

# Embroidered cover for a domestic altar, with four inscriptions

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: **65.82.1** 

Type: **religious or cult object; textile arts**

Date of production: **1940**

Place of production: **Vietnam, Southeast Asia**

Materials/Technique  
s: **silk, woven, embroidered, with silk, cotton and metal thread**

Dimensions: **width: 87.5 cm  
length: 177 cm**

The four letters embroidered in metal thread on red silk in the centre of the tablecloth read "May your name be glorious in the world of merchants". The five characters on the right side bear the date: 'Made during the reign of Bao-dai (reigned 1926-1945), in the 17th year of the cycle (beginning 1924), i.e. 1940'. On the left inscription is the name of the commissioner (Mr Nguen).

The five bats (blue and green) embroidered in the decoration framing the inscription also contain a message of good wishes, because the word 'bat' is synonymous with the word 'happiness'. But the peach in the baskets hanging on the bats' wings is also a good wish: it symbolises long life. The outer yellow frame is also decorated with lucky signs: above, two dragons playing with flaming gems, and below (the female pair of dragons representing the ruler), two phoenixes. Finally, on the side, separated by stylised "long life" characters, are the eight Taoist immortal, each on the back of a cloud (the eight immortal, adopted from Chinese tradition, are also revered as lucky charms and patrons of various professions).

