



DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS MALAYSIA
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SEMINAR

A CELEBRATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIA TEXTILES

In conjunction with the Celebration Of Textile Carnival and Exhibition
at Department of Museums Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur 2011.

Date : 20th December 2011 (Tuesday)
Venue : Auditorium, Department of Museums Malaysia



Department of
Museums Malaysia



National
Textile Museum

ICOMMAL

International Council
of Museums Malaysia



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PROGRAMME

8.00 am	Registration of participants
9.00 am	Opening Ceremony and speech by Dato' Ibrahim Ismail , Director General, Department of Museums Malaysia
Session 1	
Moderator	YM Datin Paduka Raja Fuziah bte Raja Tun Uda
9.30 am	Paper 1: Dr. Norwani bte Hj. Mohd Nawawi (MALAYSIA) - Kain Limar: Malay Ikat Fabric
10.00 am	Paper 2 : Dr. June Ngo (MALAYSIA) – Revitalising the Craft of Songket Weaving through Innovation in Malaysia
10.30 am	Light Refreshment
Session 2	
Moderator	YM Datin Paduka Raja Fuziah bte Raja Tun Uda
11.00 am	Paper 3 : Ibu Asmoro Damais (INDONESIA) – A Little Showcase of The Tie-Die n The Sew-Die Textiles from Indonesia
11.30 am	Paper 4 : Ms. Carol Cassidy (LAOS PDR) – Weaving Success in Southeast Asia
12.00 pm	Paper 5 : Mr. Sim Tan (MALAYSIA) – State of The Thread : Ancient Textiles, Modern Needs
12.30 pm	Questions and Answers
1.00 pm	Lunch and Networking
Session 3	
Moderator	Assoc. Prof. Sulaiman Abdul Ghani
2.15 pm	Paper 6 : Dr. Robyn Maxwell (AUSTRALIA) – Immortalised in Metal: Women and Weaving in Early Southeast Asia
2.45 pm	Paper 7 : Dr. Gauri Krishnan (SINGAPORE) – Rare Indian Trade Found in Indonesia
3.15 pm	Paper 8 : Ms. Erline S. Millar (PHILLIPINES) – Basic Conservation of Textile
3.45 pm	Paper 9 : Ms. Prapassorn Posrithong (THAILAND) – Indian Textiles For Thai Market And Their Local Imitations
4.15 pm	Questions and Answer
4.45 pm	Light Refreshment
5.15 pm	Ends

Revitalising the Craft of Songket Weaving through Innovation in Malaysia

Dr. June Ngo Siok Kheng

Deputy Dean (Postgraduate and Research), Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak &
Director of Textile Design and Production, Yayasan Tuanku Nur Zahirah

Abstract

The art of songket weaving is believed to have come to the Malay Peninsula through trade, migration and political marriages since the fifteenth century. Songket is a piece of breathtaking traditional Malay fabric which belongs to the brocade group of textiles. It is woven in silk or cotton threads and the songket patterns are formed by gold or coloured metallic threads using the supplementary weft technique. This paper focuses on the history of songket in the Malay Peninsula as well as the processes and problems faced by songket weaving cottage industry in Malaysia. Even though the craft of songket weaving has a very long history in the Malay Archipelago, the number of songket weavers has dwindled recently. This could be due to the rather limited usage of songket and reluctance of the younger generation women to participate in the industry as songket weaving is perceived to be time-consuming and boring. Consequently, the craft of songket weaving may one day diminish if our younger generation is no longer interested in the songket weaving profession. Thus in 2008, a special songket project was initiated by the Yayasan Tuanku Nur Zahirah's (YTNZ), a Foundation established by the Her Majesty Tuanku Nur Zahirah. YTNZ aims to revive the craft of songket weaving by teaching young women the necessary weaving skills to produce contemporary and high quality songket as well as broadening the usage of songket. Examples of the songket activities and projects carried by YTNZ in producing contemporary songket and application are also highlighted in this paper.

1.0 Introduction

Songket is a piece of breathtaking traditional Malay fabric which belongs to the brocade group of textiles. It is woven in silk or cotton threads and the songket patterns are formed by gold or coloured metallic threads using the supplementary weft technique.

According to Abdul Aziz Rashid (1999), the usage of gold thread forming exquisite motifs alone does not determine the beauty of songket. Historically, the value of songket is determined by the creative skills of the weaver in combining the usage of patterns and motifs, and the value of gold perceived within the community.