

1. Chinese Textiles in First and Second Millennia AD Myanmar from Chinese Texts - Derek Heng Thiam Soon, Head, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, and Associate Professor of Humanities, Yale-NUS College

Abstract: Textiles stand as one of the key commodities that were traded across Maritime Asia and the Bay of Bengal over the last two thousand years. Along with a rich body of textual materials on the topic, is an accompanying array of taxonomy, market information as well as uses that may be linked to such issues as ethnicity, social status and hierarchy, political economy and aesthetics. This paper seeks to provide an overview of the data that is available from the Chinese corpus of texts, spanning the first and early second millennia, on Myanmar's importation, use and consumption of textiles from China. In the process, it will seek to position Myanmar society and politics within the larger context of Chinese textiles trade and consumption in the Southeast Asian and Bay of Bengal contexts.

2. Sarsikyo: Myanmar Dedicatory Textiles--Their History, Production and Preservation - Vanessa Chan, Director-General, International Organisations Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

Abstract: This paper seeks to bring to light the history, state of the art and preservation of the weaving of Sarsikyo, dedicatory textiles that have a long historical tradition in Myanmar's history. It details the author's research project and efforts at initiating a translation project on the epigraphic and textual materials related to this form of textile weaving, as well as the efforts that have been made to preserve and expand the practice of the weaving techniques involved in the production of this textile artefact. The paper will finally detail some of the possible ways in which this cultural heritage preservation effort may be made sustainable in the long run.

3. Clothing Myanmar: conceptualising Ethnic and Religious Identities through Dress – Georg Noack, Senior Curator, South- and Southeast Asia, Linden-Museum Stuttgart, Germany

Abstract: Clothing constitutes an integral part of any society's material culture and often has strong links with conceptions of identity. As an interface that connects the individual with its social surroundings, it serves as a medium to express oneself, one's aspirations and identifications. Because of its visibility it easily lends itself as a symbol for ethnic and religious identities – both as an expression of emic identifications and as a key feature of etic categorizations. This is particularly evident in Myanmar where some ethnic groups have been named after the predominant color of their clothing and where government agencies, oppositional groups and media keep using ethnic “costumes” as symbols for the various ethnic groups. Clothing also tends to take a prominent place in ethnographic collections: Traditional textiles from the various ethnic groups of Myanmar are not only aesthetically appealing, often intricately patterned masterpieces of the weavers’ craft, but they were also deemed the best possible representation of the

ethnic groups of Myanmar. In fact they were seen, as one of the most important features of ethnicities per se. The Linden-Museum has recently acquired a collection of several hundred textiles assembled by a former German diplomat in the 1960s who hoped to take “the whole of Burma” home by collecting the “costumes” of all ethnic groups that he could get hold of by commissioning people to travel on his behalf even to the remotest villages and buy the finest, old, homemade textiles of the respective ethnic group. The paper will take a closer look at a few of these textiles, highlighting their relevance for how different people envision the ethnic groups of Myanmar - “Western” collectors, members of the concerned ethnic group, and politicians in Myanmar.