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Cover: Illustration of a *Lun-taya Acheik Htamein*. Detail from a skirt made of pink and white silk, mid 20th century, Amarapura, Burma/Myanmar. Silk, metallic wrapped yard, cotton. Burma Art Collection, Center for Burma Studies, Northern Illinois University. Gift of Hugh C. MacDougall, collected by his wife Eleanor MacDougall between 1981 to 1984. BC2019.05.122.

Photo credit: Chloe Insley, Northern Illinois University.

This is a detail of a classical handwoven traditional Burmese silk *htamein* (a woman's wrap-around skirt) exemplifying a particular technique called *lun-taya acheik*: with regard to the usage of *lun-taya* (i.e., one hundred shuttles); and *acheik* (i.e., a complex geometric design comprised of interspersed alternating floral elements). Once the privilege of the ladies at the court due to the expensive material and the technical difficulty of the requisite weaving techniques, it also became accessible to a wealthy elite during the colonial period (1824-1948).

Unique to Burma, such *htamein* are worn now at ceremonial events such as weddings and commencements. The colors pink and white intertwined with silver metallic wrapped yarn (*bu ngwe*) demonstrate the mastery of its weavers; and the style of this particular *acheik* pattern attests to a likely post-colonial provenance.

It alternates between a repetition of wave-like line, with a simple stylized orchid embedded within each undulation; followed by another stripe repeating the numeral "3" (in Burmese) intertwined with *three-strand flower yarn*—a more-complex floral motif—and thence the *five-strand gamon vine* motif. The alternating usage of white and pink silk, along with the silver thread wrapped yarn, was formerly limited by sumptuary laws for use solely within the royal court.

The color pink seemed to have been particularly favored under Thibaw, the last King of Burma (*r. 1878-1885*); although the detail here illustrated is taken from a central panel of a much more recent *htamein*. The complete garment incorporates an upper waistband made of black cotton, and itself terminated below by a pink and off-white-striped sewn train woven with a cream weft over a warp of pink, and interspersed with narrow pinstripes in black, pink and white.

This relatively subdued *htamein* was collected in Burma by Eleanor MacDougall, wife of Hugh MacDougall, an American member of the US diplomatic corps who was posted in Rangoon from 1981 to 1984. We selected it from our Burma Art Collection