coup for the National Museums of Scotland, for it will not be shown anywhere else world-wide, and two thirds of the magnificent objects to be shown have never before been seen outside China. These great artworks are brought to Scotland exclusively from the Palace Museum, Beijing, formerly known as the Forbidden City, and are drawn from the collections of the Qianlong Emperor who ruled China from 1736 to 1795. The Emperor was a great collector and patron of the arts, and he had an enormous impact and influence on Chinese cultural history. His personal collections form more than half of the permanent collections of the Palace Museum, the largest and most prestigious museum in China.

Many of the paintings in the exhibition show the robes of the Emperor and others, including his grandfather, the Kangxi Emperor who, by coincidence, also ruled for sixty years. But there are also a number of textiles including the Qianlong Emperor's official court wear and an informal jacket. As well as the huge equestrian portrait illustrated opposite, the actual clothes and armour he is wearing in it are to be seen. Another painting, *The Parade of the Eight Banner Troops at the Grand Military Review*, depicting the Emperor's first military review in 1739, in which 20,000 troops took part, is complemented by eight suits of armour worn by the banner troops on such occasions.

Alongside the exhibition there will be a display of *The Forbidden Cashmere Collection*, commissioned by Ballantyne Cashmere, one of the exhibition's sponsors. These are sumptuous cashmere garments created by some of the world's most talented contemporary designers and directly inspired by the *Forbidden City* exhibition.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fascinating and richly illustrated book, available from the Museum shop.

*Forbidden City* will be on show at the Royal Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, 6 July to 15 September. There will be a study day on *Forbidden City: Exhibition of a Lifetime* on Saturday 13 July, 10 a.m.-4.45 p.m., and a workshop the following day, *The Emperor's New Clothes: Design a Traditional Chinese Garment* 2-4 p.m., for ages 12 and above. To apply for tickets or obtain full details of these and other events, tel. 0131 247 4169

Hannah Dolby (Press Officer)  
Jane Wilkinson (Senior Curator, East & Central Asian Collections)

### **Contemporary Japanese Textiles**

Contemporary Japan produces some of the most diverse and exciting textiles in the world. The great vitality of the work being created owes much to the country's rich heritage of dyeing and weaving skills. This small display features the work of several leading Japanese textile artists who look to such traditions as the starting point for the creation of modern designs. The *kimono* remains a primary focus of artistic expression for makers such as Matsubara Yoshichi and Shimura Fukumi, an indication of the potency of this garment as a symbol of Japanese cultural identity. Other traditional forms such as *noren* (doorway



curtains) and screens are also employed and the display includes a six-fold screen depicting paper-making work by one of the great masters of twentieth century textile design, Serizawa Keisuke.

Also exhibited are examples of the extraordinarily innovative textiles being produced by a number of Japanese designers who have embraced and pioneered the use of advanced production technologies. Artists featured include Arai Jun'ichi, Sudo Reiko and Miyamoto Eiji. The display continues in Gallery 98 at the Victoria and Albert Museum until the end of the year. (Tel. 020 7942 2000)

Anna Jackson (Exhibition Curator)

### Other Exhibitions in the U.K.

#### Mediating with Spirits

Exploring Shamanism in Korea at the Royal Museum, Edinburgh, until 30 March 2003. On display are dioramas and ritual objects used by shamans and the colourful costumes used to perform a *kut* the most elaborate of shaman rituals. Tel. 0131 247 4219/4422

#### Felt-Stitch-Bead

A selection of work by felt-maker Sarah Lawrence is on show at Pickford's House Museum in Derby until 7 July. It comprises beaded and embroidered feltworks, many inspired by her travels to Kyrgyzstan last year. It is complemented by a display of Kyrgyz hats on loan from the Kyrgyz Embassy. Tel. 01332 255363

#### Shikor o Phool (Roots and Blossoms)\*

Bangladesh exhibition at Gallery Oldham, 9 July to 14 September. The work of ten or more artists will be on display, including painting, manuscript illustration, and crafts. One artist, Shafiquei Kabir Chardon weaves tapestries in both modern and traditional patterns. Tel. 0161 9114653

#### 2002 Crafty Thoughts\*

Work by eight leading contemporary Sri Lankan artists at the University of Liverpool Art Gallery, 10 July to 13 September, including Anoli Perera who has created three panels of traditional lace crochet for the three windows of the room using traditional floral motifs and patterns commonly used by women in crocheted bedspreads. The three panels will be connected with lines of thread forming geometric patterns across the wall spaces between them to make a total of five panels. Tel. 0151 794 2348

#### Threads - Dreams - Desires\*

Pakistan exhibition at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, 11 July to 14 September. Positing "textile root" as a core component, this exhibition focuses on fabric as an idea and pattern as a mode of carrying meanings and simultaneously evokes and skirts tradition through the work of four women artists of Pakistan. Tel. 01772 258 248

#### Home-Street-Sbrine-Bazaar-Museum\*

Exhibition of new Indian art at the Manchester Art Gallery (though possibly no textiles), 13 July to 1 September. Tel. 0161235 8861

\*Part of the festival *ArtSouthAsia* initiated by Shisha

## Overseas

### Draped in Dragons

Chinese court costumes at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass., USA-, until 21 July. Tel. +1 (617) 267 9300

### Flowers from the Silk Road

Central Asian textiles and jewellery at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, U.S.A., until 1 September.  
Tel. +1 (317) 923 1331

## LECTURES AND EVENTS

### Dress and Costume of Nineteenth Century Iran

International Conference at the Centraal Facilititeitengebouw, Leiden, Netherlands, 20-21 June. The first day will be devoted to the basic materials: the study of Qajar era (1795-1925) dress and costume on the basis of extant collections, paintings and photographs. The second day will with additional and/or more abstract subjects, including Qajar era uniforms; the role of European, Russian, Man and Asian manufacturers and imports; the role of second-hand clothing; religious and secular influences on Iranian dress, etc.. Fee: 100 euros (or 80 excluding dinner). Further information from Dr W.J. Vogelsang, tel. 00 31 71 5272210 or 0031 71 5168766, e-mail: willemv@rinv.nl ; website: www.qajardress.com

### The Paradise Garden Carpet Project

Drop-in workshops at the Royal Museum, Edinburgh, Tuesday to Saturday 2-5 July, 2-4 p.m.. People representing multicultural communities in Edinburgh and Glasgow have created two giant textile pieces based on traditional Islamic Paradise Garden carpets. See their work and add your own garden design. Admission free.

### Multiple Perspectives Conference

An international conference in connexion with *ArtSouthAsia* on the visual culture of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be held on Friday and Saturday 12 and 13 July at the Manchester Art Gallery, with key speakers in the crafts and visual arts. Tel. 0161 838 5255

### Felt Making

Workshop at Green's Mill, Nottingham, Saturday 13 July, 10 am. - 4 p.m., £10 + £5 for materials. Jane Marrows will teach participants to create their own piece of felt, embellish it and make it into a small bag. Tel. 0115 984 3833

### Art in Action

The annual event at Waterperry House, near Wheatley, 18 to 21 July, will this year feature a special Central Asian section, including textiles, with artists from Bukhara. Tel. 0207 381 31192.

### Tapestry Weave Technique before A-D. 1500

Early Textiles Study Group conference, 6-8 September at the University of Manchester. Contact Frances Pritchard at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6ER, Tel. 0161275 7451

### Silk Roads, Other Roads

The Textile Society of America's symposium on this theme will be held at Smith College in Northampton, Mass., 26-28 September. Papers on silk & other textiles world-wide will be presented. Contact Pam Parnal, tel. 001 617 369 3707; e-mail: pparnal@mfa.org ; website, <http://textilesociety.org> Parnal,