



Sash or Belt

Date

early to mid 20th Century

Primary Maker

Naga

Medium

Wool and shell

Description

This sash is notable for its decoration with cowrie shells. Cowrie are common in the Indian Ocean; however, this object originated in Nagaland, which is considerably landlocked. This conundrum is addressed in Kajen Mongro's Naga Cultural Attires and Musical Instruments: cowries are readily available in Nagaland markets now, but are actually a part of traditional Naga dress as well. The Naga people would have originally come across cowries on journeys to the Bay of Bengal, or purchased them from traders who had been to Myanmar. This kind of sash or

belt is generally worn in Nagaland to bind the dao-holder to the body (the dao is a kind of sword or knife used as an agricultural tool, although it can also be used as a weapon). The belt is typically worn such that the dao-holder is on the back, just above the buttocks. This means that the belt is also important for maintaining good posture.

Dimensions

7 1/4 × 120 in. (18.4 × 304.8 cm)