

The Mao Era in Objects

Handloom Cloth: Production

Handloom cloth of the type depicted here – handspun from local cotton and woven on simple wooden looms – was widely worn during the collective years, typically dyed indigo blue or left undyed.



TITLE

Image 1 Setting up the loom

DATE

2008

CREATOR

Jacob Eyferth

PUBLISHER

N/A

RIGHTS

Courtesy of Jacob Eyferth

DESCRIPTION

74-year old Wei Yuqin is setting up the loom by passing the longitudinal warp threads through the heddle (*zeng* 综 – the part of the loom that moves up and down, lifting each second warp thread so that the weft thread can pass through, forming a crisscross pattern). This process is known as 'threading the heddle' (*guozeng* 过综).



TITLE

Image 2 Spinning thread

DATE

2008

CREATOR

Jacob Eyferth

PUBLISHER

N/A

RIGHTS

Courtesy of Jacob Eyferth

DESCRIPTION

The spinner holds a sliver (*nianzi* 捻子) of carded cotton in her left hand. With her right hand, she drives the wheel. The wheel drives the spindle, which twists the fibers; at the same time, the spinner is drawing out the thread.



TITLE

Image 3 Weaving

DATE

2008

CREATOR

Jacob Eyferth

PUBLISHER

N/A

RIGHTS

Courtesy of Jacob Eyferth

DESCRIPTION

In the Mao years, most households in Gedatou would have looms like this one. In this image, the weaver pulls the batten (*kou 筘*, a wooden beater that pushes the warp threads together) towards her. The yarn she uses is no longer homespun but bought from a yarn dealer in the nearest town.