

Phaa Hom

BLANKETS OF VARIOUS TAI GROUPS

Project Space • Luang Prabang 2011



PHAA HOM - BLANKETS OF VARIOUS TAI GROUPS



Tai Thanh weavers in Khammouane Province, April 2004.
Photo by: Linda McIntosh

Women belonging to the numerous Tai ethnic groups populating Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Burma, as well as parts of China and India, excel in the creation of elaborately woven textiles. Tai weavers painstakingly decorate not only clothing and ceremonial weavings with intricate patterning but also mundane items, such as household accessories. The Tai living in the cooler environs of northern Vietnam and Laos utilize *phaa hom* or blankets to provide warmth. Many subgroups, including the Tai Dam, Tai Thanh, Tai Moey, and Tai Sam Neua, produce *phaa hom* with a center section composed of one or two similarly woven panels, often in striking indigo, and sometimes ebony black, continuous supplementary weft designs.

A Tai woman begins to weave plain and patterned cloth prior to marriage, building a trousseau. When she weds, the blankets and other textiles will accompany the bride to her new home for future use. *Phaa hom* serve as blankets, curtains or room dividers, and baby carriers. During funerals, they also function as shrouds and are often hung around the deceased's body.

The motifs adorning *phaa hom* are similar to those found on other Tai fabrics and possess protective qualities, warding off harmful, supernatural sources of illness and misfortune. For example, *ngeuak*, a type of serpent deity, and *hong*, a mythical bird, are recurring designs. These mystical creatures also provide transport between worlds for spirits symbolized with human figures. A favorite motif is the monkey whose playfulness resembles that of children, which every new family expects to have many.

Finely plied, white cotton or silk thread compose the background of the decorated panels while the continuous supplementary weft designs are formed with thickly plied, indigo- or ebony-dyed cotton. Plain, hand-spun cotton fabric surrounds the central field.

Linda S. McIntosh PhD
Textile Curator

Catalogue

































- p. 5 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns enclose mon keys. Ngeuak surround the lanterns.
- p. 6 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns are composed of monkeys, dauk chan sandalwood flowers, and silkworms. Hook forms symbolize ngeuak and fern tendrils.
- p. 7 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Human figures ride on mating hong. Ngeuak, flowers, and fern tendrils surround them.
The central panels are from the same strip of cloth decorating the central field of the textile p. 19.
- p. 8 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton and silk
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: The interlocking key design is universal and has existed among the ancestors of the Tai since the Dong Son Bronze culture.
- p. 9 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns
- p. 10 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: The three-eyed great goddess dominates the small ngeuak and lanterns. The central panels are from the same strip of cloth decorating the central field of the textile on p. 12.
- p. 11 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Sun with illuminating rays
- p. 12 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: The three-eyed great goddess dominates the small ngeuak and lanterns. The central panels are from the same strip of cloth decorating the central field of the textile on p. 10.
- p. 13 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns enclose ngeuak. Monkeys parade on fern tendrils.
- p. 14 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns are composed of monkeys and stars.
- p. 15 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns are composed of stars and vegetation.
- p. 16 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns are composed of hong, ngeuak, silkworms, civets and other animals, fern tendrils, flowers, and vegetation.
- p. 17 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns enclose ngeuak and maak chap water chestnuts. Monkeys parade on fern tendrils.
- p. 18 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns enclose ngeuak. Monkeys parade on fern tendrils.
- p. 19 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Human figures ride on mating hong. Ngeuak, flowers, and fern tendrils surround them.
The central panels are from the same strip of cloth decorating the central field of the textile on p. 7.
- p. 20 *Phaa Hom, Blanket*
Ground Warp and Weft: White cotton
Continuous Supplementary Weft in indigo cotton
Motifs: Diamond shaped lanterns brimming with stars surround monkeys.

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