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THAI TEXTILE SOCIETY STUDY TRIP TO CHIANG RAI

By Johanna Hall

I was fortunate enough to take part in the study trip to Chiang Rai in January. It was my first Thai Textile Society trip, and a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Our group of 11 textile enthusiasts, led by Khun Chomporn, who had planned and organized every aspect of the trip with the invaluable help of Siew-Eng Koh met at Don Mueang airport at 6:30 am for our flight to Chiang Rai. We shared our luggage allowance, which for those of us incapable of travelling light was quite a challenge! Despite this, we were able to absorb the many boxes of gifts that we would later be donating to children from the Akha hill tribe.

On arrival in Chiang Rai our first stop was the Oub Kham Museum. This private museum takes its name from a golden bowl made from woven bamboo and then lacquered, used by members of royalty. The museum was established around 20 years ago by Khun Julasak Suriyachai, a teacher and art lover related to a Lanna royal family, with the aim of collecting and preserving artefacts belonging to or associated with the Lanna Kingdom, and the Shan State in present day Myanmar. Khun Julasak’s principal aim in establishing the museum and the Lanna Heritage

Conservation Centre was to raise awareness among Thai people of their heritage.



Akha hill tribe children, teachers, with gifts from the society

The collection mainly consists of objects used at the royal courts including lacquer ware, silver jewelry and clothing. We were taken on a guided tour of the myriad objects in the collection. Particular interest from a textile point of view was a 200-year-old Tai Yai royal court silk dress embroidered with gold; a silk robe belonging to a Tai Yai prince with gold and silver thread and green sequins made from beetle wings; and a Chao Fa’s robe from Hunan.



Yuan tube skirt



Multi-purpose decorative textile pieces



Another room was dedicated to costumes of various Tai groups from Laos, the Shan States, Yunnan, Guangxi and Zhiang, among others. Unfortunately, photography was not permitted. In contrast to the sumptuous royal robes and the intricate designs of the Tai textiles was 800-year old bra made of bronze, which looked as uncomfortable as it sounds. From the museum we drove to Doi Tung for lunch where we enjoyed a variety of delicious Chiang Rai specialties, such as pork ribs in tamarind sauce, crispy fried mushrooms with basil, and ice cream with avocado. After lunch, Khun Chomporn presented school supplies and toys on behalf of the Thai Textile Society to a group of children from the Akha hill tribe who were dressed in their traditional costume, including spectacular headdresses that incorporate silver coins.

There was then time for a quick visit to the beautiful gardens of the Mae Fah Luang Arboretum, brilliant with its mix of exotic tropical flowers, and somewhat surprisingly those more familiar in Europe such as dahlias, geraniums, and pansies. This was followed by a visit to Wat Phra That Doi Tung, which has the oldest chedi in Lanna, said to have originally been built in 940 during the reign of Phraya Ruen Kaew, Prince of Chiang Rai, to house the Lord Buddha's collarbone relic, and constructed in a mixture of Bhu-kam (ancient Burmese) and Lanna style.

Where better to have tea (and cake) than a tea plantation? The final item on the day's itinerary was a visit to Choui Fong tea plantation where we sampled various teas and a number of delicious cakes in a beautifully designed sala pavilion overlooking row upon row of tea bushes and the mountains beyond. After that, we arrived at Phu Chaisai Mountain Resort, close to the border with Myanmar, where we were to have dinner and spend the night. The resort has spectacular views of the surrounding countryside, altogether a delightful place to stay, serving delicious food that included homegrown vegetables and homemade bread.



The following morning, we visited Wat Phra That Chedi Luang at Chiang Saen built in 1290 by King Saen Phu, the 3rd ruler of the Lanna kingdom, and has an 88-metre high bell-shaped Lanna style principal chedi, making it the tallest religious Lanna monument in Chiang Rai province. From there we went to Chiang Saen Lanna Weaving Centre, a textile museum founded by the Abbot of Wat Phra That Pha Ngao to preserve the cultural and weaving heritage of the Tai Yuan peoples who had settled in Chiang Saen in ancient times. The museum houses a collection of textiles made by various Tai Yuan groups whose ancestors were later resettled from Chiang Saen to places like Chiang Mai, Lampang, Nan, Ratchaburi and Vientiane, after the sack of Chiang Saen by orders of King Rama I to prevent the Burmese from returning to Thailand. The pieces were beautifully displayed accompanied by plenty of information boards explaining the various patterns and their significance.

After lunch in the garden of a restaurant overlooking the Mekong, we visited the Lue Lai Kham Textile Museum which houses a collection of rare Tai Lue textiles.



Lue Lai Kham Textile Museum

The Tai Lue live in the Golden Triangle area that stretches over many states in several counties, from Chiang Hung in the Sipsong Panna region of southern Yunnan, China, to Mae Sai, Chiang Khong and Chiang Kham in Thailand, to Muang Yaung in Myanmar and Muang Sing in northern Laos. Baan

Sri Don Chai in Chiang Khong district is noted for its koh luang technique, in which the supplementary weft is run back and forth with different coloured thread. Each thread is tied into the wrap yarn as it is added to strengthen the fabric and create the intricate pattern called lai nam lai (flowing water pattern), which signifies the Tai Lue’s resettlement along the Mekong River. Hat Bai is known for its “chok” technique, where the supplementary weft forms complex and colourful geometric patterns. The museum’s collection includes sarongs and blouses that are around 100 years old that would have been worn by the women of Sri Don Chai when attending weddings. The long-sleeved blouses are made from dark indigo-dyed cotton and decorated with triangular patterns of coloured thread. The Sri Don Chai tube skirts have typically bright horizontal patterns at the midriff and a plain, dark coloured hem.

The collection includes a rare selection of Tai Lue weavings from Laos, particularly the northern province of Luang Namtha, where a typical woman’s cotton blouse might be black or dyed dark with indigo and have embroidered bands at the front, while the tube skirt mixes the techniques of chok, koh luang, ikat (mudmee), khit (using a continuous supplementary weft) and pan kai, the last with stripes of different-coloured yarn twisted together. There are also examples of Tai Lue textiles from Myanmar and Vietnam.



Textiles exhibited from Chiang Rai Province



**Tai Lue Traditional Dress
Lue Lai Kham Textile Museum**

We spent the remainder of the afternoon visiting a number of weaving workshops with plenty shopping opportunities before arriving for the night at Bansaeo Garden and Resort in Chiang Saen, a beautifully designed hotel on the banks of the Mekong with views across the river to Laos.

The next morning, we visited a Yao village at Mae Chan where we were lucky enough to be able to watch women from the Yao hill tribe at work on the exquisitely fine cross-stitch that is typical of their work. Yao women wear long black jackets with fluffy red woolen lapels, loose black trousers embroidered with intricate designs, and matching black turbans.



Yao Women

The older women were presented with magnifying visors on behalf of the Thai Textile Society, which they were clearly delighted with, and which will hopefully enable them to continue their painstaking work of weaving.



Douglas Sanders presenting of magnifying glasses



Stitching with the help of magnifying glasses



Yao embroidery



Tai Lue textiles at Princess Dara Rasmi Cottage



Our final day included visits to the Doy Din Dang Pottery, Baan Dam Museum (which houses the work of famed artist Thawan Duchanee and other contemporary Thai artists), and Wat Rong Khun, the famous white temple designed by well-known artist Chalermchai Kositpipat from Chiang Rai.

Last, but by no means least, was a visit to Hor Phlab Phla, Princess Dara Rasmi Cottage, named after King Rama V's consort who used it as a resting place on the way from Chiang Rai to Chiang Mai. It is said that the Princess enjoyed seeing the Tai Lue and Tai Yuan weaving in the local villages and encouraged their promotion. The building, reconstructed in 2008, now houses a textile museum and a weaving school where young people are encouraged to learn their traditional art form. It is so popular that apparently it is difficult to get the school children to leave the looms and go home. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm among the youngsters, which will hopefully help to ensure that the local weaving skills are not lost. The museum contains a wonderful collection of Tai Lue textiles including sarongs, banners and bed covers, all of which are beautifully displayed.

It was a great privilege to visit so many places in Chiang Rai province that would be hard to find without local knowledge and the hard work that Khun Chomporn and Khun Siew-Eng put into making this a memorable trip. Thankfully, Khun Chomporn had purchased additional luggage allowance in anticipation of shopping (!) and the airline graciously overlooked a little overweight luggage on the return journey.



**RAOUL DUFY, THE PAINTER WHO MADE
TEXTILE DESIGNS A FINE ART**

By John Toomey



The French artist Raoul Dufy is known for his Post-Impressionist work as well as Cubism and Fauvism. In addition to painting, he developed a colorful, decorative style that became fashionable for textile designs, ceramics, architecture and more. Last autumn he was honored with an exhibition of his work, titled “Raoul Dufy: Paintings and Textile Designs” held October 5 - December 15 at the Rouault Gallery of the Panasonic Shiodome Museum of Art, one of Tokyo’s premiere art museums known to exhibit French art. Objects were drawn from the Bianchini- Férier Archives, now owned by Dufy-Bianchini, to introduce visitors to Dufy’s design drawings, stylishly graceful paintings, original textiles, and prototype prints, as well as clothing made from reproductions of his textiles. Unfortunately, photography was prohibited in all the exhibition rooms with the exception of a small alcove in the foyer, where three mannequins wearing his costumes for the play *My Fair Lady* were placed. These were available for the ever-popular ‘selfies’. Due to the restriction, photographs herein were taken from the exhibition pamphlet and from online media. One highlight at the exhibition was the ‘Insects’ section, where one could view not only gloriously painted butterflies in flight, but also rows of silkworms in a single picture, not painted, but woven as a design for a sampler with supplementary threads giving the piece a three-dimensional and so realistic look!





Dufy started as an Impressionist painter under the influence of Claude Monet, creating airy washes of light and shade, learning not only from his mentor Monet but also from Fauvist artist Henri Matisse. Influenced by the latter, Dufy emphasized the decorative, using ornamental elements in his early paintings. It was, however, with his textile designs that he transformed the decorative into the sensuous and ecstatic. In fact, Dufy's work in textile design, first with fashion designer Paul Poiret and later with the Lyon based silk manufacturer Bianchini-Ferrier, formed his fine art style. The flat decorative pattern of colors he employed in textile designs transformed his paintings so that by the 1920s they had become fully ornamental.



Born into a large family at Le Havre, in Normandy, at fourteen Raoul Dufy left school to help his family by working in a coffee-importing company. At eighteen, he enrolled in evening art classes at Le Havre's École des Beaux-Arts. He later lived in Montmartre and painted mostly watercolors of the Normandy's landscape, but in time, he traveled and painted within France and internationally. In the city of Nice in the south of France, he painted his famed views of the city, including horse races and regattas on the Mediterranean Sea. These joyous seascapes with their vibrant colors, bold calligraphic lines, and sparse modeling display the ardor with which the painter transformed himself from Impressionist into Fauve following his first encounter with Fauvism in 1905 at the Salon des Indépendants.



French countryside painted on cloth

Having won a scholarship to the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1900, Dufy concentrated on improving his drawing skills. For the Exposition Internationale held in Paris in 1937. He painted "Ode to Electricity" using great swatches resembling light flares, this being one of the largest and most popular fresco paintings ever attempted.



Dufy who had acquired a reputation as an illustrator and a commercial artist, found himself in 1909 in financial straits. It was a boon when Paul Poiret, known as the King of Fashion, commissioned him to design stationery for his fashion house. This led in 1912 to Dufy designing textiles for Poiret's garments. It was quite revolutionary, as at a time when the vogue was delicate pastel paisleys, floral and polka dots designs, Poiret used Dufy's strikingly bold, colorful and sumptuous designs to create eyebrow-raising garments. Poiret took his attired models to races and other public gatherings, causing a sensation with his creations that would still turn heads today. This long lasting relationship with Poiret led to Dufy designing for the prestigious silk manufacturers Bianchini-Férier of Lyons who had Dufy design textile patterns for the silks, which Poiret used in designing his garments. Dufy's subsequent textile designs reflected his Fauvist convictions by

infusing the softer, more luminous colors with his special, witty personal sense of *joie de vivre*, adding these to his sheer, layered colored material that was cut in broad shapes to which calligraphic lines gave definition.



Tigers and Elephants



Like Dufy, Poiret saw no dichotomy between the fine and the practical arts, thinking of art and fashion as one. He invented a unique approach to dressmaking by draping the fabric over the body rather than tailoring it by using dress patterns. He got his inspiration from ancient cultures, particularly from the Orient. His use of Dufy's



designs resulted in such famed signature creations as the “La Perse” coat, “La Rosed’iribe” day dress, and the “Bois de Boulogne” dinner dress created from materials designed by Dufy for Bianchini-Férier. In 1912, Dufy left the Poiret’s atelier for Charles Bianchini’s receiving an exclusive contract. In this new partnership, Dufy originated thousands of designs. He used certain themes repeatedly namely flowers (mostly roses), trees, leaves, insects and exotic animals, especially leopards and elephants, as his favorites. He also excelled in designing geometric motifs, by juxtaposing opposing colors to show the design and the motifs equally.



Part 2 of article in the
Thai Textile Newsletter Fall 2019

IKATS IN THE LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS

**By Jenny L. Spancake
Photographs by Steven C. Spancake**

Flores

We began our exploration of warp ikat on the island of Flores. Flores is a long, thin island divided into areas known as Regencies. The population is 1.9 million people consisting of several distinct ethnic groups, each with its own language and customs. A good source for information on Flores is *Gift of the Cotton Maiden: Textiles of Flores and the Solor Islands*, edited by Roy Hamilton. My information on Flores is drawn from this source and the information on asiantextilestudies.com and handouts from David and Sue Richardson.

The five major groups on Flores are generally classified as Manggarai, Ngadha, Ende-Lio, Sikka and Lamaholot. We did not visit all five groups, but it is important to note the diversity that exists on just one island. To know all Indonesian textiles is a difficult task. To make things more difficult, it is difficult to travel around the island by road; sailing between villages is the most efficient form of travel.

Lio People

Our first stop at a village was in the district of Ndonga in the Ende Regency. We were greeted by the villagers in traditional dress as we would be at each village we visited. The village is made up of people from the Lio ethnic group and maintains a cooperative producing traditional textiles with natural dyes. The textiles produced in the Ndonga district are very diverse. Because of close ties with their Endenese neighbors and with other Lio districts, Ndonga’s textiles often resemble cloths woven by Endonese women or like those done in the Wolowaru district by other Lio weavers (Hamilton, p. 123). shows two weavers with their textiles, each quite different. Also, it is important to note that weaving is prohibited by adat (traditional custom) in most parts of the Lio



region and practiced only in the southern areas, where the villages we visited were located.



Two weavers with their textiles in Ndona district

Lio women’s sarongs are known as *lawo* and I mention this in order to illustrate the complexity of textile terminology in Indonesia. Each group has its own words for their textiles and with that vocabulary orders them to show complexity and ritual purpose by color, layout and pattern. I will not list the specific terms but I would like to list the numbers of different ones that exist in just one Lio group. Each of the following classifications begin with the name *lawo* as it is a woman’s sarong, so do keep in mind we are only now enumerating female cloths; then the descriptions with other words follow. There are six different classifications of *lawo* with a central field, three different *lawo* with vertical sections, seven with horizontal bands, *lawo* with a single pattern, *lawo* with pictorial motifs, and also *lawo* devoid of ikat (Richardsons’ notes, May 2019). As each group has so many descriptive terms for their own textiles, I will use the most common ones. I think this small example makes clear the complexity of textiles in Indonesia.

This small cooperative had an interesting diversity of motifs. They presented both sarongs and scarves (selandong in Bahasa Indonesia) for sale.



Textiles for sale in Ndona district

Despite a small community, the sarongs were beautifully tied and dyed.



Textiles in Ndona



Textiles in Ndona

Nggela

The Nggela community has been the best-known village of the Lio group, both for its elaborate cycle of annual rituals and for its weaving. The clan houses of this village are also often illustrated. People of Nggela take great pride in their cultural achievements. They have elaborate gold jewelry and they also bestow the greatest bridewealth in the Lio region, sometimes up to fifty or more textiles.

Warp ikat is as described above different from weft ikat in that the pattern is tied into the warp rather than into the weft. As one knows if you watch a weft ikat weaver, there are usually white or similar colored straight lines along the edge of the pattern which are used to align the pattern correctly. One may say that weaving with the pattern in the warp would be easier; the pattern is already there and ready for just plain weave to turn it into a cloth. However, if one talks to a weaver of warp ikat, nothing is that simple. The warp threads can shift so it is important to keep it in a stable position during weaving. One way this is done is to tie a thread across the warp to keep it in line. We were lucky in Nggela as one weaver was doing this.



Preparing warp for weaving in Nggela

We were able to purchase a piece from a well-known weaver, Elizabeth Pango, known as Mama Ango. She is featured in an exhibition catalog from the Museum der Kulturen Basel, entitled *Striking Patterns: Global Traces in Local Ikat Fashion*. This catalog contains a number of excellent articles on the state of ikat weaving, especially the current ongoing discussion of the meaning in textile motifs. The piece we purchased from Mama Ango as discussed above is one in which the relationship of local textiles to patola patterns can be seen, but she is also well-known for her pictorial textiles.



Mama Ango with pictorial motifs on textile



Mama Ango is optimistic about the future of ikat weaving in Nggela as she says there are still many women who weave. Of course, the problem is getting paid the right price.

Sikka

The Sikka Regency is inhabited by people who call themselves Sikkaneese and who speak the local language of Sara Sikka. One interesting aspect of bridewealth in Sikka is that it is never paid in full because that payment would sever the relationship between the two houses involved in the marriage. A series of payments are made throughout the marriage by the family of the groom (Richardsons’ notes, Sikka Regency). I am omitting so much of the detail of all these relationships such as how each culture creates its hierarchy, how lines of descent are decided (matrilineal or patrilineal or a combination), and so on, as space does not allow such detail.

We visited the Iwang Gete region of Sikka Regency, an area that maintained its independence from the neighboring Rajadoms. They were regarded as “hillbillies” by the Ata Sikka, the predominant group of the region (Richardsons’ notes, Sikka Regency). The village here welcomed us in a particularly unique way. Two members of our group were chosen to be attired as raja and rani for the day. They were dressed in traditional costume down to the smallest detail, including in our female representative a change in hair color. My husband enjoyed being raja for the day.



Steve and Mary as Raja and Rani

Large pictorial designs dominate the center panel of the sarongs in this village illustrated by this group of women.



Group of women in sarongs

Another striking characteristic of this village was the use of beautiful woven bracelets.



Woven bracelets

Palu’e

Another interesting village in the Sikka Regency is inhabited by refugees from the island of Palu’e located fifteen kilometers off the north coast of Flores. The island has almost no accessible drinking water and an active volcano. This volcano erupted a number of times in the recent past and a number of the island’s inhabitants have formed a new village. They have simple but distinctive textiles as shown by the dancers.



Dancing in the village of Palu'e refugees

The textiles have remained unchanged over the years as the layout of new cloths are carefully copied from old ones. The layout is red bands against a black background which is lighter today generally being blue as less dipping needs to be done. Ikat is white on the darker bands with traditional motifs as seen here on the loom.



Distinctive pattern from Palu'e

Lamaholot Area

The East Flores Regency plus the islands of Adonara, Solor and Lembata are linguistically and culturally related and are distinct from the Sikka Regency to the west of this area. There are however three difference Lamaholot dialects in the region, each with its own subgroups. The villages in East Flores aound the Ili Mandiri volcano are well known for the quality of their weaving. We visited a village in this area and as always received a very warm welcome.



Villagers of Bama welcome us

The sarongs feature many bands of small ikat with shells added for decoration.



Sarongs



A group of young girls who danced for us all wear these traditional designs.



Little girls in traditional dress

We also saw belts made by the use of a supplementary warp technique which have become quite rare.



Supplementary warp belt

Demonstrations here also focused on the complete making of a textile beginning with the preparation of the cotton done before a backdrop of ikat.



Ladies sitting before ikats for sale demonstrate cotton production

The tying of ikat is done here by a weaver in the traditional dress of the village.



Tying ikat

The shells must be shaved into flat pieces and holes are drilled for attachment to the sarong.



Cotton production

Another village with a reputation for natural dyes and well tied ikat was a highlight. As we spent more time in the Lesser Sundas, the more women we saw drop spinning.



Drop spinning

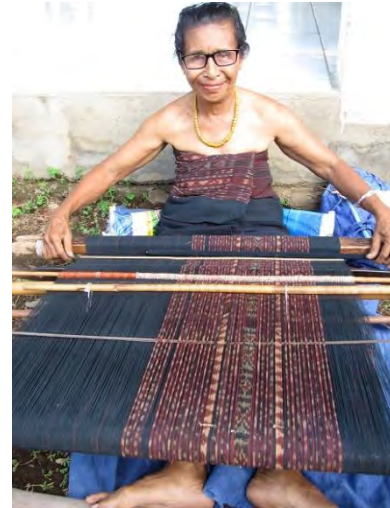
Never just walking, these women were busy spinning cotton thread as they went about the village. Another interesting aspect of this village is that the cotton there is a natural brown shade, rather than the white found elsewhere.



Tying natural brown cotton

As usual this village had distinctive designs for their sarongs; here is one on the loom.

The Thai Textile Society welcomes articles from you, our members and readership.
You can request Guidelines for Submission of articles at bkk.tts@gmail.com - Attention: Ruth Gerson



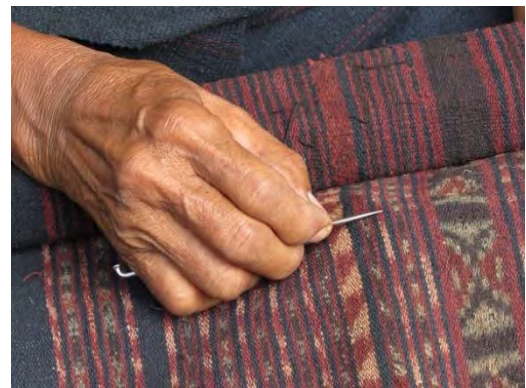
Weaving distinctive pattern of the village

We also saw the care with which the panels that make up a sarong are sewn together.



Sewing panels of sarong together

As discussed above, slippage in the warp when weaving warp ikat can occur and I illustrated the way the warp is anchored before weaving begins. But after completion of the textile, adjustments can still be made with a small pick to make the pattern line up as the weaver desires.



Adjusting ikat after weaving

We also visited the island of Lembata, which is still the least accessible of the islands of the



Lamaholot area. Lembata is famous for the quality of its sarongs produced for bride wealth, particularly the whaling village of Lamalera. These textiles must be made from local cotton using natural dyes and must include wide ikat designs. To retain their use as bride wealth, the unwoven warp cannot be cut. Although renowned for these textiles, the quality of the cloth is not of this high quality recently, at least in the textiles offered for sale. We did purchase a cloth from Mama Agnes, one of the local weavers



Sarong with weaver Mama Agnes in Lamalera; ikats for sale in background

Looking at the quality of the textiles hanging for sale, it is obvious that the market is calling for simpler pieces. Another view of textiles for sale can be seen behind local girls performing a dance that includes acting out the weaving process.



Traditional dance in Lamalera which includes weaving

Ruth Barnes did her doctoral dissertation research on Lamalera; it has been published as *The Ikat Textiles of Lamalera: A Study of an Eastern Indonesian Weaving Tradition.* This is an excellent source of more detailed information on this island.

Ternate

A very small island which should not be confused with the larger island north of the Lesser Sundas, Ternate is most interesting for the wide range of natural dyes that are produced here, many produced from sea products.



Range of natural dyes produced in Ternate



We visited this Muslim village during Ramadan and received a very warm and gracious welcome. We were greeted with a local dance, dye demonstrations, and refreshments despite the fact our hostesses could not join with us in eating and drinking.



Women performing lego lego dance

One of the most interesting dyes is produced from a gastropod.



Gastropod

This sea creature produces both a purple and a green dye from different parts of its body, plus provides needed protein for a community with little access to farmland. A video of the process of producing the purple color has already been posted on the Thai Textile Society website. The purple dye is a vibrant color in the dye bath and the cotton is dyed by placing it into the dye and boiling water.



Purple dye from gastropod



Placing dye in boiling water



Dyeing cotton

However, as can be seen in photo below one dip produces a pale color, so as with the other dyes discussed here multiple dips are required to produce the desired color. A great deal of information about dyes on Ternate is available on asiantextilestudies.com.



Pale pink produced by one dip into the dye

Another interesting textile produced in this village is one made from a combination of cotton and milkweed fibers. As the supply of cotton the weavers can afford is limited, they extend their raw material for weaving by mixing the cotton with fibers from the milkweed plant. They can also use the milkweed for dye producing a distinctive green color. In some of the weavers are seated in front of textiles for sale. The green ones with a crab design in the bands are made with this fiber combination and dyed with the milkweed dye.



Women seated before textiles for sale; green ones with crab from milkweed

West Timor

We landed at the beach in Kupang, capital of the Kupang Regency, where Captain Bligh landed after his legendary trip across a wide expanse of the Pacific when forced into a small boat by the mutineers of H.M.S. Bounty. Timor has recently been in the textile spotlight with the major exhibition held a few years ago by the Fowler Museum, *Textiles of Timor: Island in the Woven Sea*, edited by Roy Hamilton and Joanna Barrkman. The diversity of the textiles produced on Timor is staggering with a wide variety of textile techniques being used. I encourage anyone interested in Southeast Asian textiles to look at this catalog.

We only saw a small bit of the wide assortment of these textiles. We visited the area of the Amarasi, who belong to the Atoni ethnic group, and were welcomed by the current Raja of Amarasi.



Raja of Amarasi and wife

These textiles are very distinctive with rust colored ikat. Men’s blankets always have a white cotton center panel; look at what the Raja is wearing in the photograph. Women wear a two panel sarong with bands of designs.



Two young Amarasi dancers

One of these textiles can be seen on the loom at a cooperative that we visited.



Ikat on loom at Amarasi cooperative

If one looks at early textiles in museums, the patterns seen today are very much the same as those done in the past.

We also visited the Helong, a group with its own language and which is said to predate the Atoni people. This group has become quite small and

we visited those who live in a tiny area in the far western end of Timor. We saw the work of a cooperative that still is producing a classic design of textile, the same patterns that appear in an early twentieth century textile in the Fowler Museum.



Ikat at Helong cooperative

Many of the photographs of morinda dyeing were taken at this cooperative which now has only four weavers. They seem to be producing only this one design but their dyeing is very good and their ikat precise.

Sumba

Sumba has long been known for its outstanding ikat. Sumba is also an island that has been well recorded in history from its participation in the fourteenth century kingdom of Majapahit through Dutch colonial history. On the island many internal wars were fought between small rival kingdoms over land and trade rights. Trade was, despite this warfare, a strong part of Sumba's history with the main export items being sandalwood, horses and slaves. We often hear discussions of sandalwood and spices but it is important to also include the live aspects of trade, particularly slaves as slavery was endemic in Southeast Asia. Horses were also a very important commodity and a status item for the nobility. When one looks at Sumbanese ikat, horses very often appear. One good source for information on Sumba, other than asiantextilestudies.com is *Decorative Arts of Sumba* from the Pepin Press.



The traditional religion is known as *Marapu* with about 27% of the population registered as followers. Christians make up 68% of the population but there is still a great deal of respect for the traditional beliefs and rituals. Ancestors are an important part of this traditional religion. The great ones upon death become *Marapu*, invisible powers who can help or if neglected harm their descendants. Ceremonial centers contain the graves of great men. Sacred heirlooms are stored in the roofs of sacred family houses. There are still many local kingdoms. *Marapu* are often seen as human figures on Sumbanese textiles. The importance of weaving in the culture can also be seen as weavers are carved as part of the decoration on tombs.



Stone carving of women at looms on tomb in Sumba

Sumba is associated with the *hinggi*, the name for a man's cloth in Sumba. This is made from two identical ikat cloths sewn together, although they can contain areas of supplementary warp designs known as *pahikung* or with added shells. The creation of the ikat begins in a different way than most ikats. A person draws the design that will be tied on to the threads on the threads themselves.



Drawing ikat pattern on to thread

The next step is to tie the pattern in following the drawn pattern.



Tying ikat from drawn pattern

Note the bowl of water sitting on the ikat frame. The tier wets each strip of palm tie in the water before tying. This will then shrink when the palm dries making it a tighter seal for the dyeing process. At the end of the textile after the two pieces have been sewn together, the unwoven warp threads become the weft threads for a weaving which finishes the bottom of the *hinggi* known as *kabakil*. After this, it is finished with fringing.



Weaving kabakil



Finished kabakil



Sumba is well known for the pictorial motifs on *hinggi*. A wide variety of motifs are seen: horses, skull trees as reminders of the days of headhunting on the island, crabs, crayfish, dragons and also the *Marapu*, the legendary ancestors. We saw many varied designs offered for sale.



Hinggi with dragon pattern



Wide variety of ikats for sale – Sumba

Patola patterns can also be seen on *hinggi* and were once restricted to the aristocracy. We visited the workshop of Freddy Hambuwali who can be seen in this next photo explaining the process at his workshop. In the background, there is a clear example of a *hinggi* based on patola patterning.



Hinggis for sale at Freddy Hambuwali's workshop; patola pattern on one hinggi

Another interesting use of ikat is when it is used as one or more bands of a sarong with *pahikung*, supplementary warp, in other bands

The skill that it takes to do this is considerable as it involves mastering two completely different techniques as well as the difficulty of keeping an even tension while weaving these two techniques.



Ikat with pahikung on same sarong

This article has been a very brief introduction to an immense subject. As I have said above, I can only hope that I can encourage textile lovers to read more about the subject and to visit the weavers. We all support traditional weaving with natural dyes, but the weavers cannot afford to continue this art without support from those who buy their textiles. Please consider the work that goes into such a work of art created from the heart of the weaver and pay a fair price. Do not perpetuate the stereotype of handwoven textiles as cheap women's labor.



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Fred's Sketchpad

THAI FASHION OVER THE CENTURIES

By Kodjo Guiot and Dimpy Kongsiri

Lopburi, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya.

No doubt these three capitals have witnessed elegant nobles wearing the trendiest and most exquisite outfits of the region long before our today's fashionable trio, London, Paris, Tokyo. These historical capitals located between China, the silk global leader on the East, and India, the historic cradle of top designers on the West, with rich deposits of gemstones and precious metals, could be nothing but lively centers of refinement and elegance. We have tried, in the footsteps of Khun Peeramon Chomdhavat, a dance and costume artist, to imagine how the nobility used to dress.

Looking for inspiration in books, movies, artifacts of the National Museums of Thailand, and murals, we have designed one full outfit for each main period of Thailand's glorious past.

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It might not be a solidly scientific approach, but we believe these drawings may reveal some truths. In any case, we hope these pages will make you feel like you're witnessing fashion unfolding for one of the most elegant countries in the world.

Vocabulary:

- Pha yerabab: silk cloth woven with thread that was wrapped with gold, and brocaded.
- Pha kemkab: horizontal stripes sometimes interspersed with gold flower motifs. The importance of the cloth could be measured by how close together these flower motifs were. The more tightly packed they were, the most valuable the cloth and prestige of the person wearing it.
- Pha yok silk: cloth woven with gold wrapped thread. From Nakorn Sri Thamarat, Southern Thailand.
- Pha som pak: ikat silk woven by Khmer, there were also different qualities within this type of cloth.
- Pha atalat: cotton cloth woven with silk and gold threads.
- Pha lai yang: block printed cotton imported from India. The Indian patterns were not to the Thai's liking so they sent "lai Thai" or Thai motifs to be used when printing the cloth that was sold to Siam. Often the Pah lai yang has gold lines painted on to them and this added value and were then worn by the King and more important members of the royal family.
- Pha lai nok yang: some Indians tried to copy the Thai motifs but these looked different. They were sold in Thailand as a lower quality of cloth.



DVARAVATI

Approximately 6th to 11th century CE

- Men and women wore the same accessories,
- (golden necklaces and metal belts),
- Women wore clothes with patterns but men wore plain garments,
- Men wore pants similar to Indian loin cloths.
-

Jewels, similar to prehistoric examples, but smaller and more delicate

Indian influence in the appearance of a comb in the bun



Decorative Dhammacakha base.
Nakhon Pathom, 12th-13th c. CE



Fragments of reliefs showing ornaments worn by people of Ancient Nakhon Pathom, 7th-11th c. CE



Metal ring used as an amulet, found in Surat Thani the south of Thailand



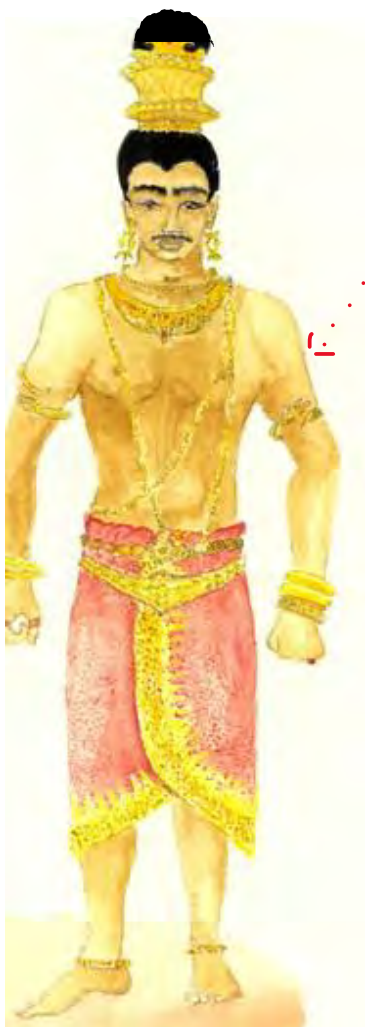
SRIVIJAYA

Approximately 8th to 12th century CE

- All sorts of jewelry: headdresses, necklaces, belts, rings, earrings, arm bracelets... however they may not have been worn all at the same time,
- Local cloth and jewelry production as well as imports from Rome, Persia, India and China



Gold ornaments found at Khao Chai Son district, Patthalung province



Elaborate jewels made of gold, silver, bronze, agate, carnelian, turquoise and quartz



Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, 9th-10th c., found in Chaiya,

LOPBURI

Approximately 10th to 13th century CE

- Men and women wore similar accessories. The difference was between the rich and the poor.
- Men and women wore a short sarong with a metal belt. Both ends of the sarong came together in the front to look like a stripe.



Earrings with stones or in the shape of an upsidedown lotus bud



Accessories found in Prasat Ban Thanonhak, Phimai National Museum.



Prajnaparamita, found at Nakhon Ratchasima province, NMB



Cone hair dress and hair bun

Belt buckle with decorative flower design

SUKHOTHAI

From 1238 to 1248CE

- Influenced by Lanka, Lanna, Khmer art and Ayutthayan art in the latest decades,
- Men's clothing was a simple full sleeved top with a long V-shape neck (but most times they were bare chested). The bottom half was usually a jong kraben;

- Women wore long silk sarongs with flowers painted on it,
- Unmarried women wore tight fitting shirts and a sabai scarf,
- Married women wore a cloth wrapped around the breast made of silk or other fabric.

Pha lai yang
A fragment of block-printed cotton, 13th-14th century. Made in Western India



Headdress decorated with triangles or rows of small grids

Jewelry were made of gold, silver and bronze

Clothing was some- times made of Chinese silk.



Vertical slats in a window opening at Wat Nang Phaya, Inner city of Si Satchanalai Historical Park

Bronze of King Ramkhamhaeng Sukhothai Historical Park

Shiva, Sukhothai 14th-15th c. CE, NMB.



AYUTTHAYA

From 1350 to 1767 CE

- Styles changed frequently under the influences of many countries,
- Men and women dressed in a loin cloth wrap called jong kraben,
- Bare chests and bare feet were accepted as part of Siamese formal dress code,
- Ladies wore a garland around the hair bun and hair pins.

Royalty and nobility wore a lomphok (a tall pointed hat, made of white cloth wrapped around a bamboo frame) in late Ayutthayan era as well as a khruai (light outer garment worn as a gown or robe)



Standing crowned and bejeweled Buddha, National Museum Ayutthaya



A royal outfit under King Naresuan's reign

Kings wore a crown, earrings, a chest chain with a large cross in the middle, in the late Ayutthayan period



Pha kad (waist sash)

Jong kraben



Golden accessories with gemstones (from top to bottom): ornament, rings with mythical animals, arm bracelets, and breast chains.



RATTANAKASIN

From 1782 to today

- Garments inspired by Ayutthaya with more complex designs due to the new techniques introduced by Chinese, Indian and western craftsmen,
- Thai decorative designs such as kranok or kampu
- Early Rattanakosin women preferred a short hair style called song dok kratum



Gold enameled with blue, red, green and white. Use of stones and diamond.



Royal shoes with velvet and embroidery

A royal lady under King Rama IV's reign



Pha song sapak
(Embroidered sash)

Sabai

Pha pu lat kien thong
Printed cotton fabric decorated with golden lines fabric used as a bedcover or shawl.
Textiles Gallery, NMB



*Fred's Sketchpad is a publication of NMVSALA Magazine - Issue No 17, April-May 2019

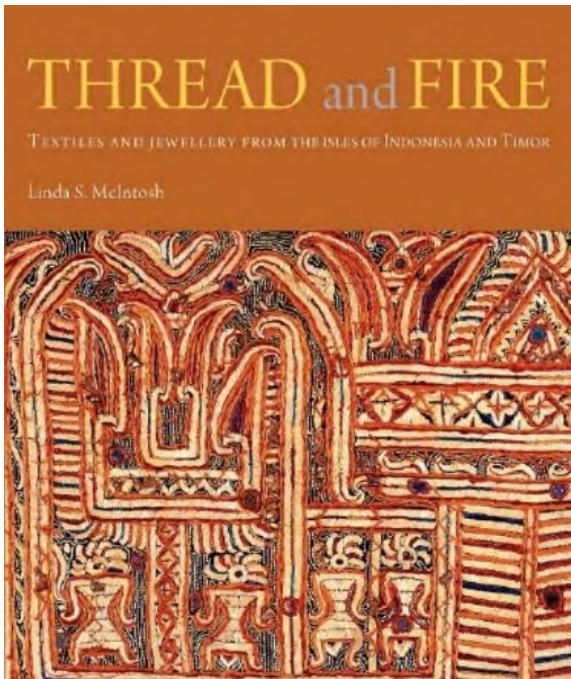


BOOK REVIEW

**THREAD AND FIRE:
TEXTILES AND JEWELLERY FROM THE
ISLES OF INDONESIA AND TIMOR**

By Dr. Linda S. McIntosh

Reviewed by Jenny L. Spancake



A Life Member of the Thai Textile Society, Dr. Linda S. McIntosh has recently authored a book on Indonesian textiles entitled *Thread and Fire: Textiles and Jewelry from the Isles of Indonesia and Timor* (River Books, 2019). Recently there has been an increase in the publication of books on textiles, including area studies, trade patterns, art history, catalogs of textile exhibitions, and private collections of textiles. This recent book focuses on the collection of one private individual, in this case Francisco Capelo. As my husband and I are also avid textile collectors, we are interested in seeing the collections of others, especially as it is an insight into what that collector is most interested in and what aesthetic choices, he or she has made in assembling the collection.

As the author of a book on a specific collection, Dr. McIntosh was presented with the challenge of documenting those specific choices, using the

items in the collection to illustrate the text presented which may or may not represent all of the textiles or jewelry produced in the area to be discussed. In this case Dr. McIntosh has been tasked with the area of Indonesia and Timor (a slightly confusing term) which is an area with an immense diversity of textile production and many different cultures. My comments will be focused on textiles, as that is my area of interest although I will be the first to state that Indonesia is not my area of expertise.

After an overall historical introduction, the book is divided into chapters on Sumatra, Java, Bali, Sumbawa, Borneo, Sulawesi, Sumba to the Moluccas, and Timor. Each chapter provides historical and cultural background for the objects presented in that chapter. One of the cultural customs that ties the differing cultures of Indonesia together is the use of textiles and jewelry in rites of passage ceremonies, especially that of marriage. Textiles and jewelry are integral parts of the exchange that occurs in the marriage contract with the bride’s family providing textiles, the soft items representing the feminine, and the groom’s family the jewelry, the hard items representing the masculine. Dr. McIntosh has provided a good overview of history and customs for each area and discusses the specific textiles and items of jewelry from each area in the appropriate chapter.

One omission that I think most readers will note is that there is no information on the collector or what motivated him to create this collection. I think this would have enriched our understanding of the textiles presented here. As it stands in my mind, the book tells us most about what the collector’s aesthetic is. There is not a complete representation of all the diverse types of textiles produced in Indonesia and I think a good argument can be made that this is actually almost impossible for the individual collector. However, choices are still made with each purchase and I will make a few comments on my view of these choices. None of my comments are meant to be negative; everyone makes choices based on their own individual taste and I am



merely highlighting some choices that I find interesting (and that I would very probably have made myself). The joy in human diversity is that we all do not like exactly the same thing. How boring would life be if we did!

The first chapter deals with Sumatra and ranges across the entire island with its diversity of ethnic groups and textiles. What I find striking is that Mr. Capelo in my opinion concentrates on what I would characterize as the textiles of the Malay world. I may be wrong but I generally find that less is written about the continuity of textiles across the geographic area of the Malay peoples. What is striking in Mr. Capelo's selection of Sumatran textiles is his preference for the more refined courtly textiles of the Minangkabau and the Palembang area. The use of gold thread is of great importance in Malay culture, especially for rites of passage ceremonies. The Minangkabau culture is closely tied to some of the courts of Malaysia and it is very popular for Malaysians to patronize Sumatran weavers. I personally think that some of the most beautiful textiles produced are the kain limar textiles of Palembang. The beautiful intricate ikat of the main body adorned with the gold thread of songket weaving in the borders is to me a showcase of the skills of weavers. Some good examples are illustrated here.

Throughout the book, Dr. McIntosh also emphasizes the influence that the layout of the double ikat textiles from India known as patola have. This can be seen in many of the pieces throughout Indonesia. Once you begin to look at the general layout with the main central pattern field with side borders and broader borders at each end, often with the distinctive design known as tumpals, you will see it everywhere. This is present in both highly refined textiles for the court as well as textiles created for village use. This theme is first discussed in the chapter on Sumatra and is followed throughout the book.

The chapter on Java focuses on batiks. There are numerous beautifully drawn tulis batiks presented here. Dr. McIntosh discusses the

history of the island again, describes batik making, and discusses the different varieties of style of the batiks of Java. The greatest divide has always been between the deep blue and brown batiks of the royal courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta and the freer more colorful batiks of the north coast. Striking here is Mr. Capelo's decided preference for the colors of the north coast of Java with their generally floral or figurative designs. Particularly interesting is the batik from the workshop of the Eurasian batik maker J. Jans and some of the gorgeously dyed pieces from Lasem. In Bangkok we have been very lucky in the recent exhibition of batiks collected by King Chulalongkorn and the publication of that collection. It is unfortunate that this catalog was published after the work done for this volume as it would have provided some expanded information on batik production on the north coast.

Another major chapter focuses on Sumba to the Moluccas. This area of Indonesia produces an astonishing variety of textiles, mostly warp ikat on cotton. Mr. Capelo has collected examples from some of the most well-known areas, especially Flores and Savu. With such a wide variety of cultures producing textiles, Dr. McIntosh has been faced with the daunting task of summarizing this area by looking at the specific textiles in the collection. A good overview discussing the basics of the cultures is provided with explanations of the textiles in the collection. Hopefully, the reader may see a textile from one of the less represented areas such as Rote and be encouraged to look further at the multitude of textiles that are part of that culture.

Could I speculate that looking at all of the textiles presented in this volume that I see many textiles with floral patterns? Obviously, floral patterns are very common but there is also a strong use of geometrical patterns in Indonesia. Perhaps this is one of the factors that attracts Mr. Capelo to a textile. I only postulate this because I know that I often end up choosing a piece because it has tiny intricate patterns and I may end up buying one with a smaller pattern even though a piece



available with a larger pattern may be available for purchase and in terms of what is academically considered a better example of wherever I happen to be.

I have not begun to do justice to all of the areas covered by this publication and my comments are perhaps based more on one collector looking at another collection than perhaps a book review should be. I have just tried to highlight the diversity of the cultures represented by this collection. The photographs of the objects are well done, especially the jewelry showing the intricacies of many of the pieces. Dr. McIntosh has summarized an immense amount of research in the area, always a difficult task, and one where it can always be said that much has been omitted. In the case of writing about a collection, those objects are the focus and so by definition it will not be a complete picture. But by using a collection as a starting point, the reader can learn a good deal about the objects in it. They can see the passion that drives the collector to preserve these objects and to hope to spread knowledge and respect for the objects and the cultures that produce them. *Thread and Fire* is a good introduction to Indonesia and one man's quest to allow others to view and appreciate this part of the world. Dr. McIntosh has been a good guide to helping us understand these objects and perhaps move us to learn more.

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Kain Songet Ilmar
Shawl, 1.95 x 80 cm, late 19th century. Malay Bangka Isle, South Sumatra. Silk, gold wrapped thread, supplementary weft, weft ikat. Multi-colored weft ikat patterns of lacy tendrils surround vases that were inspired by the European fleur de lis and integrated into Mugal art.





Kampuh Songket or Saput Songket
Nobleman's outer hip cloth, 178.5 x 111 cm, , Bali, silk, gold and silver wrapped threads, supplementary weft. Scenes from the Marriage of Arjuna epic poem are popular artistic subjects in Bali. The hero Arjuna defeats a demon disguised as a wild boar in the top panel of this nobleman's hip wrapper while Garuda and Naga decorate the bottom panel.



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Hinggi Kombu
Nobleman's wrap, 227 x 115 cm, early 20th century, East Sumba, imported cotton thread, warp ikat. The audung or skull tree is the predominant motif of this ceremonial textile. Bands called kabakil finish the ends and are created by incorporating the warp ends as weft threads in another warp.





Sarung
Tubular skirt, 195 x 105 cm, early 20th century, Cirebon, North Coast Java, cotton, natural dyes, batik tulis. The designs of turtles, shrimps, and other aquatic life give this sarung its name, ganggeng.



Lafa Dula Pilas
Shawl or hip wrapper, 168 x 84 cm, mid 20th century, Ndao, cotton, natural dyes, warp ikat. The writhing snake motif originates from a myth of origin and is thought to be the inspiration for the flowering scroll design adorning other textiles woven on Ndao and Rote. The odd number of patterned columns is associated with Ndao.



ABOUT US

The Thai Textile Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and appreciation of textiles, with particular emphasis on the textiles of Thailand and Southeast Asia. Based in Bangkok, the society was founded in 2004, when Kathleen Florence Johnson, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Darryl Johnson, invited scholars, collectors, and other textile enthusiasts to establish a society dedicated to the study, appreciation, and preservation of the textile arts in the kingdom and the region. Since its inaugural meeting in May 2004, the Society has organized regular lectures, study trips, and other programs such as the popular Collector's Corner series.

Under the leadership of President Dr. Sathirakorn Pongpanich, and with the support of Membership the society is able to help strengthen textile culture and sustainability in Thailand and promote the Asia's rich textile heritage. The TTS is thankful and appreciates all support from The Siam Society and the James H.W. Thompson Foundation.