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REVOLVING BANANAS: THE INFLUENCES OF INDIAN TRADE TEXTILES ON JAVANESE BATIK DESIGN (Precis only)
by
Robyn Maxwell

The influence of the Indian double ikat silk patola on Southeast Asian textile structure and design has long been acknowledged, however, the impact of Indian painted and printed mordant-dyed cotton textiles, traded into the region over centuries, has been largely undocumented. Recent finds now indicate the great variety of cotton textile types imported into Indonesia. This talk explored the role of these Indian cotton trade textiles in the development of Javanese batik, and the effect of the change of medium on design transformations. Designs from a range of batik-producing regions were examined, including the well known pisang balik (inverted banana) pattern of the central principalities.

Local Textile Trading Systems in Indonesia: An Example From Flores Island
Roy W. Hamilton
National Museum of Natural History

Several of the papers presented at this symposium deal with the trade of textiles over long distances, from one continent to another. Such trade systems undeniably had tremendous impact on the societies involved, but in many parts of the world individuals and communities are bound together in much smaller circles of trade that are equally formative. In this paper I will discuss a tiny network of textile trade that involves the carrying of cloth to neighboring villages over mountain paths and along surf-swept beaches. Trading systems on this scale are as much the rule as the exception and our understanding of textile trade must encompass the minute as well as the grand.

This paper developed out of a talk I gave at a conference in August, 1989. At that time my arguments were fairly straightforward, focusing on the role ecological factors have played in the development of this textile trade. Having thought over my material for the past year, I am now less inclined to try to make it yield any single conclusion. The present paper is therefore somewhat less tidy, but gives a more realistic picture of the complexity of the problems posed by my research. I will present my material in accordance with the reality of the situation, which is that I am forced to work backward, beginning with the present, which I hope I understand accurately, and then attempting to recreate the past, for which the evidence is patchy.

Three Villages

In the course of my research on Lio textiles, I have been investigating the role of weaving and cloth trading in the economies of three villages in Ndona Subdistrict, which is located east of the town of Ende on the south coast of Flores. Although they are separated by only a few kilometers, ecological conditions vary considerably from one village to another due to the extremely rugged topography. Together with cultural and historical factors, this has led to differing economic strategies in each village.

The village of Onelako, where I made my home, is in many ways atypical of the 12 villages in Ndona Subdistrict. It is the only village connected to Ende by road and public transportation, allowing many to commute to employment in town. A government office complex is located in the village, which serves as the administrative capital of the subdistrict.