

EN COMPASS WORKSHOP

HAINAN PROVINCE, CHINA 14<sup>TH</sup> TO 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011

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This is a sample of the beautiful weaved cloth done by women from the Li people of Hainan china. The process of making the cloth is long and complicated. The technique has been in existence for hundreds of years and was fast disappearing as new ways of life which are simpler and readily available. The people and the Chinese government have done much to bring this disappearing technique back. More women, who are younger, are now learning this and earning a living from it. The government supports the Li culture by providing spaces for the people to use to make their work, and exhibition opportunities.

In earlier times women weaved and made their everyday wear and for their families. It is a time consuming process and the designs which every woman did differently are quite intricate.



the Li people.

A beautiful piece of weaved design by



In this picture, the Li women are weaving and are dressed in dresses made from the finished product.

#### MUSIC AND DANCES OF THE LI PEOPLE

Traditional dances and music of the Li people are still being performed today for various reasons. Dances for funerals, harvest and birth are still in practice. These dances are very colorful.

An interesting dance is the dragon or worship dance,



The dragon dance was performed when there was no rain and it is believed that the dragon could bless the people with rain and protect them from natural disasters.





The dragon dance.....

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This kind of boat-shaped house has the roof made in this manner to protect the walls from the rains and it keeps the house cool in summer and warm in winter. It is protected by the government to preserve the culture and unique ways of the people of Hainan.

### **BODY MARKINGS AND TATTOOING...**





Body tattooing was done by the Li women as a tribute to their ancestors, it has not been done since the 1950's. The process starts when a woman is about 15years old and goes on until she is about 35 years old. It was done using a particular thorn with ink. It is a very painful process but looks very beautiful at the end as can be seen in the pictures. Each dialect had a different kind of pattern and they identified themselves easily.



## PRESERVING STORIES AND FOLKLORE



Murals are used here to show various cultural aspects of the Li people. In this mural we can see the dragon dance, using puppetry to tell stories and dances using musical instruments. Murals can be used to tell many stories and the impact is high. This is one very important method of keeping heritage alive.



one of the ways the Li people kept their stories were alive was by the use of puppets to act out stories and fables. In this way stories have lived for a long time passing from generation to generation.





