

Jacqueline **Simcox**

Chinese, Indian & Southeast Asian Textiles

2007

All works of art in this catalogue are for sale

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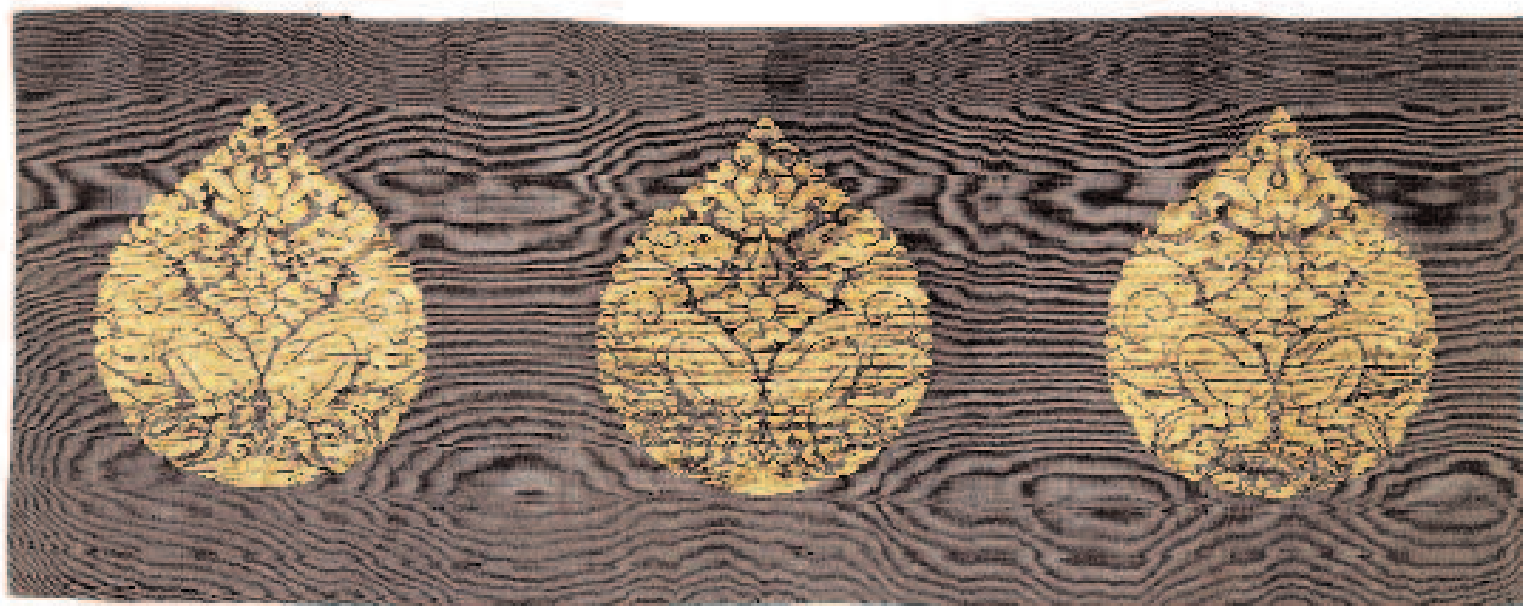
Introduction

I am delighted to present a selection of textiles from China, India and Southeast Asia. The classical patterns of China and India have an ancient and distinguished history, but no country exists in isolation and the same is true of textile designs: they travel through trade or through people settling in new countries. Both aspects can be seen clearly in the designs on Indonesian fabrics which received Indian and Chinese influences, yet the result when mixed with the Indonesian culture is distinctive and unique to that country.

It is always a pleasure to present works of art from private collections. The textiles may have been unseen for many years and there is the appeal of a familiar design interpreted in a different manner. The discerning eye of a collector will bring together textiles which form a group with an inner coherence, as it has been informed by an individual taste.

In exploring the textiles of India I would like to thank Rosemary Crill of the Victoria & Albert Museum for her kind and generous help. Equally, I would like to thank Dr. Amy Heller for translating no. 7, the 'Offering of the Universe' mantra.

Jacqueline Simcox



1. Medallions with Gilded Animals

A horizontal brown silk panel brocaded with gold on animal substrate with a design of three tear-shaped medallions, each composed of a pair of addorsed, hoofed animals with long tails and with formalised flower heads between them.

The animal substrate has been gilded on both sides, a rare occurrence, indicating the high value of the textile.

Chinese, Liao or Jin dynasty, 11th - 13th century

Height: 24.5 cm (9 5/8 inches)

Width from selvedge to selvedge: 62.2 cm (24 1/2 inches)

Carbon 14 dated:

68% confidence: 1050 - 1080 AD (14.1%)

1120 - 1140 (1.9%)

1150 - 1220 (52.2%)

95.4% confidence: 1040 - 1260



2. Hares in Arched Medallions

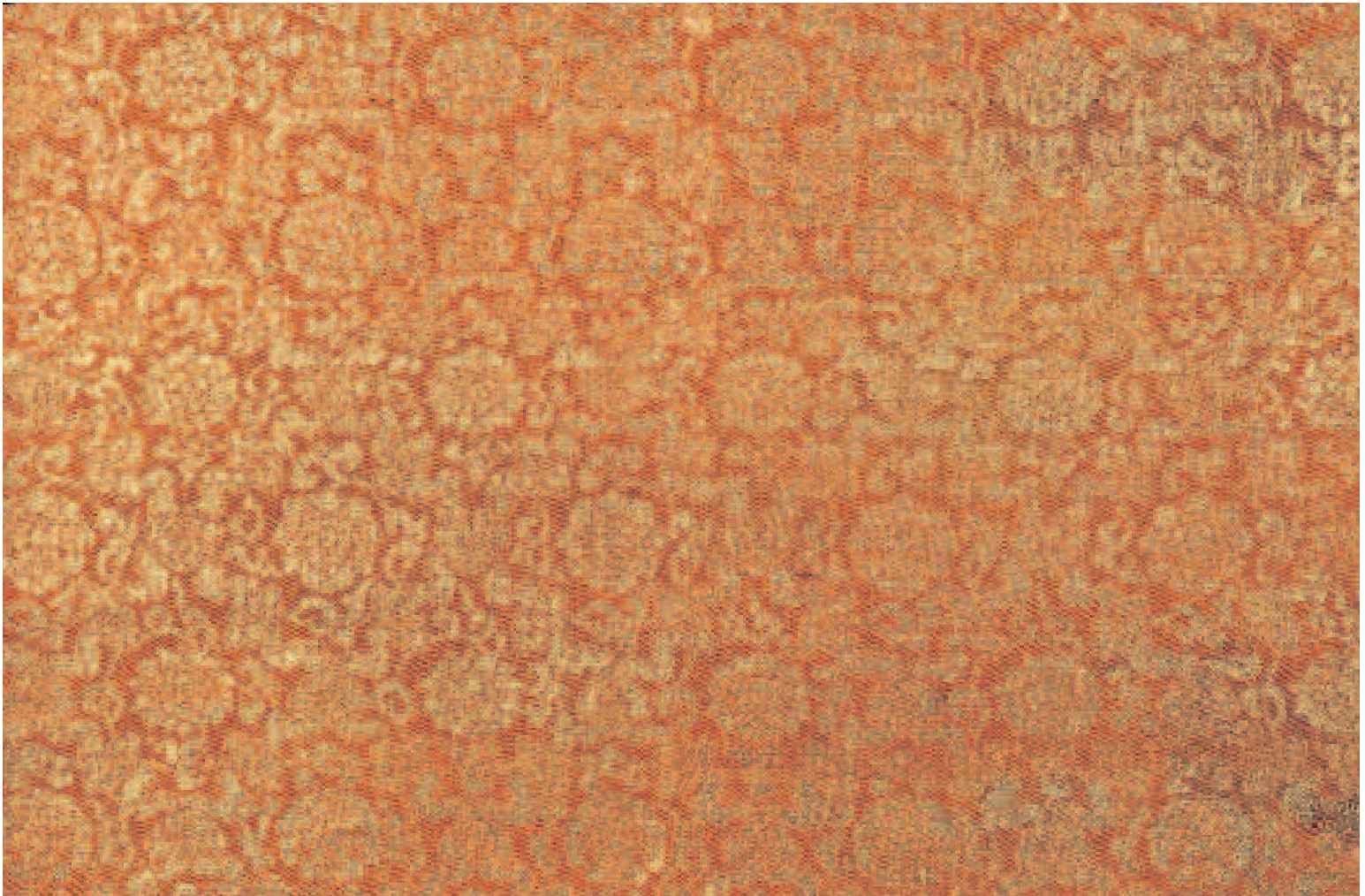
A purple silk fragment, tabby brocade in gold on animal substrate with four offset rows of arched medallions each woven with a hare amongst flowers. The hare facing in the opposite direction in alternating rows. One red selvedge remaining.

* The textile presented here is referred to in *When Silk Was Gold* as the other surviving example.

North China, Yuan dynasty, 1279 - 1368
 Height: 44.5 cm (17 1/2 inches)
 Width: 44.5 cm (17 1/2 inches) to extreme edges

For identical examples of the design see:
 • *Chinese Textiles*, pl. 12 (with green selvedge)
 • *When Silk Was Gold*, pl. 34

Provenance: from a private Japanese collection



3. Lotus Flower Brocade

A rectangular panel of orange silk, brocaded with gilded paper, the design in parallel alternating rows of lotus flowers and *ruyi* heads, or peony flowers and *ruyi* heads, linked by encircling flower stems, leaves and clouds. The design reverses on each vertical repeat.

Chinese, Ming dynasty, 15th century
Height: 25.5 cm (10 inches)
Width: 39.6 cm (15 5/8 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection

4. Needleloop Deer

A blue cloud damask silk embroidered in needleloop technique with a spotted deer set within a quatrefoil frame and holding a flower in its mouth. Two clouds and three gold spots embellish the background. The deer is emblematic of immortality.

Chinese, Yuan dynasty, 1279 - 1368
Height: 23 cm (9 inches)
Width: 22.5 cm (8 7/8 inches)

Provenance:
From a private Japanese collection

Illustrated:
• *The Asian Embroidery Technique: Detached Looping*, fig. 3

*A group of needleloop decorated silks, now in the Musée Guimet, Paris, is discussed and illustrated: • *Chinese Buddhist Silks* from the A.E.D.T.A. Collection, Paris, 1996





5. Needleloop Lotus Flowers

A navy blue silk ribbed gauze panel embroidered in needleloop technique with five vertical lotus flowers, the buddhist emblem of purity, linked by a single stem with buds and leaves. A sheet of gilded paper under the embroidery shines through the geometric patterned holes in the petals.

*This fragment is possibly from a *kesa*, or buddhist priest's robe and should be compared with a similar horizontal panel, illustrated: • *The Asian Embroidery Technique: Detached Looping*, fig. 4, which was carbon 14 dated: Arizona AA-4477, 68% confidence: 1326 - 1416, 95% confidence: 1300 - 1430.

Another example illustrated: • *Silks from the Middle Kingdom*, p. 25, pl. 9.

Chinese, Ming dynasty, 15th century
Height: 57 cm (22 1/2 inches)
Width: 13.2 cm (5 1/4 inches)

Provenance:
From a private Japanese collection

6. Thangka of Atisha

A silk thangka embroidered with the figure of Atisha seated on a lotus throne and with a halo behind him. Atisha flanked by columns set in beribboned vases bearing lotus flowers encircled with delicate leafy stems. The lower edge with a series of offerings and with a separate frame bearing an inscription, *jo rje dpal ldan a ti sha la na mo*, reading 'Hail to glorious Lord Atisha'.

*Atisha, or Atisa Dipamkara Srijnana, b. 982, was a famous Indian Buddhist teacher who arrived in Tibet in 1042 and lived there until his death in 1054. He founded Kadampa, one of the main schools of buddhism in Tibet.

Chinese professional embroidery for Tibet, early 15th century
Height: 49 cm (19 1/4 inches)
Width: 35 cm (13 3/4 inches)



ཨོཾ། རྫོག་པར་རྒྱུ་མཁའ་ཉི་ཤེས་པ་ན་མོ།



7. Vajradhatu Mandala

A square silk lampas canopy for meditation, woven as a Vajradhatu mandala, the sphere of Vajra. The large lotus flowers each supporting a Tibetan character in gold script woven in flat gilded paper. The characters are from a Sanskrit mantra, for the 'Offering of the Universe'. The characters read from the centre, then to the east, south, west and north and finally the other directions and the hanging would have been used as a visual support for meditation.

For Tibetans, and buddhists in general, the 'east' direction is the West's 'south' direction, indicating that the beginning of the weaving is seen as the 'east' - where the sun rises - and the finish of the weaving, at the top, is 'west' - where the sun sets and the weaving ends. Thus a weaving can be seen as a symbol of life: a work from start to finish - or from life to death; from sunrise to sunset.

At the centre is the seed syllable for Vairocana, one of the five *dhyani* buddhas, with the four buddhas of the cardinal points placed around the centre, interspersed with four goddesses who act as consorts to the buddhas and with an additional four goddesses, acting as assistants, placed in the corners. There would have been eight offering goddesses in all. A Vajradhatu mandala has 37 elements, but here is shown as a condensed version in 13 seed syllables.

Chinese, early 15th century
Measurements between gold band edging:
192 cm (75 1/2 inches) square

The addition of the height and width of the design is a fraction under 384 cm and it should be noted that an average lunation of 29.53 days will equal 383.89 days after 13 lunar months; echoing the number of characters on the textile. The relationship of astronomy and measure in ancient art, using the metrical system, remains an important but unexplored field.

Provenance:
From a private English collection

Carbon 14 tested, Zurich:
68.2% probability: 1415 - 1455
95.4% probability: 1400 - 1520 (93.3%)
1600 - 1620 (2.1%)

* Lampas is one of the most complex forms of weave structure, requiring an elaborate and heavy loom. It was introduced to China from the west during the Yuan dynasty, 1279 - 1368, and was only used in professional workshops and in particular the Imperial workshops. Such meditation hangings were made as Imperial gifts to abbots of leading Tibetan monasteries after they visited Beijing. The practice of giving such gifts was at its peak in the 14th and early 15th centuries.





8. Seated Buddhas

A narrow silk brocade panel, a complete length, woven with 25 parallel rows of three buddhas, each figure seated cross legged on a lotus base with hands held before him and with a halo behind and set on a gold brocade ground of flat gold on a paper substrate. Each row with a different combination of colours. The side edges cut.

Chinese, Ming dynasty, 1368 - 1644
 Height: 119.4 cms (47 inches)
 Width: 14 cms (5 1/2 inches)

Provenance:
 From a private English collection



9. Mythical Animals in a Landscape

An embroidered silk panel, probably from a robe, the unusual decoration depicting a buddhist lion on a rock, surrounded by a zebra and three mythical animals: a single horned beast, a goat-like animal and a horse. Animals with flames rising from their legs indicates their mythical status. The background entirely embroidered in short vertical rows of yellow satin stitch.

Chinese, 16th century, or early Wanli period, 1573 - 1619
 Height: 21.5 cm (8 1/2 inches)
 Width: 50.7 cm (20 inches)

Another example of near identical design and size was exhibited:
 • *Celestial Silks*, pl. 63



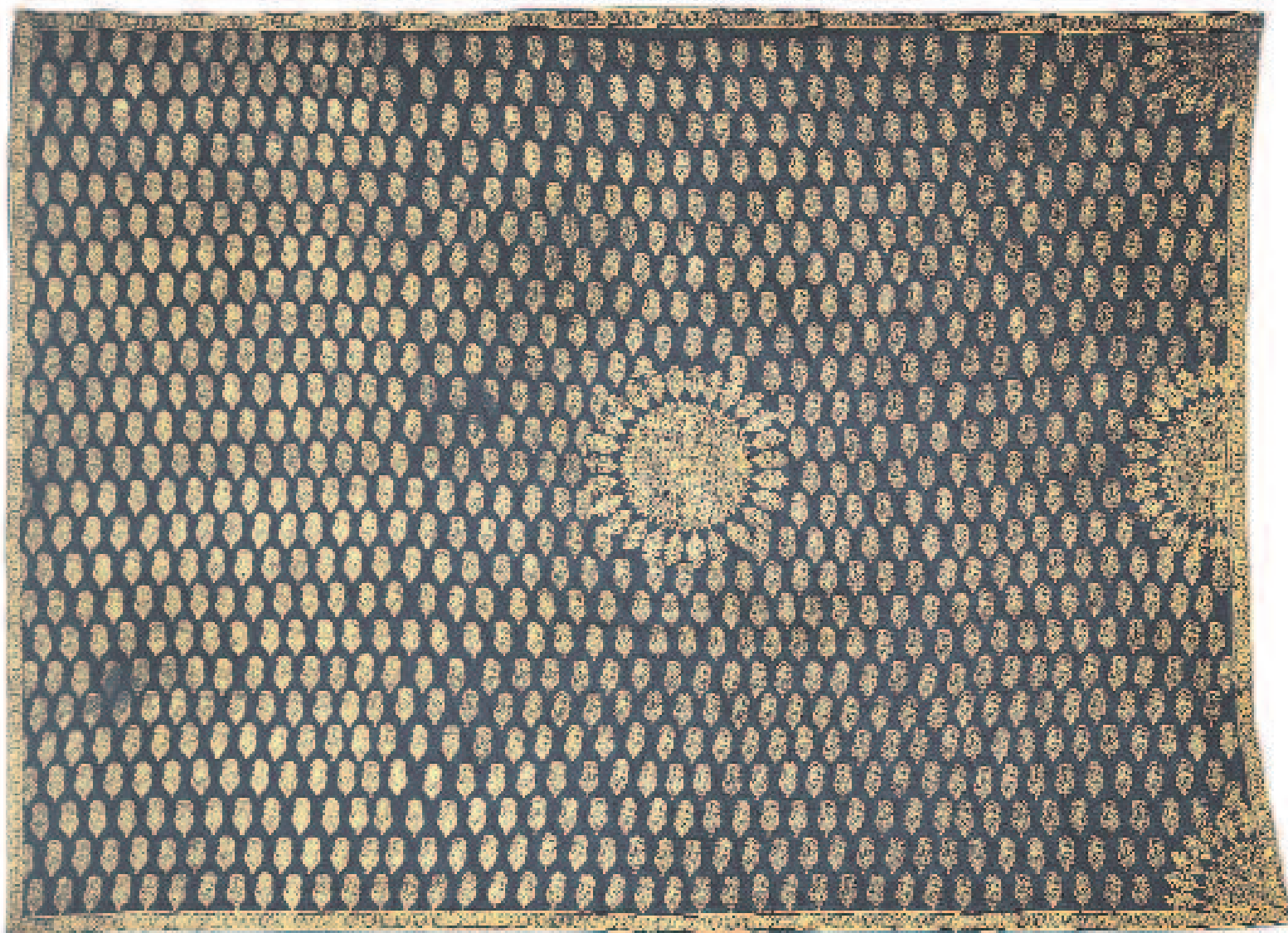
10. Ecclesiastical Vestments

A group of ecclesiastical vestments and objects for the Eucharist, embroidered with thin silk cord on a pinkish-red silk ground. The decoration of flowers and trailing foliage and with a symmetrical Cross in gold thread on each part of the vestments. The design further embellished with gold sequins.

Chinese, Macao, 19th century
Chasuble from neck to hem:
94.5 cm (37 1/4 inches)
width: 71 cm (28 inches);
Square cloth: 56.5 x 55 cm
(22 1/4 x 21 5/8 inches)

Religious vestments were made for the Christian community in Asia and while the garment shapes and Cross conform to Christian tradition the embroidered decoration was wholly Chinese in inspiration.





11. Head Cover with Gilded Botehs

A dark blue fine cotton head cover, *orhni*, decorated with gold botehs and medallions using printed adhesive and gold leaf. See • *Trade, Temple & Court*, no. 71, for another example.

Indian, Rajasthan, late 19th century

Length: 142 cm (56 inches)

Width: 196 cm (77 inches)

Provenance: from a private English collection

12. Floral Bed Cover

A quilted cotton bed cover printed in brownish-red and purple-brown on a cream ground, decorated with flower heads within wide borders filled with swags of flowers. The red silk backing revealing the circular patterns of the quilting.

South Indian, 18th/19th century

Length: 218.4 cm (86 inches) excluding fringe

Width: 170.2 cm (67 inches) excluding fringe

Provenance: from a private English collection







13. Blossoms on a Curving Stem

A long floral cotton border, printed and painted with eleven exotic flower blossoms joined by a curvaceous stem with serrated leaves and smaller flowers. One side with a narrow border of similar design and the outer edging with a double twisted thread in herringbone pattern, repeated on the reverse side on the plain beige cotton lining.

Indian, Masulipatan, 18th/19th century
Length: 219 cm (86 1/4 inches)
Width: 28 cm (11 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection

For an almost identical border, edging a palampore dated 1815, see:

• *Woven Cargoes*, no. 56



14. Gilded Winged Figures and Dancing Ladies

A large painted and dyed cotton hanging, or canopy, decorated with winged seated figures and winged dancing ladies on a blue, green or red ground. The decorated area cut from a larger hanging and appliquéd onto a later red cotton ground bound at the edges. The textile embellished with gold.

Southeast Indian, early 19th century
Height: 156.2 cm (61 1/2 inches)
Width: 137.7 cm (54 1/4 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection

Other examples of this design are in The Victoria & Albert Museum and the Tapi Collection, India.

See: • *Trade, Temple and Court*, no. 93





15. Patolu: Elephants, Parrots and Dancing Girls

A silk *patolu* sari, woven in double ikat with gilt metal wefts at one end, decorated with elephants, parrots, flowers and dancing girls within a diamond trellis, all within elaborate borders. The dancing girls are a rare feature of this type of *patolu*.

Indian, Gujarat, late 19th/early 20th century
Width: 391.15 cm (154 inches)
Height: 132 cm (52 inches)

An example is in the Victoria & Albert Museum, but without the dancing girls, and illustrated: • *Indian Ikat Textiles*, pl. 20. The author writes that this type seems to have been particularly associated with the Brahmin communities of northern Gujarat.

Provenance:
From a private English collection



16. Gilded Flowers in Ogival Lattice

A length of cream cotton with block printed flowers within ogival borders, over stamped with gold. Possibly made for the Thai or Persian market.

Indian, Masulipatam, 1800 - 1850

Length: 500 cm (197 inches)

Width: 105 cm; 104 cm within pattern (41 1/3 inches)

Provenance:

From a private English collection



17. Exotic Fruits and Flowers

A complete length of painted and dyed cotton with a five-fold repeat pattern based on exotic fruits and flowers, echoing European Chinoiserie of the 1720s. This piece found in Sulawesi.

Indian, 2nd quarter of the 18th century, Coromandel coast for the Indonesian market.

Length: 325.1 cm (128 inches)

Width: 100 cm (39 1/3 inches)

An almost identical piece in the Victoria & Albert Museum is illustrated:

- *Woven Cargoes*, no 134

Provenance: from a private English collection

18. Court Cloth with Garuda's Wings

A blue cotton batik, the design reserved for the Court - for princes and their wives and sons and daughters of the king - decorated with three rows, each of fourteen winged ornaments of Garuda, and over printed with gold. Some parts have oxidized and now show a copper-coloured tone.

Indonesian, Java, early 20th century

Width: 348.5 cm (137 1/4 inches)

Height: 74 cm (29 1/8 inches)

Provenance: from a private English collection







19. Gilded Phoenixes

A cotton batik presentation cloth, decorated in Chinese taste with a central medallion containing a figure on the back of a crane, flanked by two phoenixes; the background with scattered flower sprays and mythical animals all within elaborate borders. The blue decoration with finely applied gold.

Indonesian, north Java, gilded in Bali, early 20th century
Width: 126 cm (49 2/3 inches)
Height: 59.5 cm (23 1/3 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection



20. Floral Batik on Silk

A cream silk batik, the complete length fringed at both ends, decorated with a delicate blue and brown flower and leaf design in Chinese taste.

Indonesian, north Java, early 20th century
Length: 264 cm (104 inches), excluding fringes
Width: 52.5 cm (20 5/8 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection



22. Floral Batik Skirt

A cream cotton batik skirt decorated with three elegant floral sprays, insects and birds on a swirling fine leaf ground. The upper and lower borders with flowers and leaves and the lower edge with a blue wavy line. The front panel of triangular teeth, *tumpals*, between blue borders, each element filled with birds and flowers in colours of wine red, blue and overlapping tones.

Indonesian, 1900 - 1940s
Height: 106 cm (41 3/4 inches)
Width: 209 cm (82 1/4 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection

21. Fanciful Birds and Exotic Fruits

Detail of a brown silk batik, the complete length fringed at both ends, the mid brown ground decorated in dark brown with fanciful birds, fruits, flowers and leaves in Chinese taste.

Indonesian, north-east Java, early 20th century
Length: 324 cm (127 1/2 inches)
Width: 56 cm (22 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection





23. Floral Batik Skirt

A dark green cotton batik skirt decorated with three tall flower groups flanked by butterflies and birds, in cream, green and shades of blue. The front panel diagonally patterned with cream and blue floral stripes within vertical floral borders.

Indonesian, Java, circa 1920s
Height: 106.5 cm (42 inches)
Width: 191.5 cm (75 1/2 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection

Signed on the edge of the front panel.



24. Floral Batik Skirt

A blue grey cotton batik skirt decorated with bold and delicate scattered flower sprays in blue, cream and over dyed yellow on a basket weave ground. The front panel (*kepala*) with a cream flower spray, flanked by a curvaceous floral border which continues along the hem.

Indonesian, north Java, Indo-Dutch,
circa 1940s or earlier
Height: 105.5 cm (41 1/2 inches)
Width: 208 cm (82 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection

Signed with the maker's name, Lilbetz and a short form of the place name Pekalongan.





25. Floral Batik Skirt

A green cotton batik *kain panjang* from Lasem the design of *gendolo giri*; decorated with three tall sprays of exotic blossoms sprouting from a landscape ground and with birds in flight. Dyed in red, blue, purple, yellow and cream all on a stippled yellow ground filled with small flower heads, leaves and imaginary blossoms. The design reverses on a diagonal line after half the length to give three more flower groups.

Indonesian, Lasem, north coast of Java, circa 1940s

Height: 107 cm (42 1/8 inches)

Width: 276 cm (108 1/2 inches)

Provenance:

From a private English collection



26. Floral Batik Skirt

A cotton batik skirt with a blue front panel, decorated with four large flower sprays surrounded by insects and birds within a floral border. The main dark brown ground with a background of small white leaves.

Indonesian, Java, early 20th century
Height: 106 cm (41 3/4 inches)
Width: 198 cm (78 inches)

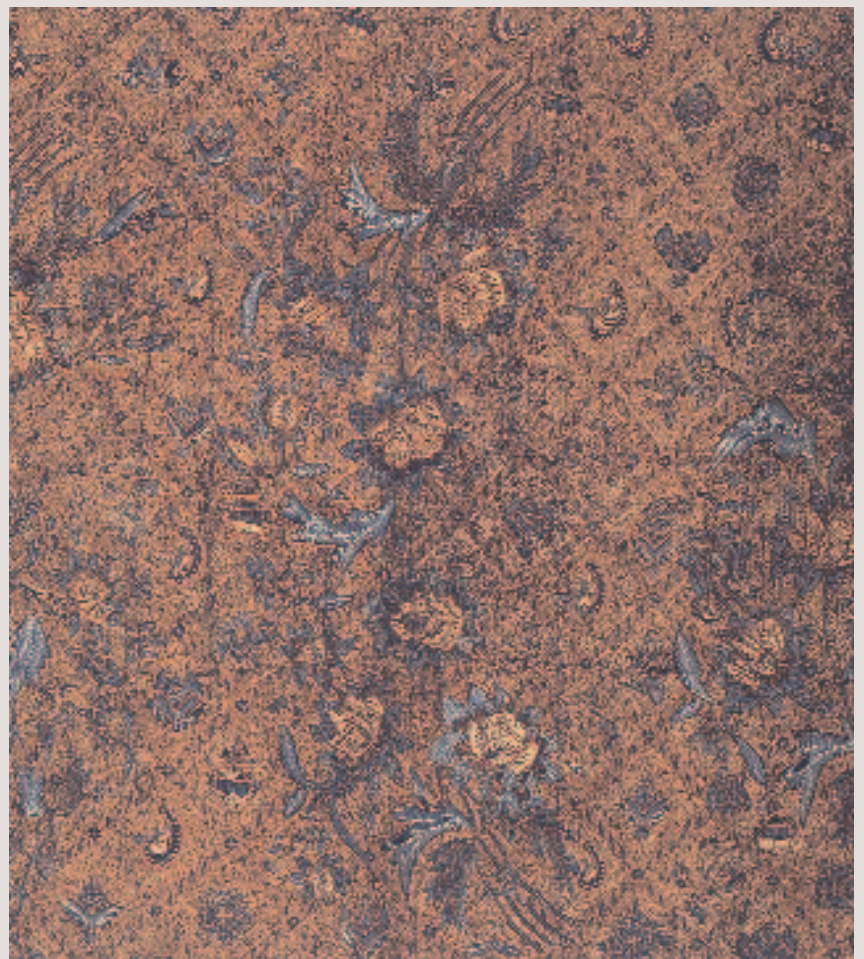
Provenance:
From a private English collection

27. Floral Batik Skirt

A brown cotton batik *kain panjang* decorated with three flower sprays in blue and cream over a lattice pattern filled with flowers, butterflies and birds on a stippled ground. The design reverses after half the length.

Indonesian, north east Java, early 20th century
Height: 105.5 cm (41 1/2 inches)
Width: 245 cm (96 1/2 inches)

Provenance:
From a private English collection



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Back Cover

28. Batik Gilded Head Cover

A cotton batik head cloth patterned with nineteen red and blue squares in each direction, over printed in gold to create one square overlaying another. The border with floral tendrils surrounded by a border which simulates a fringe.

Indonesian, Sumatra, Jambi, 1900s

Measurements: 85.5 x 87.2 cm (33 2/3 x 34 1/3 inches)

Provenance: from a private English collection

*The number 19 represents the coming together of the cycles of the sun and moon after 19 solar years; numerically important in Islamic cultures.

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Detail of no. 12