



The Roots of Asian Weaving: The He Haiyan collection of textiles and looms from Southwest China

Eric Boudot, Chris Buckley

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This groundbreaking book documents the weaving traditions and textiles of one of Asia's most ethnically diverse areas, placing them in a regional context. Based on more than a decade of firsthand study in the field, the authors record the traditions of Miao, Yao, Buyi, Dong, Zhuang, Maonan, Dai and Li weavers from Guizhou to Hainan Island. They describe the looms and techniques of these groups, including diagrams, descriptions and photographs of the weaving processes and woven structures. Each tradition is illustrated with outstanding examples of textiles, drawn from the He Haiyan collection in Beijing, including many 19th century examples. The authors present a novel analysis of loom technology across the Asian mainland, using techniques derived from linguistics and biology. They use these to chart the evolutionary history of looms in Asia, demonstrating that all the major traditions are related in spite of their apparent diversity. The results have far-reaching implications, for example shedding light on the development of the Chinese Drawloom and showing how key patterning features were derived from Tai-Kadai looms. The book is a visual delight as well as a resource for scholars, collectors and curators. The fieldwork in this book is a primary, while the looms and techniques will be essential reading for those interested in weaving and textile history, as well as contemporary weavers and designers wishing to learn how to reproduce traditional patterns and methods. The account of the development and links between weaving cultures will be a revelation for those interested in cultural evolution and the diversity of mankind.

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