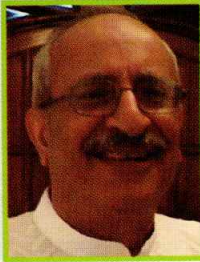


The Eternal Sari

2019-20



Dear Friends,

The beautiful sari is **India's pride**. The grace and beauty of the drape and the colours of the saris are a sight for my eyes. From every state in India, comes a different weave, a different pattern, un-changed for hundreds of years.

The sari is very versatile. There are **106 registered ways to wear the sari**, and still counting!

Most female tourists try on the sari and take pictures of themselves. All over the world, the sari is recognised as

inherently Indian.

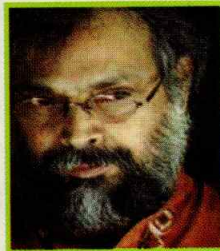
Many saris are handed down from mother to daughter and daughters-in-law for generations. The mothers give to her daughters the saris she brought in her trousseau. The new bride in the family receives the saris given to her by her mother-in-law. Most of them would have been worn once or twice. No alteration needed. **The sari adapts to every figure.**

I accept that the world has changed. Women drive cars, and the sari can get tangled in the clutch. Younger ladies drive scooters. The pallu may be a danger, as it flies in the wind. Jumping up into a bus needs two hands, and the pleats may trip the lady.

But for weddings, festivals and parties, **saris rule**. And what a beautiful sight it is! Reason enough to make it the theme of this year's Calendar! And celebrate the sari!!

Pradip Burman

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Gautam Partho Roy

He's done it again! This was a tough one, and he did it. It took a long time, because there is little information and less pictures of the saris of India. It was an eye opener for all of us. There are thirty-two drapes for the sari! Most of them are not used anymore. But he researched. And even went to a sari museum in Ahmedabad. That is dedication. And then, he chooses the most difficult media, acrylic. If you put on paper, you can't get it off. Every stroke must be exact or the whole thing has to be discarded - and start again.

But he did it. Quickly. And perfectly. And on time.

We are still looking for a medium he can't use. Suggestions?

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The Eternal Sari

According to Hindu mythology, Kanchi silk weavers are the descendants of **Sage Markanda**, the master weaver of the Gods, who is supposed to have woven tissue from lotus fibre. While cotton is considered to be the favourite fabric of Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu prefers silk. In ancient India, cloth was never stitched. Fabrics were draped, knotted and tucked. The sari is an amazing garment. A long strip of cloth can be draped one hundred and eight ways. Really!!! Saris were draped to cover the breasts, since cholis (blouses) were not invented until the Moghuls brought the concept of stitching. Many tribals still do not wear cholis.

Fabrics for saris range from the lightest muslin to heavy silk brocades. Traditionally, cotton saris are worn in summer. In winter, silks keep you warmer. Synthetic fabrics are useful for office going ladies, since they don't crush. However, an air-conditioned environment is required, as synthetics keep you hot in summers and frigid in winters.

Pallus are very useful. Mostly used to cover one's head, women also use it to clean a spot of dust, pick up hot dishes, **wipe children's tears and sometimes, their own.** The corners are used to **tie keys**, money and anything small that the lady wants to keep handy. Strangely, Kashmir - the coldest state - makes the finest, lightest silks. Whereas South India - the hottest part of India - produces heavy silks that drape like a dream. This does not mean that the saris woven in one state are worn only in that state. **Every lady needs a Banarasi sari**, with golden motifs and a heavy pallu, for **weddings and feasts.** Rajasthan's light cotton saris are worn all through the hot summer days. For grace and beauty, there is nothing like a well draped sari.



Venukagundaram

Gochi Kattu

Guda Kattu

Kaccha Kattu

Andhra Pradesh

The modern sari is derived from one of the drapes of Andhra.

Jamdani is a silk sari, woven in Uppada in the east Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh. It was registered as one of the Geographical Indications of Goods Act, 1999. Uppada Jamdani saris are known for their light weight. You can recognise one because it has two borders, one zari and another in a contrasting colour. As an example, a green sari may have a zari border with orange border above it. The Jamdani is the finest silk, woven on a brocade loom.

The Jamdani is created in a very interesting manner. Two weavers are required to sit in a pit, where the loom is, and work in tandem to make this fabric. The weft and warp threads that are needed for the background are passed from one weaver to the other. Then, the designs that need to be added are woven in the way embroidery is usually done. The word itself roughly translates to "flower vase", 'jam' meaning flower and 'dani' is a vase. The Jamdani technique was first written in Kautaliya's 'Arthashastra', composed in the 3rd century. This style of weaving was widely prevalent in Bangladesh and slowly seeped into Uppada, Andhra Pradesh.

The motifs and patterns are mostly inspired by geometrical patterns. However, they also use a lot of animal and plant inspired motifs.



Purnia

Bhagalpuri Silk

Madubani

Bihar

The Bihar plain is divided into two unequal halves by the river Ganga, which flows through the middle from west to east. Bihar is one of India's poorest states, with stark social inequality. Bihar has a glorious past. It was known as Magadha in ancient times, and was a centre of power, learning and culture. Pataliputra (modern Patna), the capital of Magadha, was an important centre of Indian civilisation.

The saris of Bihar are draped like normal saris, but the silk they use is different. Tussar silk sarees are also known by the Sanskrit name, Kosa silk sarees. They are made from silk that is produced from silk worms that breed in wild forest trees, not mulberry trees. Tussar sarees are mainly produced in Bhagalpur in Bihar and are also known by the Sanskrit name, Kosa silk. Tribal women, who are trained in the art of tussar weaving, can produce about 10 metres of the silk cloth in around three days. Un-dyed tussar has a golden sheen, and after weaving, is very strong.



Chhattisgarhi

Sarguja

Variation Surguja

Chhattishgarh

Kosa silk is obtained from an Indian silkworm - *Antheraea mylitta* and is a variety of Tussar silk. It is drawn out of cocoons which are especially grown on specific trees known as Arjun, Saja and Sal.

Kosa silk is known for its sturdiness and is preferred to pure silk in Chhattisgarh. This version of Tussar silk is produced exclusively in India. Known for its golden look, it is naturally available in shades of pale golden, dark honey, orange, fawn, cream and many more. The finished product is dyed using natural dyes from the palaas flower (Fire flower), the red pollen of the Rora Flower and the deep rose red from lac and more natural contributors.



Pano_Bhaju

4 Kalsi

Christian Kunbi

Dhsngad/Shepherd

Goa

The Kunbi tribe is believed to be the oldest tribe of Goa. This tribal community is industrious and hard working. With the advent of the Portuguese they were converted to Christians. This sari was originally worn by Kunbi and Gawda tribal women, who were basically paddy field workers, This is the main reason the drape is just below the knee, giving freedom to the Kunbi workers.

Originally the Kunbi sari was dyed in red and black, woven in small and large checks. The dye was obtained from a recipe of iron ore, rice kanji, (starch from cooked rice water) and vinegar. All this is abundantly found in Goa. Originally worn without the choli, now it is worn with a simple blouse with puff sleeves. The saree is almost extinct, as most of the members of the community are moving towards greener pastures. With the literacy rate improved in the state of Goa, members of this community prefer to have white-collared or government jobs rather than being agriculturists.



Dangi

Parsi

Gujrati

Gujrati

Gujarat

The famous Patola weaving of Patan is known for its colourful geometrical patterns. The unique tie and weave method of Patola results in identical patterns on both sides of the fabric. It is woven in the double 'ikkat' style, which is perhaps the most complicated of all textiles designs in the whole world. Each fabric consists of a series of warp threads and a single weft thread, which binds the warp threads together. Each one of the warp threads is tied and dyed according to the pattern of the sari, such that the knotted portions of the thread do not catch the colours.

The result is not only a tremendous richness in colour of the fabric, but that both sides of the sari look exactly alike, and can be worn either way. A Patola looks like it is printed on both sides in the same design. The weaving is done on simple traditional handlooms, and the dyes used are made from vegetable extracts and other natural colours, which are so fast that there is a Gujarati saying, that "the Patola will tear, but the colour will not fade."



Santhal Pargana

Tussar Silk

Santhais

Ranchi Saiko

Jharkhand

Jharkhand silk also called Vanya or wild silk, is made from the silkworms breeding in the trees of Sal and Arjun in the Jharkhand forests. This gives the rich, golden color and smooth texture to the Tussar silk yarns that produce marvelous products like silk saris and salwar kameez. Jharkhand sarees are known for their pure Tussar silks, cotton fabrics and blends.

The use of organic dye with good colour combination have popularised the tribal art, hand painted themes of flora, fauna and scenes from nature on fine Tussar silk saris. Jharkhand Tussar silk saris are famous for their exquisitely designed fabrics in elegant colors, prints and latest designs. Teamed with alluring geometrical prints, embroidery bootis and rich zari pallu, Jharkhand tussar silk sari is lustrous wear for Indian weddings and bridal occasions, traditional events and festivals. Printed border and mango buttis, to weave the sari needs the involvement of 7 weavers. Saris are hand woven on traditional looms, some of them add hand embroidery and hand painting. Each piece is painstakingly and lovingly worked upon by the weavers of Jharkhand.



Bhoothra/Nomadic



Coorg



Chikoo Brown &
Maroon Silk



Iyyengari Kachhe

Karnataka

From the land of silk and sandalwood, comes a fine textile fit for royalty. Karnataka sericulture has a history of more than 215 years. In 1785, the Tiger of Mysore, Tippu Sultan, established sericulture in Mysore. He wanted Mysore to be the foremost among silk producing nations. The Mysore silk sari is manufactured in Karnataka, which is one of the largest silk producers in the country. The factory was set up by the Maharaja of Mysore in 1912. Made from the best silk and zari, each sari is on the border-weaving machine for about four hours. During the early 19th century while the world sericulture was collapsing, Mysore Sericulture industry sustained. Though, most of the exotic silkworm varieties perished, it remained stable through this period, and till today it is the backbone of mulberry sericulture in India.



Adivasi/Tribal



Danda Mundu



Maar Kachha



Namboothiri

Kerala

Kerala is hot and humid. A sea-side state needs light cotton saris, usually in pale colours. This sari is a two-piece drape and is called the mundum neryathum. It is the oldest remnant of the ancient form of the sari, which covered only the lower part of the body.

The lower section - waist to feet - is one piece and the pallu is a separate piece, wrapped once or twice around the torso. Both pieces have borders and have broad stripes at the ends. The lower part finishes with the pleats on the front, the gold stripe going from waist to feet. The second part is the pallu, which has two zari (gold) stripes on both ends.

During the festival of Onam, women of all ages wear the mundum neryathum and take part in a folk dance, called Kaikottikalli, meaning 'only for women'.

The mundum neryathum could be worn in either the traditional style with the neriyaathu tucked inside the blouse, or in the modern style with the neriyaathu worn over the left shoulder. For festive occasions golden coloured borders or a broad zari border known as Kasavu sari. The colour for the blouse for this occasion is determined by the age and marital status of the woman. Young unmarried girls wear green blouses, while married and middle aged mothers wear red blouses.



Balaghat



Jhabua



Maheshwari & Chanderi



Balaghat

Madhya Pradesh

Chanderi

It is a traditionally ethnic fabric, characterised by its light weight and sheer texture. The fabric borrowed its name from the small town of Chanderi in Madhya Pradesh, where they are made. Weavers use cotton one way and silk the other way. They decorate the saris with delicate zari work. They sometimes also use two colours, such as blue one way and pink the other. This creates a sari which looks purple, pink or blue, according to how the light falls on it. Plain saris, with no zari, are block printed or have woven contrasting coloured borders and pallus. These are used during the day.

Maheshwari

Legend has it that Rani Ahilya Bai Holkar employed a special team of craftsmen from Surat and Malwa to design an exclusive nine yard sari that could be gifted to her relatives and guests who visited the palace. With the first sari conceived and designed by Her Highness herself, Maheshwari sarees went on to become a huge hit in the royal and aristocratic circle. Weavers also used gold or silver threads and gemstones to embellish the intricate patterns and add shimmer to the sari. Now copper coated nylon has replaced the zari.



Traditional Lavani

Shahi Mastani Nauvari

Ikkal Nauvari

Warlit

Maharashtra

The Paithani sari is named for the town where they are woven. This is one of the richest saris in India. The kaleidoscopic effect is achieved by weaving one colour for the length and another for width. Trade records, from the 2nd century BCE, mentions the silks and cotton of Pratishtana (Paithan) being exchanged for Roman wines and olive oil. Paithan has thus been a flourishing trade and textile town since the 2nd century BCE, however the craft of the Paithani really flourished in the 17th century and further reached its zenith in the early 19th century before witnessing a slow decline over time, till it was revived in the 1960s and 1970s.

Paithani is characterised by borders of oblique square designs and a pallu with a peacock designs. Among other varieties, single coloured and kaleidoscope-coloured designs are also popular.

Due to the proximity to the Ajanta caves, the influence of Buddhist paintings can be seen in Paithani motifs:

Silk was used in weft designs and in the borders, whereas cotton was used in the body of the fabric. Paithani evolved from a cotton base to a silk base and present day Paithanis have no trace of cotton. A single sari may weigh from 1.45 kg or more, depending upon the weight of the silk and zari used. Initially, zari used in making Paithani was drawn from pure gold. However, silver, coated with gold, is the affordable substitute today.



Kotapad



Kuncha



Meher



Bomkai Handloom

Odisha

The Sambalpuri sari uses a pattern called "Ikkat", where the warp and the weft are dyed in a pattern before weaving. It is produced only in five districts of Odisha. The ikkat design is woven in cotton and silk and also a mix of both.

The rich colours of the Ikkat is mainly used in the pallu and the border of the sari. Bomkai, Also known as Sonepuri, these saris are from the Ganjam district of Odisha. and is primarily produced by the "Bhulia" community of Subarnapur district. Bomkai is one of the identified Geographical Indications of India. Sonepuri silk sarees are worn for ceremonies and sacred occasions. Believed to be a sign of success and affluence, fish are a common motif on borders and pallus. The sari was originally red and black, with a white background, but now they come in several designs and multiple colours, while retaining their originality.

Traditionally, the saris of Odisha were available in four basic colours that are worn by Lord Jagannath. The origin and popularity of Bandhkala led to the weaving of Vichitrapuri sarees which have a lot of Bandhkala involved. Traditionally, the saris of Odisha were available in four basic colours that Lord Jagannath wore. The origin of the Vichitrapuri saris does not have a mention in history, but the Bandhkala originated in the early years of 19th Century. The origin and popularity of Bandhkala led to the weaving of Vichitrapuri saris which have a lot of Bandhkala involved. The borders have various geometric patterns and shankha and chakra designs.



Madisar



Traditional Madisar



Munn Kossavam



Madisar

Tamil Nadu

Kanchipuram silk, made in the Kanchipuram region in Tamil Nadu, is generally known as Kanjivaram. The pure silk thread, used to weave the sari, is locally found, but the zari comes from Gujarat. In a genuine Kanchipuram sari, body and border are woven separately and then interlocked together.

According to Hindu mythology, Kanchi silk weavers are the descendants of Sage Markanda, the master weaver of Gods who is supposed to have woven tissue from lotus fibre. Also, while cotton is considered to be the favourite fabric of Lord Shiva, silk was preferred by Lord Vishnu.

Most women wear these saris at weddings and special occasions, not only in Tamil Nadu, but all over India. Saris are distinguished by their wide contrast borders depicting temples, checks, stripes and floral (buttis) or natural features like leaves, birds and animals. There are saris with rich woven pallus, showing paintings of Raja Ravi Varma or scenes from the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

The silk is quite heavy, which makes it easy to drape and stay draped, even while getting in and out of cars. Chettinad cotton saris are like the silk saris with the same heavy border and pallu.



Pattu



Sri Manisha



Mangalgiri Cotton



Bathukamma

Telegana

Ikat is produced in many traditional textile centres around the world, from India to Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Japan (where it is called kasuri), Africa and Latin America. Double ikats—in which both the warp and weft yarns are tied and dyed before being woven into a single fabric—are relatively rare because of the intensive skilled labour required to produce them. They are produced in Japan, Indonesia, and the villages of Puttapaka and Bhoodan Pochampally in Telangana in India.

Ikat is formed by binding individual yarns or bundles with a tight wrapping applied in the desired pattern (ikat means "to bind" in the Indonesian language). The yarns are then dyed. The bindings may then be altered to create a new pattern and the yarns dyed again with another colour. This process may be repeated multiple times to produce elaborate, multi-coloured patterns. When the dyeing is finished all the bindings are removed and the yarn is woven into saris. Gadwal saris are also from Telangana. They have a cotton body with a rich silk pallu and border, usually of a contrasting colour. The gold is woven with designs, in the colours of the sari. The border is woven separately and attached to the sari. This is so neat that one cannot see the join. The weave is very light - so that people say the sari can be packed in a matchbox.



Banarasi



Seedha Palli



Designer Banarasi



Chikankari

Uttar Pradesh

Benaras is a city on the banks of the Ganges River. Every Hindu strives to take a dip in the holy river. It is also the site of the most popular sari in India, known for their gold and silver weaves, fine silk and opulent embroidery. The sari is draped so that the pallu is in front, like Gujarat. This drape actually displays the design on the pallu, which is lost on the modern sari, unless the pallu is draped over one's shoulders. Cool cotton is woven and used in summer and silk for winter, but the designs are the same.

There is a suggestion that the weavers in the 16th Century, moved from Gujarat during a famine. Others say that they were running from a plague. Whichever it was, they came to Varanasi. During the Mughal period, (16th to 18th century), weaving of brocades with intricate designs using gold and silver threads, became the specialty of these weavers. They are still the masters of brocade. Heavy silk brocade is generally used for the bandh gala coat for men and sari blouses and kurtas for women. But saris are the most important product. A Banarasi sari must be a part of every bride's trousseau. The silk is hand-loomed and the zari is deftly inserted, with no trailing thread and knots. Lavish flowers and paisleys are most popular and recently they have begun to use geometric styles.

Cotton saris are also woven and have the same designs with zari for evenings. The cottons are light and are snapped up for summer wear. Chikankari saris from Lucknow are cool cottons with hand-embroidered buttis and borders. Whatever the colour of the sari, the embroidery is white.



Gadwal Pattu Handloom



Cotton Silk Handloom



Pure Silk Handloom



Khasauti

Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand has people from different ethnic backgrounds. Rajputs, Brahmins and tribal populations like Tharu, Jaunsari, Bhotia, among others. Thus their traditional attires do have a lot of variation. Silver and gold jewellery is part of traditional attire. In the Garhwal region women usually wear saris, the pallu going from the front and knotted on the shoulder, with a waistband of cloth. Kumaoni women also wear pichoras, a type of garment common during weddings and ceremonies. Traditionally this was dyed yellow and made at home. Women still don this traditional pichora on their wedding day along with big nose rings, made of gold, covering their entire cheek.

Jaunsaris claim they are the descendants of the Pandavas. They have a distinct style of clothing which involves a lot of jewellery. Even the men wear jewellery - earrings, a kada, (heavy bangle), necklaces, with a traditional woollen cap. Women wear a ghagra, a woollen coat, and dhantu (scarf). During festivals they wear a long coat.

The Bhotia is an agricultural/pastoral community of mongoloid ethnicity. They live in the frigid higher altitude of the state. They weave and stitch their woollen clothes. The women wear a skirt, shirt, waistcoat and a coat. The men typically wear trousers and over it a loose gown tied around the waist with a woollen cloth, called patta, and a woollen cap.

Earlier, women wore loads of jewellery, including everything from neck pieces to toe rings on a regular basis. Now they wear this only for occasions like weddings.



Cotton Handloom



Kantha Tussar Silk



Baluchari Silk



Silk Jamdani

West Bengal

Weaving the tant saree is an age-old craft from Bangladesh and West Bengal. The craftsmen deftly make cotton into the thread, which is woven into a tant saree. Two shuttles are used for this purpose.

Under royal guidance, the tant became famous in and around Dhaka in the Mughal era. The East India company tried to destroy this art by cutting off the thumbs of the weavers, in order to protect the textile industry of Manchester, but the tant culture managed to survive. When India became a colony of England, which meant that the East India company no longer ruled India, these barbaric practices were put down.

During the partition of 1947, the division of Bengal, many weavers migrated to West Bengal and continued their craftsmanship there.

An early reference to the origins of Indian muslin is found in the book of a Greek adventurer, Periplus, and in the accounts of Arab, Chinese and Italian travellers and traders. During the Regency in England, Indian muslin was in great demand by fashionable ladies for summer dresses.



Assam

The three major types of indigenous wild silks are produced in Assam—golden muga, white pat and warm eri silk. Muga silk is the product of a silkworm endemic to Assam. The larvae of these moths feed on som and sualu leaves, as mulberry leaves are not available. The silk produced is known for its glossy, fine texture and durability.

The Assamese sari is called “mekhla chador”. It is worn in two main pieces—the bottom, worn like a sarong with pleats in the front, is the mekhla. Then one corner of the chador is tucked to the right side of the waist and the rest goes around the body. There is an option. It can be two rounds of the pallu or one. The end of the pallu is thrown over the left shoulder. The result is a triangular fall on front, reaching to the knees. This displays the beauty of the weaving on the pallu. This sari is only for festive occasions, as normal wear is a sort of lungi and a hip-long blouse.

Non Sari States



Arunachal Pradesh

While most tribes are ethnically similar, having derived from the same ancestors, their geographical separation has brought in the different customs in dressing styles. The tribes of Arunachal Pradesh are known for their weaving, with the Aptani tribe being the most advanced in its techniques. Using fibers from trees, goat and human hair, they create ceremonial coats, shawls, skirts, sashes, lungis (loin cloths) with various forms of embroidery.

Geometric patterns dominate the clothing worn by the Adi, Aptani and Mishmi tribes, with the most popular motif being that of angular designs and zig-zag lines. Even floral patterns take on a more geometric form in fabrics of these regions. Other common patterns to be seen are stripes. The simple, straight lines in the clothes of Adi and Aptani tribes are reflective of a more disciplined way of life, while the Mishmis display more celebratory patterns in their attires.

The colors and designs on fabrics hold a symbolic meaning for every tribe. For example, in Tuensang, motifs of shapely pointed triangles depict arrows or hornbills, and the small red squares on a sanctum cloth represent ferment used for making beer. The color red in shawls symbolises blood enemies, blue stands for sky, and black represents the night.



Haryana

Women of different communities also use different costumes. The women of the Jat community wear long sleeved men's shirts and ghagras - a long ankle-length gathered skirt - and a dupatta (veil), to cover their heads. Some of them pull the veil down to cover their faces. Their footwear are juttis, a flat leather shoe, the upper part may be embroidered, or just plain leather. The younger, middle-class ladies wear Kurtas, which are long or short - mainly depending whether they are young or older - with either a salwar, a baggy trouser, gathered at the ankle with a loose band of folded cloth, attached to the baggy part, or churidars, which are very tight below the knees and gathered at the ankles. When their mothers are not around, youngsters now rarely use the dupatta.



Himachal Pradesh

It is one of the hilly states, where temperatures go below zero. Women wear cotton kurtas in summer and woollen ones in winter. They use hand knitted socks which are like a tube, stitched at the toe, open at the other end. Summer and winter, women use closed shoes, like the delicate Rajasthani mojri, but heavier leather. Mojris would last one hour on the rocks of Himachal.

Their skirts are cotton, but very full. They embroider their kurtas and wear a veil.

It is said that their men put silver on their wives, rather than put money into banks. They wear silver necklaces which are solid, without links; ear-rings heavy enough to stretch their ear-lobes; bangles and anklets weighing kilos and a mang tikka, (a chain along parted hair, which ends in a heavy pendant dangling on the forehead.)



Jammu & Kashmir

Jammu is the land of the Dogras. They are a martial race. The traditional Dogri suthan, is a type of churidar, wide at the top, roomy at the legs and has numerous pleats at the ankles. This is worn by men and women. The kurta for women tends to be long and cut straight, changing from cotton to wool as the seasons change. Women distinguish their kurtas from the men by elaborate embroidery and the dupatta draped over head and shoulders. Women also wear the Ghagra-Choli, a long, full skirt and a short, tight blouse, topped by the dupatta in summer, or a shawl in winter.

The northern-most state is a large valley nestled in the western Himalayas. The Banihal Tunnel, the longest tunnel in India, was carved out of rock, and Kashmir is now the most popular summer holiday destination.

Kashmiris rarely wear saris. Men and women wear firans, a woollen type of long kurta. However, Kashmir produces the finest, light, silk hand-loomed saris. It is said that this sari could be pulled through a ring. When the fine wool of the Himalayan goat is blended with pure silk from the valley, it creates one of the most original fabrics, the Pashmina silk sari. Kashmir has a wide range of silk textiles. The weaves, popularly known as 'chinton' and 'crepe de chine', are some of the finest product from their silk yarn.

The silk is so fine that heavy silks can not be woven. Whether the silk worms are happier in Kashmir or whether the mulberry leaves they eat, are better, the quality of Kashmiri silk is superb.



Manipur

The costumes of Manipur are about functionality. The traditional Manipuri costumes are simple and easy to wear. The costume for women includes a shawl called Innaphi, a Phanek, which is a sort of short tunic, and a wrap-around skirt called a sarong.

But, for festivals and for brides, there is a whole different costume. An embroidered or brocade, short, fitting blouse on top and two-layered skirt, which has hoops underneath that make the skirt round, like a large tube. A veil floats from the head to the knees. Both skirts are covered in gold embroidery. It is a lovely sight to see the skirt sway as the lady walks. These costumes are seen in other states, when the dancers perform.



Meghalaya

This state is one of the Seven Sisters of eastern India. The peaceful hills are home to the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia tribes.

Jainsen is the traditional costume for Jaintia women. It's an unstitched garment, made from mulberry silk, which is wrapped around the body. The most significant costume is the silk Endi shawl, the traditional costume for women.

The Garos have different costumes, depending on which area they live. Women from villages in the Garo Hills, wear the eking, a small cloth wrapped around the waist. They wear a blouse with a hand-woven unstitched cotton cloth around the waist, called the Dakmanda, which has as 6 to 10 inch broad borders. The Dakmanda has floral patterns or attractive embroidered designs .

Khasi women are no different. They also wear a Jainsen which covers them waist to ankles, paired with blouse. Over these, they also wear cotton shawl called tap-moh khlieh which looks, to some extent, like an apron. Jaintia women have a slightly different tradition. During the harvest, they cover their head with Kyrshah, a small piece of checked cloth.



Mizoram

This is one of the seven sisters in the north-eastern region of India. Just like the other north-eastern states, the traditional dresses worn by the people of Mizoram are different.

Puan chei is worn by Mizo women during festivals. Puan has shades of black and white. The black is synthetic fur. Another traditional costume, is known as Kawrechi. It is a kind of handmade cotton blouse, and worn while dancing during festivals.

Women of Lusei tribe wear a blue skirt stitched from cotton fabric as their traditional dress. They pair the blue skirt with a white jacket and a cloth to wrap around the body. The dress is incomplete without a headgear. Bass and cane are the raw materials used to make this headgear, and long feathers, if they can find them.

Zakuo laisen is another traditional dress worn by unmarried girls. It is a blouse with stripes of crimson and a blue skirt. When the girls are married, they wear a dress known as 'Puon Pie'. This dress has a quilt-like cloth and it is mandatory to wear this dress after marriage.



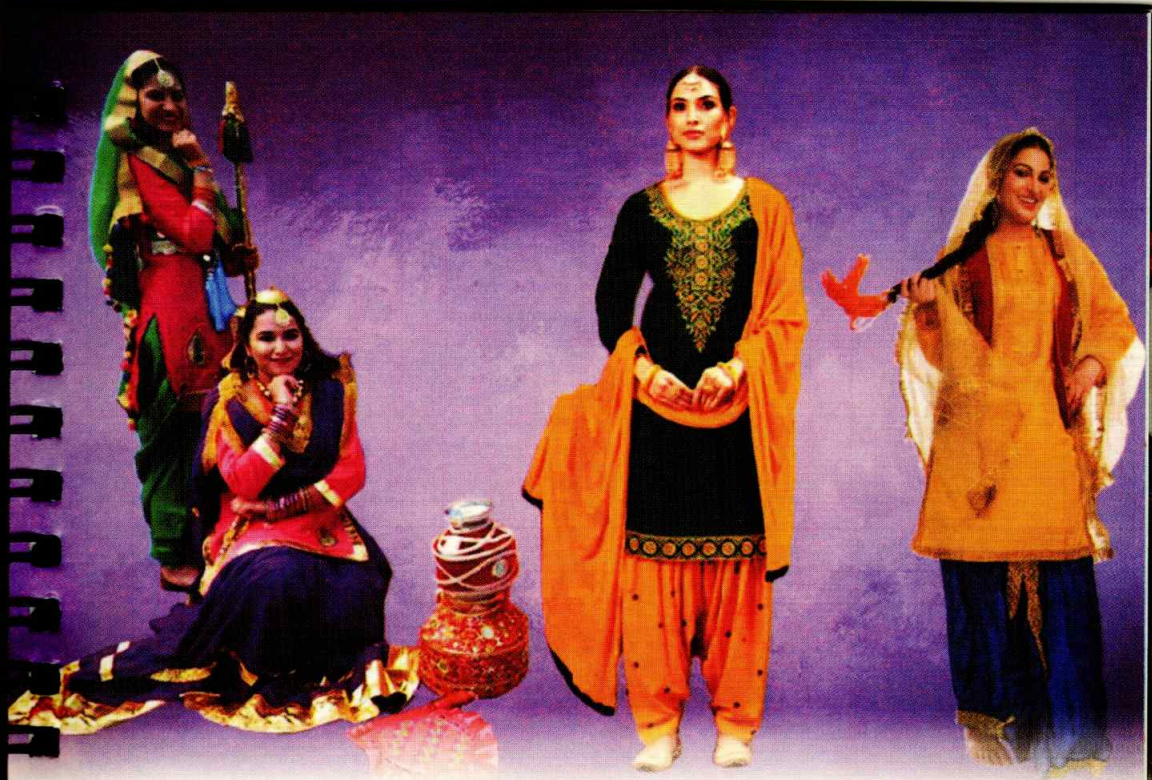
Nagaland

The most eastern state, Nagaland is home to 16 main tribes and several sub-tribes each distinguished by custom, dress and dialect. They are a martial race. Every tribe weaves their own fabrics, and a Naga can tell the tribe by the patterns on the cloth. Red is the favourite colour with men and women and designs use only black and white.

Weaving is a traditional art, handed down through generations. A number of traditions and beliefs are associated with the weaving and wearing of the traditional dress. It is considered auspicious and has its traditional value and meaning.

The loom, which every house possesses, is a simple tension loom. Weaving, spinning and dyeing have always been the three important industries in Nagaland.

Stitching is not needed. The women use a kind of sarong, from under the arms, reaching below the knees. A man wears a sleeveless cloth vest with a v-shaped neck, and a sarong.



Punjab

Punjab is the bread basket of India. The golden waves of wheat are all you see as you drive along the highways. One woman stays at home to cook lunch for the farmers, the others are working along with their men. They wear salwars - baggy trousers, tied at the waist and the poncha collects the fullness of the salwar at the ankles. The kurta, a long shirt, goes over the salwar. The dupatta, a long piece of muslin cloth, is used to dry the sweat that would get into their eyes, or cover their heads if the sun is too hot. Mostly it stays wrapped around their waists. At home, the dupatta is draped over both shoulders, or over her head when a senior member of the family comes into the room. For formal occasions, the dupattas can be fine chiffon or light silks, with tassels on both ends. Their footwear are mojris, flat leather shoes. These mojris can be sturdy and plain for work, or decorated by embroidery and beads for festivities.



Rajasthan

Kota saris were originally called Masuria, because they were woven in Mysore. The weavers were brought to a small town in Kota by Rao Kishore Singh, a general in the Mughal army. The weavers were brought to Kota in the late 17th and early 18th century and the sari came to be known as 'Kota-Masuria'.

Kota is woven on a traditional pit loom that produces a square check pattern on the fabric. The delicately wrought checks are locally known as khats. They smear onion juice and rice paste with a lot of care into the yarn making the yarn so strong that no additional finishing is needed.

They are light cotton saris, perfect for hot weather, but they also weave silk with the same square check pattern. The saris come off the looms white and are subsequently dyed and printed. Rajasthani royalty favoured these saris.

The 'Ansari' community is largely known for practicing this craft, but now several other villages in southern Rajasthan are also weaving the popular saris. The weavers are mostly of the Muslim community. With machines taking over drastically, there has been a considerable fall in the number of handlooms. However, the government of Rajasthan has now a system, where a stamp would be printed on the authentic Kota Doria products, as a mark of authenticity.



Sikkim

Nestled in a valley in the eastern Himalayas, is Sikkim. It is one of the smallest states in India. Part of the Himalayas, Sikkim has a dramatic landscape that includes India's highest mountain, 8,586m Kangchenjunga. Sikkim is also home to glaciers, alpine meadows and thousands of varieties of wildflowers. Steep paths lead to hilltop Buddhist monasteries. The Pemayangtse monastery is, situated at a height of 11800 feet is known as 'Valley of Flowers', 148 kms from Gangtok. The valley is a paradise for nature lovers, a blend of flora and fauna and breathtaking scenic beauty.

There are different styles for men and women. Men wear a Bakhu, which is sort of shawl wrapped around the torso over a shirt, a pair of loose, shin-high trousers, fastened with a leather belt. Women wear a honju, a long sort of kimono with long sleeves, cotton or silk. A belt around the waist, where the men use a cord and women use a wide ribbon. This entire outfit is the pangden. Leather short boots are worn by women and men.

Lately, more additions, like a waistcoat called Jya Jya, a Shambo - an embroidered cap and a jacket called Kushen. Sikkimese women wear jeans with the bakhu outfit. Shawls, known as 'Majetro'. have been added to the attire.



Tripura

Tripura is a state in Northeast India. The third-smallest state in the country. The women's costume of Tripura is like a half sari. The drape from the waist down is like a sari, complete with pleats. But above the waist is a long, fitting jacket. Between the jacket and the lower part, is a piece of cloth, tied around the waist. The palla is a separate piece, which is draped under the right arm, crossing the chest, and tied on the left shoulder. The hanging piece is also tied at the corners on the right shoulder, also crossing the chest. Then another cloth, mostly white, is wrapped around the waist, the edge tucked in under the waist cloth.

Surprisingly, the men have the exact style, except they have trousers where the sari was. He wears a short jacket on top of all that.

