

Court & Country: Textiles from Mainland Southeast Asia, July 12, 2000-October 29, 2000

The countries of Southeast Asia have long histories of excellence in many art forms, including textiles. The rich beauty of the textiles on display in this gallery testifies to their importance in the lives of the peoples of Southeast Asia. On the mainland, the contemporary nations of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia (in part), Thailand, and Vietnam share languages and cultures that cut across their current political borders. Thai language groups are found in Thailand and Laos, while Khmer speakers comprise most of Cambodia, but are also found in Malaya (the mainland portion of Malaysia). The Shan people of northern Burma also inhabit northern Laos.

Traditional textile production on the mainland has always been almost exclusively women's work. One common technique creates pattern by tie-dyeing yams prior to weaving. Called *mat mii* in parts of the Southeast Asian mainland, it is often recognized by its Indonesian name: *ikat*. Another widespread practice uses weft yams that are supplementary to the ground fabric in order to pattern the cloth. Many variants of both are employed and, together with differences in patterns, fibers, and colors, provide clues to cultural and linguistic identity, as well as the gender of the wearer.

The influence of the Thai aristocracy was felt throughout the region, and many provincial courts emulated the styles preferred in Thailand. Textiles in the Thai taste were also sent from outlying regions to the Thai capital as tribute or for sale. In addition, luxury goods for court use were purchased from China and India, and influence from these areas may be seen throughout the region. Beyond the courts, many traditions and cultures thrived, and in some areas contact with the outside world was rare.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Burmese; Shan
Bag, early 1900s
Cotton, seeds; plain weave, weft brocading, applied ornament
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.224



RISD MUSEUM

Burmese

Sash or shoulder cloth, early 1900s

Cotton; warp-faced plain weave, weft brocading

Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.225



Laotian; Lao Neua people

Phaa sin (tubular skirt), mid 1900s

Cotton; plain weave, supplementary weft patterning

Gift of Beth Nelson 1988.094.2



Bhutanese; Laotian

Pha biang (shoulder cloth), 1800s

Cotton, silk; plain weave, supplementary warp patterning, continuous supplementary weft patterning, weft brocading

Gift of Mrs. Eliot A. Carter 1991.148.9



RISD MUSEUM

Burmese
Shoulder cloth or sash, late 1800s
Silk, cotton; plain weave, weft brocading
Gift of Brown University 22.070



Burmese; Karen
Sash or shoulder cloth, 1800s
Cotton, silk; plain weave, supplementary weft patterning
Gift of Brown University 22.062



Cambodian; Thai; Khmer
Pidan (pictorial hanging), early 1900s
Silk; twill weave, weft ikat (mat mii)
Gift of Miss Mary Patterson 53.041



RISD MUSEUM

Burmese; Shan
Shoulder cloth or wrapper, 1800s
Cotton, wool; plain weave, supplementary weft patterning
Gift of Brown University 21.467



Burmese; Shan
Bag, early 1900s
Silk, metallic yams, seeds; weft-float patterning, applied ornament
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.230



Cambodian; Khmer
Hip wrapper, late 1800s
Silk; twill weave
Bequest of Martha B. Lisle 67.453



RISD MUSEUM

Burmese; Shan
Bag, late 1800s
Cotton, seeds; plain weave, weft brocading, applied ornament
Gift of Brown University 22.072



Burmese; Shan
Bag, late 1800s - early 1900s
Cotton, wool, silk; plain weave, weft-float patterning
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.226



RISD MUSEUM

Burmese; Kachin; Shan
Man's bag (n'hpye), late 1800s - early 1900s
Cotton, wool, seed, silver disks, tassels; plain weave with
supplementary weft patterning and appliqué
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.227



Cambodian; Khmer
Ceremonial shawl, mid 1900s
Silk; twill weave, tie- and stitch-resist dyed
Gift of Mrs. Eliot A. Carter 1991.114.2



RISD MUSEUM

Malaysian

Sarong, 1800s

Silk, metallic-wrapped yarns; twill weave, weft ikat, supplementary weft patterning

Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.497.1



Khmer; Malayan

Sarong, 1800s

Silk, metallic-wrapped yarns; twill weave, supplementary weft patterning, weft ikat

Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.497.2



Cambodian; Thai; Khmer

Shoulder cloth, late 1800s

Silk; twill weave, weft ikat

Gift of Mrs. Barbara Deering Danielson 82.308.40



Malaysian

Man's sarong (tubular skirt), ca. 1930

Silk; plain weave

Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 47.218

