

Sashiko and Kamon

The *Sashiko* sewing project 2008-2010 involved the sewing of *sashiko* stitches onto a series of 15 X 15 cm patches which were then assembled to form a quilt tapestry. *Sashiko* (pronounced: SA-Shi-KOE' - the "Shi" is almost silent) is a form of quilting originating from Japan centuries ago when farmers and fishermen practiced using a running-stitch technique to patch torn or worn clothing. *Sashiko* came about because of the need to reuse precious linen fabric. Traditionally, common people used linen as the main material for clothing before 1868. After 1868, cotton became more widely available but was still

considered valuable. When the cotton fabric was new, it was used to make the finest wear. These garments were eventually used as working clothes until they became worn out. As cloth and thread were scarce, it was vital to - mend damaged clothes. Mending was done by applying additional fabric and *sashiko* stitches over the affected area in order to strengthen the material and ensure its longevity.

To date 41 patches have been made, each with its own distinctive pattern. Designs are all traditional and chosen from the project reference book. The assembled quilt was first officially displayed at Tamu Gadang during the UMS 12th Convocation 2010. Congratulations to all those who participated!

The *Kamon* Project was another attempt to engage UMS students with a traditional form of Japanese design. A *Kamon* is a kind of symbol representing a family crest. It is considered unique to Japanese culture. There are more than 5000 different patterns in existence, each identifying a family's lineage and social status. Although only one participant took part, he made a superb design, combining the image of a poplar tree (which relates to his name) with that of an umbrella - a symbol associated with the samurai. We printed and pasted the design onto T-shirts, printed it onto stickers - and even drew it on an umbrella!

Contributed by

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