

Ceremonial Skirt from Laos

Asian Civilisations Museum

This skirt has wide bands of alternating *ikat* and supplementary weft-woven designs in natural dyed silk. The *ikat* employs a “resist dyeing” technique where the threads used for weaving are dyed earlier. The *ikat* threads are bound in a pattern so that the threads covered by the binding “resist” the dye, creating a unique design. The *ikat* designs include pairs of stylised interlocking *naga* or dragons.

The red ground is typical of Tai Khang¹ weaving, whilst Tai Daeng² usually employs similar designs of indigo and red bands. The Tai migrated out of southern China into northern areas of mainland Southeast Asia during the 12th century. The rich textile-weaving legacy remains today, although designs and markets for such textiles are changing with globalisation. □



Ceremonial skirt from the early 20th century, Laos. Collection of Asian Civilisations Museum, National Heritage Board.

Notes

1. The Tai Khang are a minority people group in Laos who speak the Tai Language.
2. The Tai Daeng are an ethnic group of Vietnam and Laos and they speak the Tai Daeng Language.