

Exotic Textile Decorative Art

Part - 1

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Textile decorative art has flourished since ages across civilizations across the world. It has spread across continents, weaving a fabric of textile story of its own. preserving the antiquity and uniqueness of textiles.



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1722, when Chinoiserie craze was at its heights, some vestments from France during the reign of Louis IX, with the finest of needle work; a tunic from the 6th century Egypt, depicts mermaids on the fabric. The impact of Oriental designs is quite profound.

The folk art of Indonesia is an example of symbolism depicted in the textile designs. For instance, Tampan, the small ceremonial cloth from Sumatra, has symbolic depiction of a ship drawn with patterns of human figures at the top and large variety of marine animals below forming a dazzling formal pattern, great feast to the eye and mind.

Textile Treasures Depicted in Museums

The Fine Arts and Textile Museum, San Fransisco, houses well preserved and documented display of 12000 collections spanning 125 countries. These collections depict 15 centuries of textile art and include English embroidery, playful Spanish laces, French ecclesial vestments and many others. They are categorised into four distinct sections viz., exoticism, mythology, religious symbolism and the animal world. A tapestry depicting the Asian Monarch believed to be the Kangzi Emperor, the beast part serpent, part bull and even a napkin depicting Apollo have imbibed the abstract features of history, religion and mysticism.

Some of the masterpieces on display include the Audience for the Emperor, woven in France



In other textile techniques viz., the handsome batiks, the symbolism is less readable. Every decorative art, though not having a specific narrative, would still have a network of symbols. Ikat, the elaborate resist dye process in which the warp and weft are tied in knots to provide

a negative background to the positive colour pattern, achieve an intricacy of details having a stunning visual effect. The more familiar batik processes employ wax for the same on a cloth surface.

Decorative Art Bearing Exoticism

These exotic fabrics come from faraway lands, are lovely to look at, connect easily to people and have a story to tell about the land they come from. Vintage pieces are scarce and preserving the art and artisans has become challenging as the processes involved are very intricate and labour intensive. Designers all over the world are trying to showcase and publicise them. Here are some examples of textile art:

Ikat

The origin of this technique is not known, though the word itself is Indonesian. Many Asian countries still employ this technique. Ikat was introduced in Europe through the Dutch.



In Cambodia it was. known as the finest

textiles of the world but was in danger of being eroded during the Khmer Rouge region. It is said that Kikou Murimoto , a Japanese textile expert, travelled through the war-torn lands of the country from village to village looking for artisans who knew the craft.

Ikat is not just a print or pattern but it is a complicated dyeing process involving marking, tying and dyeing the yarn before it is woven with intentional bleed and blurry lines.

Double Ikat weaving is a process where the weaving is bidirectional and both the warp (vertical) and weft (horizontal) are prepared using this technique. Tenganga, Bali, a place in Indonesia is just one of the three places where Double Ikat is woven.

In Tenganga, the yarn is dyed with natural materials prepared from papaya leaves, candle nut and turmeric. The yarn is soaked in the pigmented mixture for three nights and hung to dry for six weeks. A turmeric -stained yellow colour is formed which is the base yellow colour. Then the yarns are wrapped in wooden frames, grouped and tied and made ready for the next

colouring stage. The second colour to be applied usually takes two weeks, dyeing and drying until the desired intensity is achieved. The third layer of dying can take upwards of three months, as the yarn is dipped 12 times. Once the dyeing is completed the ties are removed and a complex coloration is formed. Obviously, Double Ikat is a tedious process not for the faint hearted!

Tapa

Made from the inner bark of mulberry paper tree, Tapa cloth is originally from the South Pacific and later on migrated to Southeast Asia. Tapa is made by stripping



the bark of the tree. Then the bark is soaked in water and pounded with a traditional mallet. When the fibrous mixture is thin and even, the sheets are glued together using arrowroot and tapioca. Natural dyes are then rubbed on the stencilled patterns to transfer the designs. When the dyeing has dried, artisans use a paint brush to accentuate the patterns. Nowadays Tapa cloth is usually worn on special occasions, especially weddings as a mark of respect to Tongan culture.

Yuzen

Yuzen is said to have originated in the late 17th century. This technique is named after the artist Miyazaki Yuzensai who first applied the designs onto the



folding fans and then onto kimonos. Yuzen is the art of dyeing kimono fabrics with paper stencils, resulting in intricate designs in varying colours. The ability to create diverse patterns with varying colours makes this an affordable cloth among the younger women.

Kimono patterns are either dyed on the fabric or woven by using coloured threads. Yuzen pattern is hand drawn into the fabric or gone over with the stencil and paint.

Kuba

Kuba is considered to be one of finest and rarest textiles of Africa and was supposedly invented by Kuban people of Congo. It is known



as the bark cloth. Raffia is used as the standard material for making Kuba.

Because of the brittleness of the textiles, it tears frequently since the people of Kuba live in tropical rain forests. Patchwork is done using symbolism in abstract

geometry and colours like orange, brown, black, red, yellow and green.

The Kuban clan is a matrilineal society which rose in the 17th century and now resides in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The clan consists of a loose federation of 18 tribes bound by different political and social ideologies, but tied together by the Kuba cloth. The entire community is involved in the making of the Kuba cloth. Men collect the raffia leaves, boys prepare the fibres and turn it into silk like threads for weaving, women prepare the threads for embroidery. Men weave the base fabric. women pound the base cloth. Finally, men stitch the embroidery pieces together. Kuba is the literal incarnation of the term, ' It takes a village '.

Yakan

Yakan is the name used for both the indigenous native Muslim tribe residing in the tropical island of Basilian in the



Philippines and the textile they make. Before 1970, the tribal people used abaca leaves, pineapple and bamboo fibres. But after the rise of armed conflict, they migrated to the bigger island of Minoa and replaced the vegetable fibres with vivid coloured cotton. The textile is used for making men's badju (buttoned shirt) and sawal (trousers) for special occasions like weddings, as one metre of the cloth takes five days to prepare.

Shibori

Different than tie-dve, Shibori the ancient method Japanese practised since 8th century AD of creating patterns by twisting, wrapping, binding and stitching.



Designs are often drawn on the cloth, outlined with a running stitch, pulled and folded to bring the desired effect. Some techniques are easier than the others viz., Miura Shibori wherein no knots are involved, but hooked needles are used to pluck sections of the cloth to create tension. In contrast, Nui Shibori has the textile maker drawing an outline with a running stitch pulled tight and gathered. Kumo Shibori involves pleating of cloth evenly, resulting in an amazing. spider-like design.

Kitenge

Kitenge is a colourful print of African origin. It is worn as a covering for the chest, or tied like



a sarong for the waist or even to carry a baby. It is an informal piece of clothing, prepared by batik process. African batik is made using a paste of starch and mud used with wax. Patterns are drawn with the paste on the cloth and dyed. These days rollers are used to produce clothes faster.

Suzani

Originating from the Persian word 'Suzani', meaning needle, it traces its origins to Uzbekistan. The earliest Suzanis date back to 15'th century AD. The most



common designs include, floral motifs, medallions, sun, moon, stars and pomegranate. Suzani was used for making tapestries and carpets, offered in dowry and as traditional clothing for the bride and bride's family. The back ground colour of suzanis are strips of fibre 15 to 20 cm in width, which are basted together before the embroidery is transferred to the fabric before stitching. In this time- consuming process, after the embroidery design is transferred, the basting stitch is moved over each strip till all the stitching is completed in all the sections resulting in an irregular pattern giving Suzani a distinct mismatched look. The Suzanis are in the list of precious textiles.

Some characteristic ethnic designs made a mark of its own in the textile world of the Middle East.

Moroccan Berber

Mostsought after, were the Moroccan rugs and carpets, originating from the Berber tribe. These carpets were known for their undeniable beauty and quality. These labour-intensive carpets were



expensive, with the women weaving ten kilos of wool to make one carpet. It would take one month to prepare wool and one month to transform it into a carpet. The vibrant colours of carpets, wall hangings, saddle bags, women's shawls were replete with symbolic geometric shapes like triangles , diamonds, chevrons, representing the identity of the Berber people.

Pateh

Pateh was an important textile from the city of Kerman, in Iran. The women of Kerman were adept in weaving this fabric as part of their normal culture. Pateh weaving



had its unique techniques, with almost the entire surface area being sewn. Raw soft wool was used for the embroidery. Most patch embroidery had a shamseh (symbol of sun in the centre with four cyprus trees around) as a motif. Cypress trees represented a mark of persistence and stability in life. Almost all the borders of the embroidery were covered with the motifs of plants and animals. In the past, patch embroidery was used as curtains, table cloths and pillows in Persian aristocratic homes. Now they find their presence as unique wall hangings, table cloths and pillows in modern home decor.

Baloch Hand Embroidery

Baloch hand embroidery is one of the finest needlework pursued in South Eastern Iran in Balochistan and in parts of Afghanistan. Almost every Balochi woman or girl knows this exquisite art. Not much is known is about the history of this textile. But there has been a discovery of 5th to 6th century pottery, which has the



motifs in the form of geometric shapes of Baloch woman. A specific type of fabric is used in Baloch embroidery which has a countable warp and weft. Motifs are done by hand block printing. The main motifs are geometric shapes, animals, flowers and cypress trees. One woman sews the borders while the other fills the in design. As several women and their girls sit together and sew, this technique is transferred from generation to generation. The price of the embroidery is dependent on the intricacy of the process and the extent of the surface area of the fabric covered.

Mamaghan Doozi Embroidery



Mamaghan doozi means Mamaghan embroidery, having taken its name from a village called Mamaghan, in North Eastern Iran is. Mamaghan doozi was done by using silk threads. Six point or eight point stars are the main design of

this embroidery. These motifs have their roots in early Persian art dated to the Archaeminid era in 2500 B.C. Another common design in Mamaghan doozi is the cypress tree motif. In the past this type of embroidery was used to make hats for young men. Now it is used as a home decor for making table cloths and pillows.

Gulabatoon Doozi Embroidery

Gulabatoon doozi is the embroidery typical to the tribal culture of Hormozgan province in Southern Iran. The fabric is delicately stretch onto traditional embroidery



hoops and the design is sewn on the fabric. Special kind of vivid, vibrant yarns called Gulabatoon are used to trace the lines. Slowly, the complexity of shapes become visible. Hooks are used for sewing, and every time the hook passes into the fabric it gets intertwined underneath a string which is underneath. These knots aid in keeping the stitch tight to the embroidery.

Some of the Gulabatoon doozi fabrics are decorated with different sections done separately and completed by sewing them together. In old days the fabric was made with silk gold coated threads, bordered with gold and silver. Anyone wants such a traditional wear could get it done from the local artists.

Gulabatoon designs were found on trousers as well as half masks known as burqas, covering both face and nose. Another important example of Gulabatoon designs which are intertwined with the lives of the tribal people are the henna

designs, with similar flower and leaf patterns used on clothes.

Sermeh Doozi Embroidery

Sermeh doozi is a type of delicate Persian hand embroidery. This requires its own special tools and fabric like velvet. First silk is attached to the back of fabric and then



transferred with carbon paper. Then, the design is stitched by white thread and the fabric is attached to the hoops. Now the real work begins. The design is covered with all types of different stitches and decorated with glittery materials. Sermeh doozi dates back over 3000 years ago when it was used as the clothing of royal kings and queens. Back then, very thin wires of gold and silver were stitched on. The designs were mostly inspired by Persian motifs like flowers, birds and trees. Nowadays this art work is used to adorn table cloths, curtains, prayer rugs and decorative pillows.

Turkish Textile Designs

Turks brought with them their own methods and textiles from Central Asia. With the conquest of the Anatolia peninsula, a sustainable textile culture was created that included neighbouring geographical regions. Anatolian textiles had already gained a reputation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East as Anatolia had been developing its own characteristic textile world. Phrygean woollen fabrics and fleeces of extreme quality were exported to Aegian islands and Hellenic peninsula. Hittete flat woven rugs were traded while Assurs were imported from far southern islands. In later years. Byzantine textiles evolved with the import of dark red dye from Persia and imperial purple dye from the Tyr city of Egypt. Combined with embroidery with both valuable and invaluable beads like pearls, amber and agate, these became classics of not only the Byzantine courts, but were much sought after by the Turkish aristocracy class.

Sassanian and Scythian textiles came from the eastern lands with their exquisite characteristic workmanship and fine texture, unique animal patterns; while Coptic textiles from Alexandria, Egypt, were flat- woven rugs depicting daily life. The Armenian and Assyrians also had their own textile culture based on fine-spun elaborately woven woollen fabrics. These included flat woven rugs like Soumak, hand woven in wool and embroidered in silk with motifs of local wildlife.

Felt was the most basic textile without a structure of warp and weft prepared by the unification of fibre by humidity, temperature and friction. Very cheap to produce, it could be decorated with freelance patterns as well as with elaborate and elegant designs created with coloured yarns of cotton and yarn.

Kilim - Flat Woven Rugs

Kilim was a weft based weaving method practised in the Anatolian province since years. The basis of kilim is weft fibres which are accumulated on stretched fibres which are unseen.



Types of kilim vary as per the position of different coloured wefts lying side by side. The wefts

can be wrapped with each other or intertwined with each other, or slits are made without touching other. Normally wool is preferability due its durability and strength.

Jajim - Warp Faced Weavings



Warp faced weavings were generally produced for use in rough conditions. Warps were stretched forming a tough surface with the help of weft, sticking together side by side, pulled together during weaving so that lots of warps remained unseen. Jajim which

have alternate coloured warps created pattern to be used as ground cover. Tent fabrics used goat hair by this method which made them durable. Long and narrow bands were woven with either heddle or tablet weaving method and used as packed animal bands, saddle bands or tent fixing bands.

Pile Carpets

Pile carpets consist of one line of pile knots attached on two warps and one line of kilms or tapestries linking each other with vertical knots to form a surface. These required a lot of workmanship and were considered as precious and luxurious export items for the Ottoman Empire.

Zili

Zili was a flat -woven rug with extra brocade of yarns passing through a multitude of warps, then under the following yarn to form a horizontal

pattern. This passage of the coloured yarns under the warp creates a chord effect on the surface of the warps going along the length of it. After passing these coloured yarns over the warp, one weave line is passed through each row so that it was hidden under the warp and remains



unseen. Zili was a coarse weaving method used by the nomadic tribes to make ground covered rugs, nomadic sacks and pillows.

Jijim



Not to be confused with Jajims, which were warp faced weavings, jijims were flatwoven rugs with extra brocade yarns. In each line, the coloured yarns were wrapped around the multitude of warps to create a pattern. This type of weaving

was used to make fine covers to put over the bedding pile in nomadic tents and village houses.

Saumak

Saumak also consisted of warps and wefts. In each line, coloured yarns were wrapped around each warp or two warps. The weave was fine but durable. This type of weaving technique was used by nomadic tribes of Turkey to weave fabric for making storage bags, salt bags,



Koran covers, roller -pin covers and shear covers.

Cotton Fabrics

Cotton fabrics in Turkey could be as fine as a tulle veil or extremely coarse as curtains. These were dyed according to the functionality and wealth of the owner, using bright and deep red made with the madder root and canary yellow, considered to be a prestigious colour. These fabrics were embroidered. The most famous one is the Peskir towel of Turkey.

Shayak

Shayak was a woollen fabric similar to Scottish hodden. It was made from 12 to 15 cm strings of warp and 15 cm long weft. The felt was made by pouring hot water on the fabric and pressed and



rubbing over it. The felt obtained was durable with

insulating properties. Shayak was used for making trousers and jackets for people like shepherds, who work outdoors under hard conditions

Sof

Sof is one of the most luxurious fabrics made from Angora goat hair. Angora goat hair is finely combed, spun and woven to make this fabric, which was used for making fine jackets and coats for wealthy people.

Catma

Catma was a kind of silk velvet fabric generally with a double metal thread with a raised design. In the 16th century, the fame of Bursa catma extending beyond the confines of the Ottoman Empire. Although it was expensive, it became the



most revered fabric for export to other countries and was offered as a gift to many envoys and ambassadors. Velvet fabric producers from Venice made trade alliances with Turkey, offering velvet fabrics of Venice in exchange of Bursa catmas.

Kemha



Kemha fabric which is known to the westerners as 'brocade' was a very popular fabric in Istanbul and Bursa. Made of silk fabric and a mixture of metal wire thread, it was exported as papal robes and as ceremonial apparel worn by the imperial class. Papal

costumes made from Ottoman brocades are found in museums and palace treasuries. Palace archives, show evidence of workshops specialising in these catmas and kemhas.

Block Printing and Hand Drawn Textiles

Block printing and hand drawing were old patterning methods of textiles prevalent in Turkey. Relatively cheap, textiles ornamented with block printing and. hand drawing were used by Anatolian locals, especially as veils worn by women in daily life. Block printing was done all over Anatolia, with the good quality ones coming from Istanbul, Bursa and Tokat.

(To be continued) (The views expressed in this column are of the author and not that of Cotton Association of India)

Australian Cotton Seminar in Mumbai

ustralian Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA) in support of Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) organised an Australian Cotton Seminar on May 17th 2023, at Four Seasons Hotel in Mumbai.

Austrade is the Australian federal government's non-commercial agency for promotion of Australian trade, investment, tourism, and education to the world. Austrade delivers services to grow Australia's economic prosperity.

After a short address, highlighting the long and rewarding association between India and Australia as trading partners, CAI President Mr. Atul S. Ganatra also stressed the need for a MOU between CAI and ACSA to further strengthen ties. Mr. Ganatra presented mementoes - specially made to commemorate 100 years of CAI - to the Australian delegates including Mr. John Southwell, Trade and Investment Commissioner, Austrade (India); Mr. Mathew Brad, Managing Director, ECOM Cotton, ACSA Chairman; Mr. Michael O'Rielley, Manager Export Sales & Quality, Olam

Agri, ACSA Director and Mr. Cliff White, General Manager, Omni Cotton, ACSA Director.

Many CAI members attended the seminar.

















UPCOUNTRY SPOT RATES												(R	ls./Qtl)	
Standard Descriptions with Basic Grade & Staple														
	in Millimetres based on Upper Half Mean Length [By law 66 (A) (a) (4)]								Spot Rate (Upcountry) 2022-23 Crop May 2023					
Sr. No	Growth	Grade Standard	Grade	Staple	Micronaire	Gravimetric Trash	Strength /GPT	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	
1	P/H/R	ICS-101	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 - 7.0	4%	15	18334 (65200)	18250 (64900)	18194 (64700)	18194 (64700)	18194 (64700)	18194 (64700)	
2	P/H/R (SG)	ICS-201	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 - 7.0	4.5%	15	18475 (65700)	18390 (65400)	18334 (65200)	18334 (65200)	18334 (65200)	18334 (65200)	
3	GUJ	ICS-102	Fine	22mm	4.0 - 6.0	13%	20	13498 (48000)	13498 (48000)	13469 (47900)	13441 (47800)	13441 (47800)	13413 (47700)	
4	KAR	ICS-103	Fine	23mm	4.0 - 5.5	4.5%	21	15016 (53400)	15016 (53400)	14960 (53200)	14904 (53000)	14904 (53000)	14847 (52800)	
5	M/M (P)	ICS-104	Fine	23mm	4.5 – 7.0	4%	22	16113 (57300)	16028 (57000)	15944 (56700)	15860 (56400)	15860 (56400)	15803 (56200)	
6	P/H/R (U) (SG)	ICS-202	Fine	27mm	3.5 - 4.9	4.5%	26	16338 (58100)	16253 (57800)	16197 (57600)	16056 (57100)	16000 (56900)	16000 (56900)	
7	M/M(P)/ SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	26mm	3.0 - 3.4	4%	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	
8	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 - 4.9	4%	26	16675 (59300)	16591 (59000)	16506 (58700)	16366 (58200)	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)	
9	M/M(P)/ SA/TL/G	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.0 - 3.4	4%	25	15157 (53900)	15100 (53700)	15016 (53400)	14904 (53000)	14763 (52500)	14679 (52200)	
10	M/M(P)/ SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 - 4.9	3.5%	26	15860 (56400)	15803 (56200)	15719 (55900)	15607 (55500)	15522 (55200)	15466 (55000)	
11	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.5 - 4.9	4%	27	16900 (60100)	16816 (59800)	16759 (59600)	16591 (59000)	16450 (58500)	16450 (58500)	
	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 – 4.5	3.5%	27	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)	16225 (57700)	16113 (57300)	16056 (57100)	16000 (56900)	
	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 - 4.5	3.5%	27	16338 (58100)	16338 (58100)	16253 (57800)	16141 (57400)	16085 (57200)	16028 (57000)	
	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 - 4.5	3%	27	16535 (58800)	16450 (58500)	16422 (58400)	16366 (58200)	16366 (58200)	16310 (58000)	
	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine		3.7 - 4.5	3.5%	28	17013 (60500)	16872 (60000)	16816 (59800)	16647 (59200)	16563 (58900)	16563 (58900)	
	M/M(P)	ICS-105			3.7 - 4.5	3.5%	28				16563 (58900)		16450 (58500)	
	SA/TL/K				3.7 - 4.5	3%	28	16788 (59700)	16731 (59500)	16703 (59400)	16591 (59000)	16563 (58900)	16478 (58600)	
	GUJ	ICS-105			3.7 - 4.5	3%	28	16844 (59900)	16788 (59700)	16788 (59700)	16731 (59500)	16731 (59500)	16675 (59300)	
	M/M(P)	ICS-105				3.5%	29	16956 (60300)	16900 (60100)	16872 (60000)	16816 (59800)	16759 (59600)	16647 (59200)	
		ICS-105				3%	29	16984 (60400)	16928 (60200)	16900 (60100)	16844 (59900)	16788 (59700)	16675 (59300)	
	M/M(P)	ICS-105				3%	30	17181 (61100)	17097 (60800)	17069 (60700)	16984 (60400)	16956 (60300)	16816 (59800)	
	SA/TL/ K/TN/O	ICS-105				3%	30	17238 (61300)	17153 (61000)	17125 (60900)	17041 (60600)	17013 (60500)	16872 (60000)	
	SA/TL/K/ TN/O				3.5 - 4.2	3%	31	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	
	M/M(P)	ICS-107				4%	33	20809 (74000)	20809 (74000)	20752 (73800)	20668 (73500)	20584 (73200)	20528 (73000)	
	K/TN	ICS-107				3.5%	34	21231 (75500)	21231 (75500)	21174 (75300)	21090 (75000)	21006 (74700)	20837 (74100)	
	M/M(P)	ICS-107				4%	35	21231 (75500)	21231 (75500)	21174 (75300)	21090 (75000)	21006 (74700)	20837 (74100)	
27	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	35	21512 (76500)	21512 (76500)	21455 (76300)	21371 (76000)	21287 (75700)	21118 (75100)	

(Note: Figures in bracket indicate prices in Rs./Candy)