

'Green Indigo'-Native Indigo of the Iban people of Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo

Abstract of paper by Edric Ong

The indigenous Iban people of Sarawak in Malaysian Borneo are renowned warp ikat weavers using the back strap floor loom. Traditionally they are known as 'Dream weavers'. The patterns on their textiles are inspired through dreams given by the weaving goddess, Kumang.

The primary natural dyes used are red-brown from 'engkudu' (morinda citrifolia) and accentuated with 'tarum' (marsdenia tinctoria). The mordanting of the cotton threads is done in a special ceremony known as 'Ngar' designated as the 'warpath of the women'.

'Tarum' (marsdenia tinctoria) used by Iban weavers is not fermented and therefore used 'green'...thus the term 'green indigo'.

This paper explains the heritage of Iban ikat weaving and the use of 'tarum', their colour significance in Iban culture and the use of 'Green Indigo' in my own textile design and fashion