

Textiles Asia

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Textiles Asia is published three times a year. We welcome submissions from subscribers and friends on textile-related subjects, notices of events, exhibitions, tours and publications. Please send contributions to be included in the next issue to the editor by September 15, 2023: bonniemcorwin@gmail.com

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Tribal Blankets of Southern China

Lee J. Chinalai

In the mountains of northern Vietnam, and right up against the border with China, I had a “come to” moment. Along the mountainside, the forest was dense and shaded, a chill mist penetrated the air and our bones, and the trees blocked nearly all of the sun from the scattered huts housing mostly Hmong Hill Tribe families. Yet, there, in the shadows, was a silhouette of a Hmong woman catching one or two pale rays of sunlight to embroider cloth by the open door.

This image was with me constantly as I prepared for *Auspicious Dreams*, an exhibit of tribal blankets from southern China at the Charles B. Wang Asia Center, Stony Brook University, in 2022, with co-curators Jinyoung Jin, director of cultural programs at the Wang Center, and Vichai Chinalai. The contrast between the living conditions in which the blankets might have been made and their often complex technical skill, beauty, and historic, cultural and spiritually iconic meanings was, to me, mind blowing.

Approximately eight percent, or around 125 million, of China’s total population of almost 1.5 billion comprises 55 state-designated ethnic minorities, with the majority living in the south and southwest provinces. Over the course of centuries, tribes in the south have been re-named so often that even they may refer to themselves by names assigned to them by officials and government-hired anthropologists. Many ethnicities are concentrated in one province or region; others span several provinces or live in clusters in several regions.

Our relationship with blankets starts at birth. They swaddle and cover newborns. Toddlers form their own connection to blankets. In tribal cultures blankets may be worn as wraps during the day and used as quilts during the night. A blanket can be a bedcover or a sleeping mat, and, after one’s final days, a shroud to cover or wrap the deceased.

A blanket also confers status. In tribal southern China, the respect a woman received was intrinsically tied to the blankets she produced. As part of a woman’s dowry blankets showcased her skill, implied virtue,

made her more desirable in marriage and gained her the respect of the community. Wedding negotiations often included the exchange of hand-made blankets. A special bedcover might have been made by the bride, her mother, or another family member to beautify and sanctify the wedding bed.

Among all of the southern tribes blankets were the keepers and communicators of tribal identity and culture. The non-verbal narrative of the shapes, colors, patterns and symbols on the blankets references not only a tribe’s origin story, legends, myths and spiritual history, it provides auspicious wishes for fertility, longevity, wealth and abundance; and protective devices for health, safety and well-being; and wrapped the owner in the supernatural. Much of the pictorial or abstract iconography appears to have paid homage to the ancestors while also asking for their help and protection against evil and harm, in effect creating a geometric genealogy that references a tribe’s origin, past, present and future. (For their theory on ancestral patterns in tribal art, see Carpenter and Schuster, *Patterns That Connect*.)

Many of the Chinese tribal blankets were woven on body-tension backstrap looms. Others exemplified both the economic necessity and emotional benefit of recycling. Some of the most moving pieces in the exhibit were baby or child-size blankets repurposed from worn out wedding bedcovers or other damaged family heirlooms (images 1 and 2).

Eleven tribes from south and southwest China, those most recognized for the excellence of their weaving, dyeing, sewing and creativity, were represented in the exhibit. Highlighted here are eight of the eleven tribal groups and eleven of the thirty-nine blankets and bedcovers that were on display.

Miao Blankets, Southwest China

Like many other tribal groups in southern China, the Miao have a history of migration coerced by various central governments. Forced under severe duress to flee the fertile lowlands of central China, the Miao were

a prime example of those tribes that over time were pushed southward and upward into the mountains, culminating in the disruption of Miao communities including at times the separation of families. This threw Miao people into isolated pockets along the mountainsides, but the isolation had one possible benefit: it fostered retention of the distinctively Miao customs and traditions. Centuries-old patterns and symbols used in their textiles and clothing, for example, became a way for the Miao to recognize each other as belonging to the Miao nation, even when meeting from afar. The words of a song originating from Zhijin County in Guizhou Province about Miao batik cloth reflect this history:

Fleeing from calamity to Heiyang [i.e., Guiyang] without any money and food to be found; I appease my hunger with fish and field snails, and I keep my wax printing as proof for my mother to be found.

Thus Miao quilt covers and blankets became visual narratives of Miao history, legends, totems, symbols and religion, which is an amalgamation of ancestor and spirit worship, as well as a belief in not always benevolent ghosts. The ingenious, often abstract, connecting of patterns and animal, plant and fruit motifs tells the story of the Miao ancestors, starting with the original ancestor butterfly. Various designs invoke good fortune or serve to offer protection and drive out evil spirits. Consequently, the blankets may also express a form of optimism and hope in the face of centuries of persecution.

Image 1: This charming baby or child's quilt features repeated geometric motifs of squares, triangles, diamonds, crossed diagonal lines, shapes forming X's, good luck *wan* (swastikas), suns, blossoms and vines

in plain weave, batik and appliqué, patched together with a keen artistic eye from one or more old skirts that probably belonged to the child's mother. All are framed in indigo-dyed tabby-woven cotton. In Miao iconography, squares represent the fields or gardens where the ancestors lived, preserving a memory of the original homeland after centuries of forced migration. It is interesting that the blanket itself is nearly square shaped.

Maonan Blankets, Southwest China

The 107,000 plus Maonan people of Guangxi Province's isolated mountainous north are barely a drop in the vast population bucket of China. As late as 1982, the Maonan population was about half that number. One can only imagine how small the Maonan community was during the Qing dynasty, when silk and cotton blankets like the one in image 2 were made. At that time, many Maonan were poor farmers exploited by the ruling classes. Very few were wealthy landowners, reducing even further the number of Maonan women who would have had the skill and resources to produce such densely woven, opulent wedding blankets that could rival almost any textile created by larger and more sophisticated Chinese ethnic groups including the Han.

The Maonan were polytheistic, worshiping a large array of gods and ancestors in a religion that was predominantly Taoist with Buddhist, Han and Zhuang influences. In the past, Maonan weddings were arranged by the parents of the bride and the groom according to an astrological assessment by a Taoist priest. Dowry and gift-giving were important aspects of the wedding ritual. The exchange of wedding presents was often in the



1 Front and back: Miao child's quilt, Southwest China, early to mid-20th century. 39" x 42" (99.06 cm x 106.68 cm).



2 Maonan baby blanket, South China, late 19th to early 20th century. 35 in x 39 in (89 cm x 99 cm).

form of textiles that sealed the religious commitment with good fortune and auspicious symbols. The textiles attested to the skill and status of the maker and in turn bestowed status on the recipient. The most valuable blankets were complex, tightly woven brocades with naturally dyed silk floss, great detail and astonishing depth. Only a few Maonan families could afford to offer such luxurious gifts.

Front cover image: In this remarkable bedcover, two woven silk and cotton panels were joined, then surrounded by a double frame of tabby-woven cotton cloth. Through the rare and challenging use of continuous and discontinuous silk supplementary weft inlay on a cotton warp base, rows of birds and flowers were made to float above a background lattice of interlocking *wan* (swastikas), the mystical ancient symbol of Buddha's heart.



3 Mulao wedding bedcover, Southwest China, late 19th century, 44" x 56" (111.76 cm x 142.24 cm).

Birds, regarded as being close to heaven because of their ability to fly, appear to be consistent motifs on Maonan wedding blankets from Guangxi Province. Flowers represent the seasons, bestow blessings and celebrate longevity; when presented in vases they also symbolize peace.

Image 2: Perhaps a mother deliberately cut up a damaged bridal bedcover to be reconstructed into a baby blanket, or perhaps a large blanket wore out and provided just enough cloth to preserve the auspiciousness embodied in the original and enlarge it with three tabby-woven cotton borders. Two versions of the phoenix appear to be woven into the cloth, possibly signifying both male and female elements in harmony. Abstract anthropomorphic figures, perhaps representative of ancestry and procreation, are presented with bats (called *fu* in Chinese—a word phonetically equivalent to good fortune) on either side. Butterflies, symbols of conjugal love; peonies, emblems of wealth; and other unidentified flowers or sprigs unite with the other symbols to pass on the wedding blessings to the child.

Mulao Bedcovers, Southwest China

More than 90 percent of the approximately 230,000 Mulao people in China live in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi Province, making a living

mostly through farming or working in the mines. The Mulao farmers were known for developing one of the world's first irrigation systems, although much of the richest farmland was owned by the Han Chinese who diverted the water for their own use and functioned as feudal landlords, contributing to the exploitation and impoverishment of the Mulao community.

Ethnically related to the Dong and Zhuang, the Mulao share with them many cultural similarities which, to some extent, eroded the Mulao sense of their own identity. Their religion is a mixture of animism, ancestor worship, Buddhism and Taoism, the latter possibly implying that Mulao tradition also has been influenced by Han Chinese culture. The Mulao also believe in a Heavenly Palace and a netherworld where ghosts abide. Although their spoken language (which is similar to Zhuang) is their own, their writing is in Mandarin Chinese.

The Mulao also are considered to be very close to another tribe in the region—the Maonan—and this relationship has had an obvious influence on Mulao weavings. Like Maonan bedcovers, some rarely found Mulao blankets incorporate small motifs of flowers and mythical creatures that seem to float over a geometric fretwork. Materials, techniques, patterns and iconography of these Mulao blankets are so similar to those of the Maonan that it is not always easy to tell one from the other.

Image 3: Within a plain-woven and indigo-dyed cotton frame, two silk and cotton panels are adeptly joined at the center to create a wedding bedcover. The patterns are replete with butterflies, phoenixes and stylized birds with plumage that also could be taken for floral bouquets. These motifs are all woven in discontinuous silk supplementary weft, creating the impression that they float above the two-toned *wan* (swastika) latticework that was woven in continuous silk supplementary weft on an indigo-dyed cotton ground.

Some of the images are clear and some so abstract as to be subject to interpretation: for example, what appear to be butterflies (note the antenna spiraling out from top center) also look like pairs of birds peering away from each other on either side of the center line. From another perspective, there is a distinctly floral element to this design with flowers to the left and right. These can be interpreted as part of the butterflies' wings or as eyes. If seen as eyes, then the entire icon suddenly resembles a cat-like face.

Two possibilities arise—that the weaver deliberately created this fusion (and confusion) of elements; or that the faces are of lions, a possible reference to the Mulao



4 Yao wedding bedcover, South China, late 19th century. 51 in x 68 in (129.5 cm x 173 cm).

Yifan Festival, a celebration in commemoration of a legendary heroine who saved her people from marauding lions that were killing their livestock, destroying their crops and terrorizing their village.

The Mulao also believed that babies were the gifts of Huapo, the Lady of the Flowers and goddess responsible for the births and protection of children. As a whole, the iconography invokes the blessings of beauty,

protection and good fortune.

The components and format of the blanket, divided as it is visually into one third and two thirds by horizontal stripes with eight-pointed stars, diamonds and fretwork, are so similar to those of Maonan bedcovers as to make the two sources nearly indistinguishable. In our experience, the strength and boldness of the contrasting background fretwork help to identify the blanket as Mulao.



5 Tujia bedcover, Southwest China, 19th century. 44 in x 50 in (112 cm x 127 cm).

Yao Blankets, South and Southwest China

With a variety of sub-group names according to clan and region, the Yao are descendants of people who lived around the Changjiang (Yangtze) River Basin as far back as 221 BCE making them one of the oldest known tribal people in China. Over time, they were pushed southward, and later some Yao migrated into Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. Most of the current Yao population of over 2.7 million in China lives in the mountains of Guangxi Province.

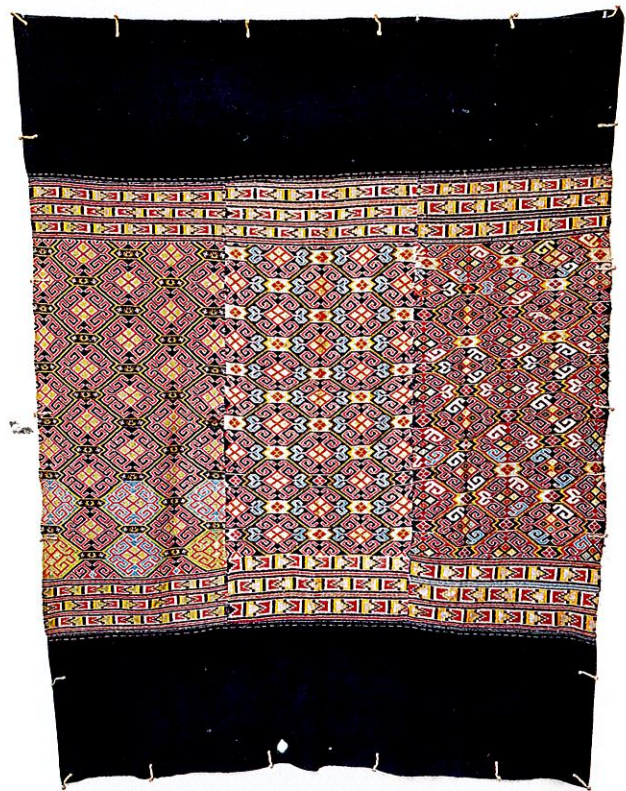
The Yao are unique among the many Chinese tribal groups in that they used Han Chinese written language to document religious and spiritual rites, record their ancestries and chronicle their history and legends. In designs, symbols and occasionally writing, Yao blankets are as varied as the Yao clans themselves, the places they lived, and their other textiles and art, including clothing, headdresses and jewelry—yet almost all appear to contain similar references to Yao traditions and religion, a blend of Taoism, animism, totemism and ancestor worship. Patterns woven, cut and sewn into the blankets serve as engaging decorations and conveyors of Yao culture from generation to generation. Many blankets contain multidirectional rows of diamonds and X's; these abstract elements likely refer to mountains and Yao ancestry

Image 4: This dowry blanket is constructed of three panels woven in continuous and discontinuous silk supplementary weft on cotton within a plain woven cotton border. Attention immediately is drawn to a series of Chinese characters for double happiness. Rows of small diamonds surround larger diamonds alternately containing *wan* (swastikas) and blossoms and subsequently form patterns of repeat Xs, a possible reference to Yao genealogy. Also notable are some charming inconsistencies and the bedcover's extraordinary balance of color.

Tujia Bedcovers, Southwest China

Over eight million Tujia people live in the mountains and valleys of northern Guizhou and western Hunan and Hubei provinces, mostly sustained by agriculture. The Tujia are polytheistic, worshiping gods and ancestors, but their religion also borrows beliefs from Taoism. In fact, despite having been granted the "status" of "Chinese minority" by the central government, some Tujia self-identify as Han.

Perhaps along with living in close proximity to the Han, changes brought on by modern times have impacted the Tujia weaving tradition even more than those of other ethnicities, altering both designs and intentions,



6 Tujia bedcover, Southwest China, 19th century.

or simply interrupting the passage of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. Historically, Tujia women were famous for their weaving, especially their brocaded bedcovers (*xilankapu*). The importance of these bedcovers as part of the bride's dowry, starting with a master bedcover that was displayed by the bride during her wedding, went beyond beauty and functionality; they embodied tribal identity and revealed and transmitted a girl's talent, ability and place in the community. Superior weaving made her a more desirable marriage partner and ultimately influenced the respect shown to her by her in-laws.

Patterns and iconography on the old bedcovers reflected Tujia culture, the natural environment and sometimes Tujia interaction with the Miao and Han. There are reportedly over 300 traditional patterns in Tujia weavings, with general underlying meanings of good fortune and protection. As is true of all of China's tribal groups, although most of the motifs retained their integrity through the generations and therefore continue to convey Tujia cultural identity and pride, their underlying meanings did not always survive and remain subject to some amount of supposition.

Image 5: The Tujia people believe that they are descendants of the white tiger. According to legend, Lin



7 Zhuang bedcover, South China, early 20th century
45 in x 67 in (114 cm x 170 cm).

Jun was a leader of five transient Tujia clans. He led them along the Yan River, home to a cruel river goddess. Lin Jun managed to kill the goddess, and he and his followers were able to settle alongside the river. The Tujia believe that when Lin Jun died his soul transformed into a white tiger who became their eternal protector. Altars in Tujia homes often contain a wood carving of a white tiger: the Tujia believe this effigy helps to repel evil and bless them with safety and happiness. At his wedding, a Tujia groom would cover the banquet table with a tiger blanket to commemorate Tujia ancestors.

This four-panel wedding bedcover (image 5) finely woven in cotton, wool, and silk discontinuous supplementary weft on a cotton ground, is filled with diamond shapes, with additional diamonds at center and at four compass points, possibly representing the Tujia lineage. All are encased in a latticework of stripes that most likely signifies the revered white tiger of Tujia legend. At the junctions where the lines of stripes meet and cross are what appear to be small shadow faces of tigers.

Image 6: This is a masterful bedcover in that the three segments, intricately woven in silk and cotton brocade, have markedly different but complementary patterns. In fact the patterns within the two side panels display an artistic disregard for symmetry and consistency. The best Tujia bedcovers also play with contrasting colors to divide and emphasize the various shapes and symbols. Once again there are many large and small diamonds and a probable reference to the stripes of the white tiger, legendary ancestor and protector of the Tujia people. Another auspicious element is the good luck *wan* (swastika). From a sideways perspective, the unique borders appear architectural, or as altars.

Most outstanding, however, is the presence of hooks, which according to Yong Zhang in *Threads Unwoven*, "... are the most important and the most difficult pattern to weave." Hooks represent young sprouts or the rays of the sun. When they also appear in pairs, they are emblematic of the Taoist concept of yin and yang. Cloth buttons on all four sides were there to attach and detach the cover to and from its original backing and for the purpose of inserting cotton batting when the weather turned cold.

Zhuang Blankets, South China

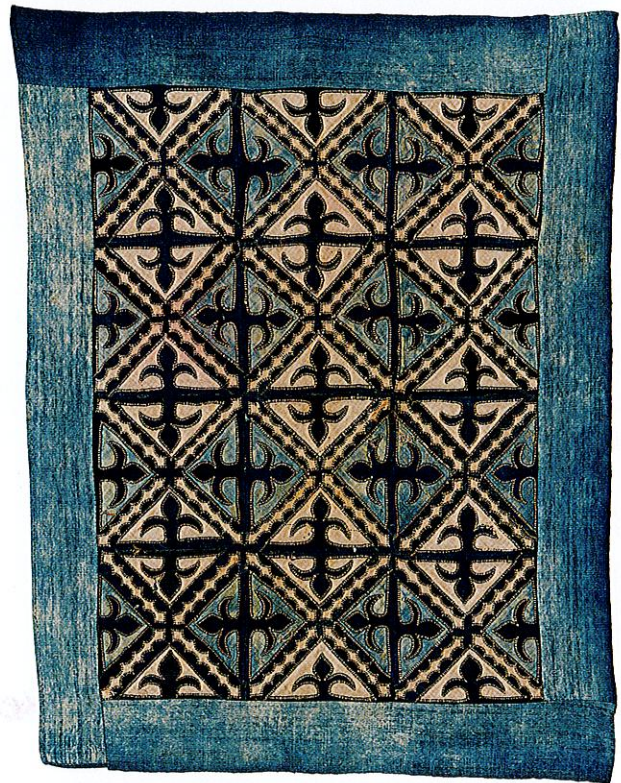
With an estimated population of 18 million, the Zhuang are the largest of the Chinese ethnicities. Most live in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, with a small number in surrounding regions. They are also one of the oldest indigenous groups in China.

The Zhuang share cultural aspects with the Han Chinese and also the Miao. Similar to the Han, but unlike the Miao, they are more likely to live in the lowlands. They have their own spoken and written language, and many Zhuang people are bilingual in Mandarin Chinese as well.

Most practice Mo, an animistic belief that spirits are present in everything, including gods, devils and ancestors, and in inanimate matter such as water and heavenly bodies. They venerate Bu Luotuo, supreme god and creator, and other deities. Souls of deceased ancestors may be supplicated to assist the living.

Quilt covers are important components of a Zhuang woman's dowry. Girls learn to weave at a relatively young age in preparation for marriage. Many quilts for adults and swaddling babies feature auspicious geometric shapes woven in weft-faced silk patterning over a natural cotton yarn warp.

Image 7: This bedcover from the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi Province consists of masterfully woven silk supplementary weft on a fine cotton tabby ground. It might have been a wedding gift or part of a young woman's dowry. Woven in three separate narrow panels, it features at center repeated eight-pointed stars, symbolic of heaven and the universe, contained within diamonds. Some of these are surrounded by latch-hooks, and all are within rows



8 Bu yi quilt cover, Southwest China, c. 1900. 30 in x 39 in (76 cm x 99 cm).



9 Buyi wedding blanket, Southwest China, late 19th century. 53 in x 60 in (134.6 cm x 152.4 cm).

of zigzag lines that probably represent the mountains worshiped in Zhuang culture. Against a subtle background of interlocking auspicious *wan* (swastikas), the contrasting soft beige border also is filled with diamonds and eight-pointed stars.

Buyi Blankets, Southwest China

The Buyi are one of the oldest indigenous groups in China, with records showing them living on the plains of

Guizhou more than 2,000 years ago. Over time, the Han pushed the Buyi out of the lowlands and into remote, rugged mountains; some Buyi fled south to Vietnam.

Like many Chinese tribal groups, the religion of the Buyi is a combination of ancestor worship, shamanism and animism, a belief that there are gods and spirits in nature: for example, in mountains, forests, ancient trees, caves, rivers, wells, the sun, the moon, the wind and the rain. Much of Buyi art, including blankets, is a



10 Dai wedding blanket, Southwest China, early 20th century. 39 in x 54 in (99 cm x 137 cm).

manifestation of these religious beliefs.

There are two distinct types of Buyi blankets. In one, a complex system of bamboo rods was utilized to separate cotton warp threads for the insertion of silk floss in a supplementary weft weave, requiring an advanced level of skill. Two or three narrow woven sections were sewn together, then surrounded by one or more borders usually made of tabby cotton cloth. Despite coming from a relatively large population (currently around 3 million), it appears that very few Buyi silk and cotton blankets of this quality were made or survived.

Buyi women also cut and sewed cotton, silk, satin and velvet cloth, sometimes from worn-out clothing or earlier bedcovers, to fashion new appliquéd blankets that might also incorporate couching and embroidery.

At one time, the Buyi were very close to the Zhuang in origin and culture. While many of the Zhuang people migrated farther south over time, causing each society to become more distinct, the two cultures still share linguistic similarities.

Image 8: Squares of cotton couch-stitched appliqué were sewn together onto a cotton cloth backing and framed in plain-woven, indigo dyed cotton cloth. Shades of natural indigo and bleached cotton form an extremely pleasing pattern. The repeating diamond motifs may reference both mountains and ancestors. Surrounding the inner diamonds and formed of diamonds themselves are a series of segmented, undulating snakes or dragons, another strong Buyi emblem. The inverted fleur-de-lis may represent the iris flower, symbolic of repelling evil spirits; or possibly it is a stylized version of the lily known as the “Bringer of Sons,” indicating that this blanket could have been made as a wedding gift or by a young girl for her dowry.

Image 9: Three separate panels woven in silk supplementary weft on tabby-woven cotton were sewn together within a striking triple border of colorful cotton and felt cloth. It is probable that the zigzag lines and series of X’s on this weaving represent the Buyi lineage and the revered God of the Mountain who can bless or punish people. Sinuous lines most likely also convey rows of scaled, serpentine dragons. According to Buyi legend, a dragon woman was impregnated by a human man and gave birth to a son, leading to the belief that the Buyi ancestors were related to dragons and to the adage that giving birth to a boy was “having a dragon”.

Dai Blankets, Southwest China

Dai people, with a current population of around 1.6 million in China, are closely related to the Lao and Thai

who form the majority of the populations of Laos and Thailand. Those Dai not forced by war and political strife to migrate beyond the southern Chinese border mostly live in Yunnan Province. As is often the case in the relationship between the central government and the Chinese ethnicities, the label Dai was imposed by the government as a catchall name for several culturally diverse groups who fall into two linguistic categories. Most Dai practice Theravada Buddhism interlaced with animism, shamanism and the worship of ancestral and village deities; a minority are Muslim.

The Dai have their own written language and many in China also speak Chinese. The location of their villages in rich lowland river valleys has given them greater exposure to Han culture and influence and helped to make the Dai wealthier and more politically powerful than other tribal groups. Han symbols and patterns can especially be seen in later Dai textiles, making earlier Dai blankets with traditional patterns such as the one in image 10 quite rare.

Image 10: In this vibrant wedding blanket from Yunnan Province, which includes a variety of birds as well as geometric and abstract floral patterns, two tapestry-woven strips are joined and surrounded by an indigo dyed plain woven cotton border. The birds appear to be ducks, chickens and stylized phoenixes near what could be ponds with additional wildlife. Prominent among the geometric shapes are diamonds, elongated hexagons, X’s, and crosses that may refer to the Dai ancestors. The composition of figures and geometry and the combination of colors make this blanket an outstanding one.

In Conclusion

It was an honor to have had an opportunity to present bedcovers and blankets from southern China from an age when the textiles were infused with tribal culture, function and spirituality and during this current era when most of the intention and skill to produce them is being lost.

Economics, a trend toward the various tribes’ assimilation into Han Chinese culture and the easy availability of commercial fabrics means that the transmission of weaving knowledge and mastery between generations of women is in serious decline. Needless to say, this has caused contemporary blankets, along with other tribal textiles, to lose their ethnicity, elegance, meaning and spontaneity. These days even a handwoven “tribal” bedcover from southern China is more likely to be ordered in twin, queen or king

size, with the first bite of income from a sale taken by a government agency or commercial middleman.

Photography by Chadri Chinalai and Dhani Spinola.

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- 2 Yang Wenbin and Ce Yang, *The Traditional Miao Wax Printing*, p. 104.
- 3 Yong Zhang, *Threads Unwoven, Politics, Indigenous Knowledge, Ethnic Identity, and Community Based Cultural-Ecological Conservation in Ethnic Rural Regions, Southwest China—A Case Study of Tujia Brocade*.

Lee J. Chinalai, with her husband Vichai, lived and worked in Thailand and Bahrain. They travel in Southeast Asia and China often for their business, Chinalai Tribal Antiques, Ltd. Together they received a Rockefeller Foundation residency, and curated a number of textile exhibits. Lee attended graduate school in Asian Studies at UC, Berkeley, and has authored and co-authored a number of articles, mostly on textiles. She has given talks at Textile Society of America symposiums, for various museum groups, and most recently in conjunction with *Auspicious Dreams*, the exhibit of tribal blankets from southern China at the Stony Brook University Wang Center. www.chinalai.net

Recently Published

Anatolian Tribal Rugs 1050–1750:

The Orient Stars Collection

By Michael Franes

Anatolian Tribal Rugs 1050–1750: The Orient Stars Collection, a limited-edition companion to *Orient Stars: A Carpet Collection* (Stuttgart and London, 1993), presents 33 early rugs and textiles acquired between 1993–2006 by Heinrich and Waltraut Kirchheim. In this volume, Michael Franes discusses these exceedingly rare unpublished carpets with reference to their carbon-14 dating as well as comparative examples and offers new commentary and dating for 43 of the carpets from the original book. Other contributors include: Anna Beselin, Walter Denny, Eberhart Herrmann, Klaus Kirchheim, Garry Muse and Friedrich Spuhler. (source: www.accartbooks.com)

Hali Publications, 2022

ISBN: 978-1898113959

From Myth to Art, Anatolian Kilims

Edited by Ali Rıza Tuna

Opening new perspectives, *From Myth to Art: Anatolian Kilims*, by Ali Rıza Tuna, is an immersive exploration of these powerfully evocative Anatolian flatweaves.

Beyond their utilitarian function as decorated weavings, Anatolian kilims provide the medium for a unique iconographic tradition practiced and observed over several millennia by the region's nomadic cultures. In the spirit of Hans Belting's *An Anthropology of Images* or Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of cultures, the author revisits the current paradigms of Anatolian kilim studies and develops a fresh art-historical vision through which to understand these flatweaves. A detailed essay accompanies 85 illustrated examples. The important kilims presented in this book include a 15th-century Anatolian *zili*, the oldest to be radiocarbon dated so far, here published for the first time. A dedicated section offers the radiocarbon results for seven kilims, all displayed and discussed with detailed measurement curves. (source: <https://shop.hali.com>)

Hali Publications, 2022

ISBN: 978-2839933599

Global Ikat: Roots and Routes of a Textile Technique (The David Paly Collection)

Edited by Rosemary Crill

Deceptively simple or fantastically intricate, ikat technique has been used for many centuries to create extravagant costumes and cloths of deep cultural meaning. The distinctively blurred, feathered or jagged patterns of ikat-dyed textiles are found across much of the world—from Japan in the east to Central and South America in the west, with vast areas of Southeast Asia, India, Central Asia and the Middle East in between. The traditional patterns still hold cultural relevance today in significant parts of the long-established ikat-weaving areas. Textile artists and fashion designers in many and varied countries have taken ikat in new directions, respecting traditional forms and palettes while creatively diverging from them. This is the first time all the different iterations of this textile have been comprehensively brought together in one volume, drawing from the wide-ranging collection of David Paly. This is a journey across the world through the lens of ikat. (source: www.accartbooks.com)

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