

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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(Name)

for the Master of Science
(Degree)

in Clothing and Textiles
(Major)

presented on August 4, 1967
(Date)

Title: THE RELATIONSHIP OF CURRENT TEXTILES TO THE
CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

Abstract approved: _____

Redacted for privacy

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Textiles are one material aspect of Indian life influenced by the nationalistic movement. They fit into a larger attempt to create a united and singular image of the country. As the creator of a national image, the central government encourages belief in ancient philosophies which hold beauty as a creed. Village life is idealized.

Direction of the textile industry reflects self-pride and typifies nationalism, as idealistic goals are set and realistic advice of foreigners is disregarded.

India, in aiming for new heights, attempts to relate historical achievements to the present. Her interest in the past calls for continuity of its spirit, rather than imitation of its objects. However, as village life has been quite static, ancient forms as well as attitudes from that level of society continue to exist, represented by the textiles. This makes it easy for the nationalist to encourage

relationships to cultural heritage through current goals and products.

The dominant place of religion, the caste system, and the arts explain why textiles of India have developed and remained as a craft. The handloom weaver is protected by a cottage industry plan. The Indian says the acceptance of modern methods of dyeing and machine spinning are an example of the ancient tendency for assimilation of outside influences into the tradition. Village textiles that relate directly to the past have designs applied through embroidery or traditional dyeing techniques. Specific illustrations are the patolas, tie-dyed fabrics, and phulkari and Kutch embroideries.

The renowned textiles which reached their peak under the Mogul courts are important in legends of India. However, there is no attempt to revive production of those items. Actual samples of a Dacca muslin, a Benares brocade, and Kashmirian shawls represent the intricate work and more subtle styles required by royal patrons.

From the Indian viewpoint the present relationship of current textiles to the past is realistic and genuine. To the outsider plans seem economically inappropriate to our times.

The Relationship of Current Textiles to
the Cultural Heritage of India

by

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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Science

June 1968

APPROVED:

Redacted for privacy

Professor of Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts

in charge of major

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and Related Arts

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Date thesis is presented

August 4, 1967

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author felt fortunate in receiving special favors and sincere encouragement during the preparation of this study. The privilege to examine in detail any desired specimens in the historic textile collection of the Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts Department at Oregon State University was granted by Clara W. Edaburn, Acting Head of the Department. She guided the research and writing.

Advantage was taken of the Oregon State University setting to talk with persons who had traveled in India. Appreciation for willingness to share their experiences is extended to Georgene V. Barte, Assistant Professor in Foods and Nutrition; Phyllis Grant, Assistant Professor in Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts; Sheela Ramesh Nayak, graduate student from India; and Dr. Gordon R. Sitton, Director of International Education. Dr. Clara Simmerville, foreign student counselor, kindly displayed her personal collection of beautiful Indian textiles, many given her by foreign students.

Working under Professor Mark R. Sponenburgh, whose reputation as an educator and artist first became known to the author 3,000 miles away, was a special honor. Ideas gleaned in his challenging art seminars at Oregon State University have influenced this paper and will inspire the author for a lifetime. As minor professor he took vacation time to help make the completion of the thesis possible.

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RELATIONSHIP OF CURRENT TEXTILE DESIGNS TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

INTRODUCTION

A general study of historic textiles usually acquaints one with representative specimens of several countries' finest achievements. It provides knowledge of design traits and construction qualities characteristic of each area. Once able to recognize and assign the numerous samples to the proper country, one seldom has the time or the opportunity to go back and acquire a deeper understanding of the individual pieces. The first exposure is fascinating and unquestionably has merit, as it allows for comparison of technique and design in a broad way. It introduces awareness of the fact that environment influences lines, colors, materials, and methods of work.

Were there a next logical step, it might well allow the individual to question and examine how textile designs have varied within each particular region. The question of how any indigenous style or design originated admittedly seems better left in the realms of anthropology and archeology. Design origin is still largely a matter of conjecture, but the less specialized person might feel qualified to trace the development of designs during periods of recorded history.

Personal experiences that deeply interested the writer in current world affairs were part of the impetus for choosing to examine

the textiles of another country. This study was seen as an opportunity to take the next step of concentrating attention on textiles within one region, while concurrently strengthening the understanding of a country. Familiarity with the many factors--such as culture, politics, and environment--that determine a country's character are important to understanding textiles. This is true whether the fabrics are ancient or modern.

It has been suggested that various aspects of fabrics are the result of man's interest in himself. How enlightening it is to successfully translate even a few yarns. Robert Riley indicates some of the things man might reveal in his fabrics:

His fabrics glorify the body and the home. He strives to impress on his fellow man his idealized version of reality.

It is the scrutiny and dissection of this ideal which illuminates the content of a culture. What kind of economy could produce such complex weaves? What manner of religion would use these decorative forms? Why this color for men and the other color for women? Layer by layer the questions reveal the economic and social kernel, the inner ideas of a community (41, p. 8).

Statement of the Problem

Strikingly apparent in several nations today is a determined effort to convince the world that their culture, although different, is at least equal to others'. Of these countries, some have been noted in histories and art books for producing artistically and technically

fine textiles. India is one particularly notable example.

Nationalism is generally thought to encourage emphasis on traits of a certain group of peoples. One would expect some attention to be directed to those material aspects of their heritage or history that have been considered superior or noteworthy. The question raised is whether India refers to past textile superiority in attempting to express her philosophy and goals today. Perhaps knowledge of specific historical motifs is not so important as the idea that textiles are something with which a people can proudly identify. General awareness of India's textile achievements is widespread and quite common.

In the last few years, the United States has enjoyed an international trend in textiles with designs adapted from various cultural periods of many countries, including India. However, these often were produced outside the country of origin. If manufactured abroad, there were indications that they were developed almost entirely for export. Native persons may have contributed little besides their labor. Textile revivals created with foreign markets in mind have been quite thoroughly advertised and extensively examined in retail, merchandising, and popular fashion magazines. There is no doubt that some of the fabrics have been creative, ingenious in incorporation of modern techniques, and yet quite true to the spirit and meaning of the earlier source and times (36).

Another type of textile revival would be one which is designed

by and for the people living where the design was previously known. The importance of textiles as a cultural and artistic aspect of societies might include significance to those who learn about them as part of their heritage.

Certainly, in historical surveys, there is some continuity of a culture even when decline or assimilation of others' styles sets in. But interest here is in observing what happens when a people identify themselves with earlier cultures in their region, become conscious of themselves, and consider their country in a new period of cultural ascent.

An aim of this thesis is to note, through textiles, India's particular interest in her past and the way in which she attempts to interpret this in the current age. This approach is in contrast to that of the anthropologist, who might look for consistency in old and new traits, but without much regard for people's awareness of such relationships. Some of the anthropologist's ideas, of course, are important for explaining why indigenous revivals do take their particular directions.

It should be clear that this thesis does not attempt to solve the question of whether a people separated from a cultural achievement by time and change alone should be able to make a better redevelopment of indigenous styles than an outsider. He may be, among other things: more objective, more versed in history, and more financially

and technically able to attempt such an undertaking.

Any region experiencing a cultural revival begins with different resources, as well as different artistic backgrounds. Changes in the lives of the people and of ideas would cause one to expect them to carefully analyze the earlier periods if they choose to revive artistic textiles. Irregardless of their actual approach, this writer thought it important to have a good working background of settings and attitudes on the Indian sub-continent.

Following are some of the qualities of the nation which have come to be popularly identified with independent India: seeming dependence on a single strong political leader to hold the unity of the nation, the desire to be a leader among non-aligned nations, economic struggles to support the national programs deemed advantageous, and a cultural gulf between the educated peoples and the mass of the population. These major considerations have been kept in mind throughout the length of the study. The writer has attempted to remain conscious of the length and quality of India's cultural history, although it is impossible to truly comprehend even a part of it without a lifetime devoted to the subject.

In this study a broad scope was brought to focus on a comparison of general design traits of past and current periods. This approach provided opportunity to follow a secondary interest in the influence of nationalism on a cultural outlet.

At times it seemed as if the writer's interest traveled far afield of the main question of textiles. However, these diversions generally revealed pertinent material that would lose its impact if studied in a cursory manner. The approach employed has made some artistic textiles and whole cultural periods more meaningful. The textiles are somehow more seemingly representative of the culture from which they came. Hopefully, this same insight will be conveyed to the reader of this thesis.

Purpose of the Study

This study, centering on factors that have influenced Indian textile designs, has four main purposes:

1. To learn specifically about some of the artistic textile designs of India today--particularly those related to the past of the several region(s).
2. To gain a better perspective concerning past textile achievements.
3. To investigate the general situation of current textile production in India.
4. To see whether or how a government with nationalistic fervor uses its influence on a cultural outlet, specifically textiles.

To fulfill these purposes textile specimens of traditional designs

and techniques will be handled at the same time past and current settings are studied.

Hypotheses

The working hypotheses for this study will be tested by observation of general trends, rather than by measurable means. They are as follows:

1. In a country which once had exceptional achievements in textile arts, stress on a national culture will encourage attempts to again achieve superiority in those skills.
2. We will see some relationship to past textile heritage in the emphasis of current textile production.
3. A country choosing to interpret itself in textiles will select approaches consistent with natural setting, prevailing situations, and contemporary attitudes.

PROCEDURE AND TECHNIQUE

Classification and Resources of the Study

This is a comparative analysis employing historical research and recently recorded surveys of Indian textiles. The procedure involved notes what is considered pertinent data and then attempts to compare the facts in light of the hypotheses.

The source of textiles extensively examined in this study was the historic textile collection of the Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts Department at Oregon State University.¹ There are a few museums in Oregon that were considered as other possible places for direct examination of specimens. However, alert faculty members and generous donors have developed the Oregon State University collection so that it includes an adequate representation of almost every type of traditional Indian textile to which reference is made in textbooks. Some very rare samples from older private collections have been incorporated. Wise purchase and careful scrutiny before the permanent addition of any item assures the great value of this collection for classroom instruction, educational display, and individual

¹ All textiles displayed on colored plates in this thesis are part of the above-mentioned collection, and were personally photographed by the writer. Permission to take these photographs and include them in this study is invaluable in supporting descriptions in the text. The identification accompanying each photograph is followed by its permanent catalog number.

research.

Items studied in depth were samples of traditional types of woven and printed textile designs used in India. Texts were selected so as to touch on the areas of concern and to allow for desired comparisons of facts.² Several books contained plates compared with samples, or were used to fill the few gaps where specimens were missing.³

Approach to the Problem

First, some background emphasizing specifically the environmental, religious, and artistic character of India will be given. Hopefully, this will help make the old and new textile designs seem to come to life. Next, a sampling of superior textile achievements will provide matter for later comparisons. This section will be far from exhaustive, since such thoroughness is considered unnecessary for the

²The William Jasper Kerr Library at Oregon State University held more books on the subject of Indian textiles than could be exhausted in the time allowed for this study. A recent doctoral thesis from Pennsylvania State University which was acquired on loan provided much pertinent information. Beatrice Lamb's India: A World in Transition, a chance purchase, helped immensely in gaining orientation in the complexities of Indian life. Also, faculty members offered some published data for examination.

³Particularly valuable in this regard were: The Costumes and Textiles of India by Jamila Bhushan, Shawls by John Irwin, The Handicrafts and Industrial Arts of India by Rustan Mehta, an album of Persian and Indian Textiles from the Late Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century, and The Arts and Crafts of India and Pakistan by Shanti Swarup.

purpose of this study. Also, persons residing in India have made research of this subject and have published numerous works on traditional Indian crafts.

An aspect which is often overlooked in historic textile study will be emphasized. Few authors detail what has happened to the textile tradition since the time of the specimens usually shown and during the recent history of the country.

It is necessary to attempt pinpointing the age of famous fabrics which are frequently described. Even in textbooks these are often assigned to nebulous "antiquity". After determining the era(s) implied, there will be an effort to trace and explain the decline or change of direction which evidently took place.

Skipping to a more recent period of time, concentration will be on India since independence until about 1960. Relationships of India's current textile interests to her own past of recognized textile superiority will be sought. The question of whether a fine textile tradition has persisted, has subsided and been revived, or is completely disregarded in present work should be posed. Whatever the answer, it might be interpreted as demanding one of several possible actions. Further examination will show the meaning behind the Indians' decision.

With sufficient observations concerning past and current textile designing at hand, there should be possible a comparison showing

contrasts and consistencies in the old and new approaches and products. Results should allow conclusions regarding the relationship of India's current textiles to her cultural heritage.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations helped determine the exact approach to the problem and reduce it to manageable size:

1. Rather detailed examination of a few traditional fabrics, instead of an attempt to survey all Indian textile arts, will give an understanding of general characteristics of past and current design trends. Actual specimens will be limited to those available in the historic textile collection of the Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts Department, Oregon State University. Use of the collection is seen largely as a special advantage. All fabrics are authentic, omitting foreign reproductions. A limitation in the collection's value for this study is the absence of detailed information regarding regional provenance and date of fabrication of individual pieces, although many are of museum quality. Frequently descriptions in books supplemented the collection's records. The collection has to be considered only as providing an opportunity to become acquainted with characteristic types of work.

2. When speaking historically, India's boundaries are thought of as occasionally shifting, but usually including Pakistan; current India is defined as the area given that name at the 1947 independence from Britain, with the addition of Goa and about 2/3 of Kashmir.
3. Time will be divided into three periods of consideration. First, information of the "ancient" period will begin with the earliest recorded legends. However, facts naturally emphasize the Moguls, due to limited documentation before their empire. The second period, a minor one, will be thought of as a transition between the ancient and the current. Events will be considered "current" if they occurred since about 1920 when national feeling was first strongly roused to cause unity and to demand independence. This third period is of interest especially from independence (1947) to the present time when nationalism stresses a more definite search for national identity. The overlapping of all three periods makes impossible the assigning of exact dates.

The writer admits a personal limitation in her minimal knowledge of the ancient literature and the numerous art treasures of the Indian peoples. Many of the Indian design motifs are related to legends or tradition and are used similarly in several media. A greater

ability to interrelate the arts would be an advantage. However, even authorities with well-developed backgrounds will admit there is still much conjecture and diverse opinion about the original significance of individual motifs. On occasion the meanings even are said to be irrevocably lost. Concerning books available on such material, there has already been voiced the complaint that although designs are described sufficiently, explanations of meaning are almost totally lacking (43). This leads to frustration as well as limitation.

Although interpretation of design is a vital part of understanding decorative fabrics, emphasis here will be on elements of art as they have varied to affect visual appearances. Some attempt will be made to determine the Indian artist's attitude and working conditions in both past and present times. Changes will be noted for the effect they may have on his product.

A real hindrance in analyzing village textiles is limited historical records from the lower levels of society. It is assumed that village crafts exist today in forms little changed from what they were ages ago. The village peoples' tendency to take their textiles for granted and to lack formal education means early specimens have not been preserved or even described. An approach that looks at relatively recent work as representative of the past admittedly leaves room for some inaccurate assumptions.

Even records of old court fabrics leave something to be desired.

Many accounts were written by individuals who had little technical knowledge or artistic appreciation of textiles. Concerning both village and court textiles, there are huge gaps of data between different periods in history. In some cases there is even little speculation. Almost no Indian fabrics can be dated before the 16th century.

The fact that the culture under examination has to be studied at second hand is sure to put restrictions on what can be observed. Nevertheless, with language and cultural barriers and the unlikelihood of being able to settle in each area long enough to gain much depth, the need to accept the word of authorities is not seen as a complete disadvantage. Their insight, as well as that given by Indian writers (authorities or not), may be imperceptible even to those fortunate enough to have direct contact. It would be useful to have both the insight and the contact, but presently the writer is an armchair researcher who must depend on others' mobility. Access to fine specimens hopefully makes the vicarious experience more like the real one than usual, and certainly renders it more enjoyable.

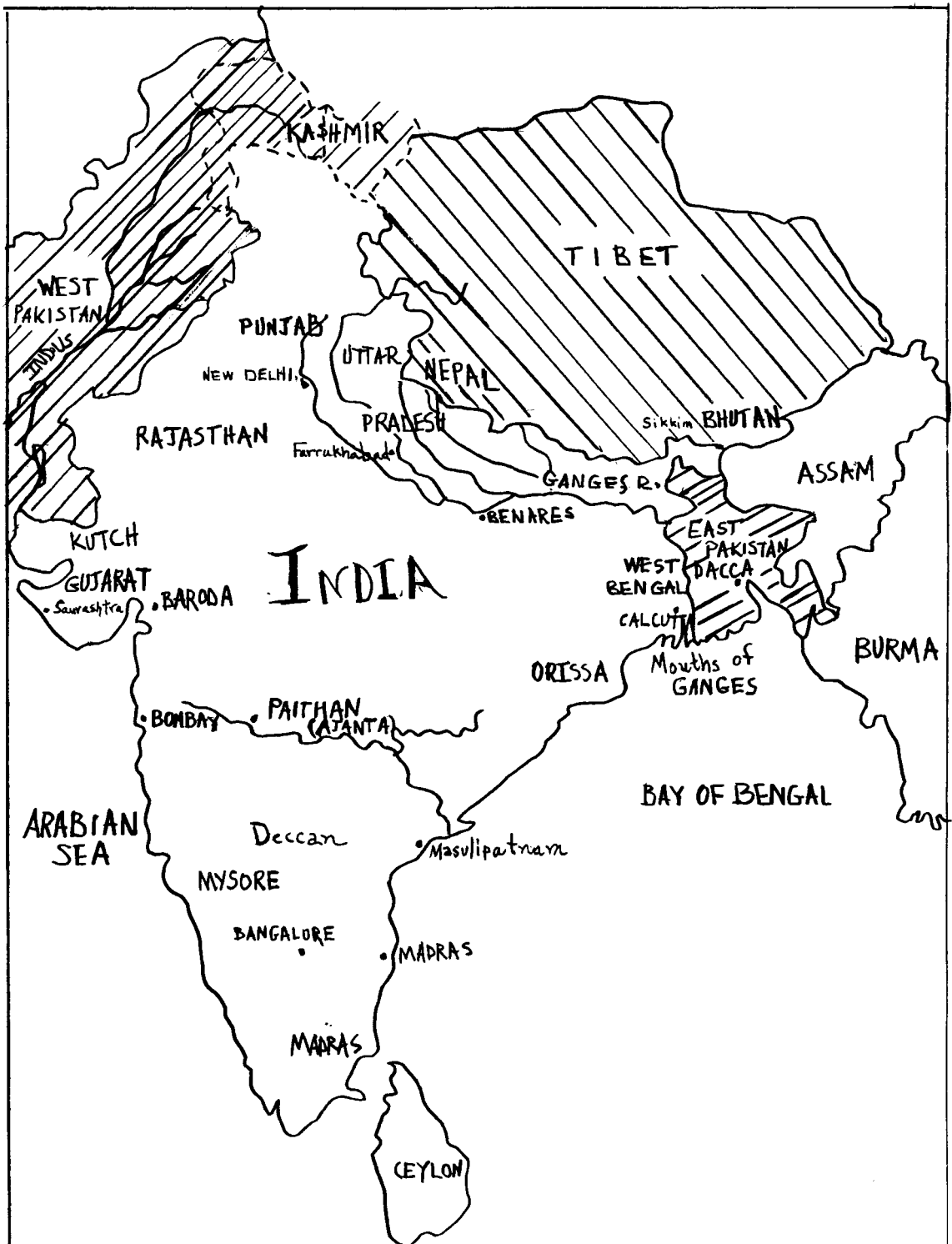


Plate 1. Map of India (28).

THE CHARACTER OF INDIA

Influence of the Land

India, with its present physical boundaries, has been in existence only since 1947. In that year release from the British led to the first truly independent nation called India. Two noteworthy periods of unification in the past were under the Mauryas (a native but oppressive rule) and the Moguls. For the remainder of the region's history, varying areas (often with life as contrasting as that of European countries) functioned under independent rulers. Intermittently, rulers extended their influence to limited surrounding areas and inspired their subjects to great cultural achievements.

The recurring land divisions pointed out by history seem as if they were encouraged by natural environment. Travel guides could point out more extreme contrast of climate and setting in India than in almost any other country. The mass of land is usually described as having three main divisions: the Himalaya Mountains, the Indus and Ganges River valleys, and the Deccan plateau. Coastal people might be said to occupy a fourth major land area, as India is, in effect, a peninsula with several of her major cities on the watery perimeter (Plate 1). Factors such as a 60 inch difference in rainfall within one region impress one with the further variety in each major area. The effect of the variation in rainfall produces strongly differing

situations for a people to whom agriculture, as in ages past, is of primary importance. Some current information about agriculture follows:

...means of livelihood for more than 70 per cent of the working population. Seven out of every eight village families [82.7 percent of the population] are wholly or partially dependent on agriculture for a living (27, p. 252, 273).

Cotton and jute are two large crops of interest in relation to textiles. India may have other rich economic possibilities besides land, but thus far other resources have played a minor role in the lives of the people. Now there is proof that in various areas agricultural land itself has been depleted by overuse and poor methods. Industrialists are just beginning the development of steel mills, taking advantage of domestically available iron. A widespread metal craft leads one to believe there may be other metals largely untapped. Certainly, a supply of fine sandstone is apparent from some of the architectural monuments.

Besides material resources, natural seasonal patterns have at times been used to explain the typical rhythm and philosophy of a certain country's inhabitants. In India, the unpredictable patterns and effects of the monsoons are important. It seems likely conjecture that they could relate directly to the Indian attitude of passivism and acceptance. Events the Westerner may quickly divide into "good" or "bad", the Indian has learned to accept altogether as equally probable

or important aspects of life. The Westerner often has tempered or at least prejudged his weather, while the Indian has had to accept the uncontrollable and uncertain offerings of the monsoons. These deviate unreasonably and may provide both benefits and destruction.

Being in a strategic position between the Far East and the West has directly encouraged the influence of other cultures along widely separated areas of India's coast. The fertile river valleys have served as lure for foreigners, friend or foe.

As one studies a country in depth, he becomes fascinated with the innumerable facets and becomes dissatisfied with the cursory description which is so often repeated. At the same time, he finds it progressively difficult to go back to composing general statements. This material presented should help one anticipate the diversity which really exists among the Indian people.

Importance of Religion

Despite great variety, there are points of similarity which in combination make Indians peculiarly distinct from other nations of peoples. Religious attitude alongside the socio-economic patterns of caste and village are the items which, judging by the emphasis of several authorities, deserve priority. In some form, both are recorded in the earliest tales of India and seem to have had continuity through the long ages of her history.

India's present official position is as a secular state, but influences of religion are still seen in every aspect of her peoples' lives. Hinduism is today the religion of a great majority, but until partition Islam was a much stronger minority than it is today. Still, some Islamic attitudes and styles are seen inseparably mixed with Hindu practices in certain areas of India.

The fact that religion has permeated all phases of life indicates a need to understand some tenets of the primary faith involved. First, ideas about the composition and place of religion can be confusing. Being predominantly Hindu means something quite different from citing a Western nation as favoring a specific faith. The Hindu religion accepts inconsistencies and allows glaring contrasts to live side by side in a unique manner. It encompasses aspects of life that are oftentimes ignored or considered outside the scope of other religions. Traditions of the village, including castes and work patterns, have either been determined by or incorporated into the religion of the people. This helps to insure permanence and creates resistance to change of these practices. Custom and the absence of set religious doctrine have made acceptable personal gods and devotion to current personalities as religious idols. This nature of the religion makes the range of art forms said to have religious links much greater and more mystic than that to which Western peoples are accustomed. The pervasive nature of the faith seems to add a certain tranquility and depth

of soul to everyday attitudes toward life.

Qualities of the Arts

...the indigenous artistic traditions are no longer alive.
(24, p. 546).

...in India tribal people still provide enough clues to penetrate into the significance of the cave paintings. [The art tradition among them]...is still a very powerful one (34, p. 15).

The quotes above indicate some of the contradictions about the continuity of an art tradition in India. Few people have dared to attempt drawing neat theories about the entire realm of Indian art, since the divisions of styles and methods are almost as numerous as the different groups of peoples. Several historic periods have been minutely detailed.

Only recently have Indians themselves begun to acknowledge the fact that they have a singular and ageless art quality permeating the various historical periods and the diversities of their population. Granted the acceptance of this idea, there was then general agreement that the essence of this quality has not yet been isolated.

Those persons leaning more toward anthropological interpretations of indigenous qualities pointed to functioning primitive peoples as a source of information to be preserved and carefully studied if one is to solve the present mystery. Since such continuity is not available to Europeans, one is led to believe the Indians eventually

may have a more complete outline of artistic development than the West. Presently, these primitive people are not a dominant force in the arts and their significance has limited recognition. Specialists beginning study of Adivasi crafts have found some rather close similarities to practices of Hindu villages.

One person who at least attempted to identify what he called the "elusive link" uniting the various forms of Indian art was W.E.G. Solomon. First he stressed that this was not to be found in any one period of India's art history. Furthermore, he scoffed at those who feared "De-Indianised" art would be the result of Western influences. Innumerable intruders of the past have altered only the surface effect while the characteristic core remained. With excitement, he has watched current Indian artists who are able to experiment and incorporate modern approaches in their work. This, rather than senseless copying of the past, is consistent with the tradition of Indian art which has benefited from the knowledge of many sources. In its changes Indian art has not been reactionary, but adaptable, according to Solomon's theory. His eventual definition of the essence of Indian art is a "sublime unity of the purely Decorative, the Realistic, and the purely Spiritual" which is "felt rather than seen" (44, p. 94).

Although past peoples of India have not been specifically interested in understanding their art style, artistic expression nevertheless has been a part of their everyday lives. It has been taken for

granted by persons producing objects for ordinary use as well as by those providing luxury items for the court. Pupul Jayakar says specifically, "Integration of creative impulse with livelihood and the absence of a designer intervening led to the flowering of the craft tradition of India" (25, p. 36).

Art is practiced without the thought of confining it to limited persons. One observation of the contemporary primitives is that they "live in a world of rhythm, colour and form...[and] among the most interesting of the Adivasi arts and crafts are their textiles" (34, p. 16). Traditionally, the art of the mass of Indians has been consumed locally by the same people who produced it. This added to the unity of art with the attitudes and activities of the people, and is reflected in the contemporary primitive art which has the characteristic of "complete infusion of group emotion" (34, p. 20).

In villages, objects meaningful to a group have been reproduced by a group according to local custom. This has precluded stress on individual creativity or credit for design origin. In fact, Solomon has gone so far as to say Indian art is a legacy which "cannot be amassed because it is inherent, because it emanates as much from ourselves as from the surroundings" (44, p. 95). The Indian craftsman actually considers his art as "originating in the divine skill of his god" and tools of his craft are worshiped at certain festivals (28, p. 103). Nevertheless, designs have not been completely static. Occasional

deviations in reproductions or influences from new experiences caused variations which in turn have been repeated. Hundreds of subtle variations on the same theme can be found throughout the country. Franz Boas in his study of primitive groups pointed out the tendency of relative permanence (not rigidity) of design anytime there was group workmanship with skills handed down to newer associates. Accordingly, he believes, lack of desire to change rather than inability to create is responsible for design continuity. The meanings attached to designs, the fact that they are more than aesthetically appealing, also has caused persistence.

The Indian primitive is said to depend heavily on myth and legend to explain his designs. Although more advanced people have not been able to give such specific explanations of all forms, ancient Hindu literature has always been a beloved source of inspiration. In primitive art Ajit Mookerjee says, "These [myths] stimulate dramatic intensity resulting in distortion, exaggeration, and the use of strongly contrasting colors" (34, p. 23). Also, in the tribes, colors and forms are significant in taking on totemic associations with magical overtones. This might be paralleled with caste and regional designs and colors which have held fast for generations. Swarup has an interesting chapter explaining widespread use of ritual designs, particularly well-developed in coastal cities, which in their production are credited to much more than a decorative impulse. He refers to

them to illustrate a major aspect of Indian life: "religion and art are vitually linked. Here religion has supplied not only the motive and material for Indian art, but has also been the sustaining force" (46, p. 86). Ritual designs display well the place of religion in Indian art (or vice versa).

Besides myths and legends, Indian art has consistently portrayed "deep spiritual experience" which to the initiated may be as realistic as objects traditionally portrayed by the Westerner (34, p. 22). Solomon says the strong realistic trend in current Indian art is "by no means new, though the advent of photography among other things has given this a new impulse" (44, p. 116). The recent stress on concrete or material objects need not necessarily change her underlying approach to artistic interpretation. Swarup's interpretation of ritual art pointed up a realism in the visual elements as well as in the symbolic significance of designs:

...in these compositions of two dimensional flatness, an ample power of realistic delineation, which is of the true expressionistic type. They have a naturalistic appeal not in the sense of photographic realism, but in an altogether different sense of the term, wherein we speak of realism as representing the details actually in existence (46, p. 89).

Solomon holds the belief that "the thirst for Realism will never outrun the imaginative element in Indian art" which he calls the "guardian-sense in the Indian artist's mind" (34, p. 118). Incorporation of realism is seen as the artist's means to make his fancy more believable

rather than as an end in itself.

As art has been entwined with everyday life, so have arts meshed with one another. More than one author has suggested that to truly appreciate Indian art one must familiarize himself with the ancient but alive mythical lore of India. In addition, acquaintance with the many Indian arts would be immensely helpful to understanding of textile designs. Jayakar tells how "Hereditary craftsmen dipped into designs of great stone temples, clay and wooden toys, ... designs of thresholds, paintings on huts, and great clay gods and animals" (25, p. 35).

Both the contemporary primitive and the village cultures have an art tradition which "does not encourage mass production" (34, p. 27). Production time is apparently of little concern in method of work used. The fact that crafts have been a family's pride rather than a skill to be purchased has upheld integrity of method and style. The government's support of handlooms indicated to Western people continued disregard for time and quantity of output. Organizers do express practical concern for providing employment for those away from industrial centers. Yet, it is doubtful that the average craftsman comprehends any centralized economic concern as he produces for his village.

The primitive artist of India is said to be particularly conscious of the eventual setting and use of his products. This, of course,

continues to be true in such aspects of village textiles as the elaborate details of a sari kept to the border and the decoration of a scarf placed in the center so as to show in wearing. Usage is also kept in mind when choosing clothing colors, usually brighter for domestic than export markets. An Indian student quite frankly suggested that the warmer, darker skin tones might create a particularly harmonious and pleasing relation with the more vibrant textile hues. This idea may have originated with Jayakar in whose writing this theory also appears. It seems a realistic appreciation of self and setting which is not observed in every culture.

One might counter that such instinctive foresight is absent in the ritual designs referred to earlier. The most artistic of these are floor decorations made with "white and coloured rice powder, limestone or chalk" (46, p. 86). Since they are frequently desired in the home for religious or social occasions, their impermanent quality makes constant replacement seem a repeated waste of effort. But as the execution itself heightens the immediate anticipation for a special occasion and keeps significance of designs alive, this too becomes an example of compatible product and usage. Were ritual designs fixed this meaningful experience would be lost.

In addition to any conscious consideration, subconscious awareness of environment is thought significant in controlling the use of color. The person who knows Indian culture well can identify by color

traits alone articles belonging to different regions.

There are specific design qualities found consistently in the decoration of textiles. Jamila Bhushan says, "Ornament on Indian fabrics is always flat and without shading." Flowers and animals are conventionalized. Designs, although simple, are "very effective and full of apparent richness" (6, p. 12). He considers use of color in good taste and superior to Western nations'. An interesting relationship to the flat use of color in fabrics is the preference in gems for a cut which accentuates color depth rather than the cut which emphasizes sparkle. The latter is considered gaudy (12, p. 135).

Since 1900 there has developed a gap between design quality of textiles produced in mills and those considered fine art fabrics, generally among those still made by hand. In sources available there was shown little concern for creativity and tradition in mass production. This is better understood when one realizes that traditional Indian fabrics leaned on special techniques for much of their design quality.

These last comments do not mean that traditional designs are being overwhelmed as modern methods arrive. Recent government programs favor continuation of the traditional methods of work. Official publications have dwelt on the continuity of design in India--but always with reference to places where the original (or a slightly modified) technique is continued.

EMINENT HISTORIC TEXTILES

Accounts of the great Indian textiles marvel at antiquity of method and style. However, seldom are either methods or styles assigned to specific periods of time. To prove the great age of textile achievements, authorities have used ancient legends and poems which contain at least as much fancy as fiction. Regardless of fairy tale qualities, these sources indicate types of objects known at extremely early periods of history. Some of the hymns may date back as far as 1500 B.C. Emphasis of such literature probably indicates those items held in high esteem in actual life (28).

Besides the native legends which could contain biased praise, there are accounts of early travelers and traders (particularly from Rome in the 1st century and Europe in the Middle Ages) that describe Indian textiles considered superior to any others of their time. Another means for documenting the age of certain textiles has been through fabrics portrayed in dated paintings or in other works of art. Even where textiles are not depicted, the fact that decorated fabrics and paintings are both two dimensional areas with line and color appearing on the surface make their styles easily compared. For periods completely lacking in textile specimens, researchers have relied upon paintings to calculate some of the probable changes and developments in design.

Unfortunately, India lacked a climate favorable to the preservation of textiles. So we must accept these sometimes speculative sources of historic data. Probably the earliest evidence of textile production in India has been uncovered at excavations in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa from the Indus civilization. "These prehistoric people could spin and weave cotton, as is proven by many spindles that were found" (31, p. 150).

It is accepted that time, with its changes of authority and boundary, has allowed considerable continuity in the designing of Indian textiles. This is particularly true of "village" textiles, one of two divisions which have long existed in India. The other main category is the "court" textiles, usually stressing meticulous techniques and the finest materials. These show greater variation as foreign groups or patronizing individuals have tried to outdo each other or immortalize themselves in some textile marvel (25, p. 38).

Village Fabrics

It is doubtful that there could be indicated a particular peak of design and technical excellence in village textiles. Sacred and unquestioning belief in custom and ritual has caused continuous use of some patterns for centuries. The same techniques and even tools have been handed down in almost a religious manner from one generation to another. Caste requirements have kept certain groups using

as well as producing textiles of a uniform nature. Heritable occupation and group practice also encouraged repetition and discouraged individual expression or change. Since most villages produced just enough for themselves and their immediate needs, samples to show subtle changes were not preserved.

Although fabrics produced under the various courts may have received the greatest praise, the way in which village textiles have evolved and endured makes them a living record of the past. As Mehta says, "...the art-crafts of India today are still the art-crafts of antiquity" (32, p. 1). Many of them require handwork as intricate and complex as any king might desire, but their impression is likely to be more gaudy and flashing. It would be absurd to think such technical and design proficiency could have burst into being abruptly. India's slow pace of life, her persistence of tradition, and her resistance to change must be remembered.

Some design traits attributed to village textiles are a "deep understanding of the nature of mass and volume with color used as a vital dimension" (25, p. 38). The colors are often bold, bright, solid hues of red, black, yellow and blues. The remarkable ability to balance all of these harmoniously has won India much praise from art critics. At times, however, two tones of a single color dominate. Certain colors used by the villagers have significance for special occasions or have been associated with certain elements of nature or

aspects of gods who permeate every aspect of life. The design patterns of the villages have a tendency to be quite geometric--often with exact or harmonic repetition in bands or evenly spaced position. A potential source of information for research on the age of village patterns is indicated by the fact that "there is a strong resemblance between village cloths and prehistoric pottery" (25, p. 38).

The regional source of village textiles is often identified as much by design techniques as by artistic style. Although her weaving ability has resulted in some of the world's most delicate fabrics, India was noted earliest for being far advanced in the art of dyeing. Quality and variety of colors along with techniques of application were noteworthy. In historic perspective, the great predominance of work with cotton is evident. Fine quality silk, still a relative newcomer, has been and still is imported, since India's climate has produced only a coarse, inferior grade of this fiber.

Because of frequent conjecture about a link between designs on certain textiles and in the Ajanta caves, it seems appropriate to interject information about that site before further textile descriptions. Such a diversion is justified by the interest in this thesis of observing a country's attention to its past cultural achievements. Apparent direct relationship of current textiles with antiquity might be of interest to contemporary Indians. They could promote the fact that indeed flames of a great and continuous cultural potential have kept smoldering

despite an inhibiting atmosphere. Proper attention might release the potential for full realization.

The Ajanta caves were a series of 29 temples begun by Buddhist monks in the 2nd or 1st century B.C. and painted with frescoes between the 1st and 7th centuries A.D. (44, p. 137). The style of the paintings is related to the great Gupta Empire when Hellenistic and Oriental attitudes were combined, resulting in a golden period of culture (31, p. 160-161). Both Coomaraswamy and an Englishman quoted by Swarup (46, p. 17) speak of that period of art as being the main-spring for the "common spiritual consciousness" (12) which exists even today throughout Asia and India. Swarup says because of their seclusion at Ajanta:

the priest artists could still show a keen interest in the larger and fuller life outside which gave an intensely humanistic character to their work (36, p. 18).

He refers to the accomplishments as a "mystic unity between the spiritual and the real." He repeats another's comments that these are "the earliest surviving illustrations of the rooted ideal of the Indian artist, ...that beauty is spiritual and not of matter" (46, p. 17).

Work at Ajanta is described often as an art depending on line and incorporating in this single element the effects of others. Expansiveness of single components begins to seem truly Indian as this idea is paralleled with that of the material also incorporating the spiritual. In outlook, some consider the Mogul period with its "secular,

aristocratic, and matter of fact approach" the first powerful force to challenge the "spiritual sentiments" inspiring "deep idealism" represented at Ajanta (46, p. 25). Despite the apparent idealism of form, there is realism in the truly Indian aim to give the impression of the total essence being represented.

More detailed study of the subject matter of the frescoes shows "an extraordinary variety of decorative design and a highly developed sense of weaving technique." Embroidery is also depicted (46, p. 81-82). Mookerjee specifically identifies the forms of designs used at Ajanta:

bands alternately filled in with geometrical patterns, such as chevrons, stripes, circles and checks; formal floral motifs or scrolls entwined with processions of hamsas and simhas; dot patterns and diagonal bands of geese. Poets have waxed eloquent over these bird designs... (32, p. 95, from Mookerjee, Ajit [ed.] Designs in Indian Textiles, n.d.).

Traits in the decoration which correspond in many ways with Indian design through the ages are: narrative style, spacing on a grand scale, simplicity of treatment, masterly modeling of surface, variety, exquisite refinement of detail, delicate coloring, spontaneous line flow, absence of shading, and amazingly life-like qualities (46, p. 18).

There are other remains which portray the place of textile arts in ancient India and prove the relation of the past to contemporary styles. The Ajanta caves are presented as a single example of the

type of comparisons which might be developed. Fortunately, they have been especially well-documented from several authorities' points of view.

Tie-dyeing of fabrics to produce patterns composed of dots (Plate 2) or stripes is one carefully developed method of dyeing which Coomaraswamy suggests was limited to a few areas (12, p. 138). Swarup, however, says this technique is used particularly for the "Wedding scarf of women of Gujarat; the Rajput belle...and for Hindu women everywhere an auspicious bridal garment" (46, p. 82). Some motifs noted by the two authors are zigzags, elephants, birds, flowers and dancing females. The number of colors is quite limited since each requires separate tying and redyeing.

Even more admired by textile experts are the fabrics produced by tie-dyeing both the warp and weft threads before the weaving takes place. The intricate process requires tremendous patience and exceptional preplanning. It produces an appealing design with hazy outlines which it must be fascinating to see developing from continuous threads. Both sides of the fabric show the complete design. This process, except in corrupted form, Swarup believes confined to the Gujarat area which used the technique on silk. In contrast, Coomaraswamy said its universality proved its antiquity; but he did agree that Gujarat had the most elaborate work (Plate 3). The finest work of that area, which has been reproduced so often, is designed with



Plate 2. Tie-dyed fabric (detail). This coarse cotton wedding sari of a lower class woman shows use of traditional hues--red, yellow, and green. Due to thinness of the fabric, the repeated design on a second fold appears as a double image in the background. Probably 20th century. Full size, 41" x 124". (13. In. 4)

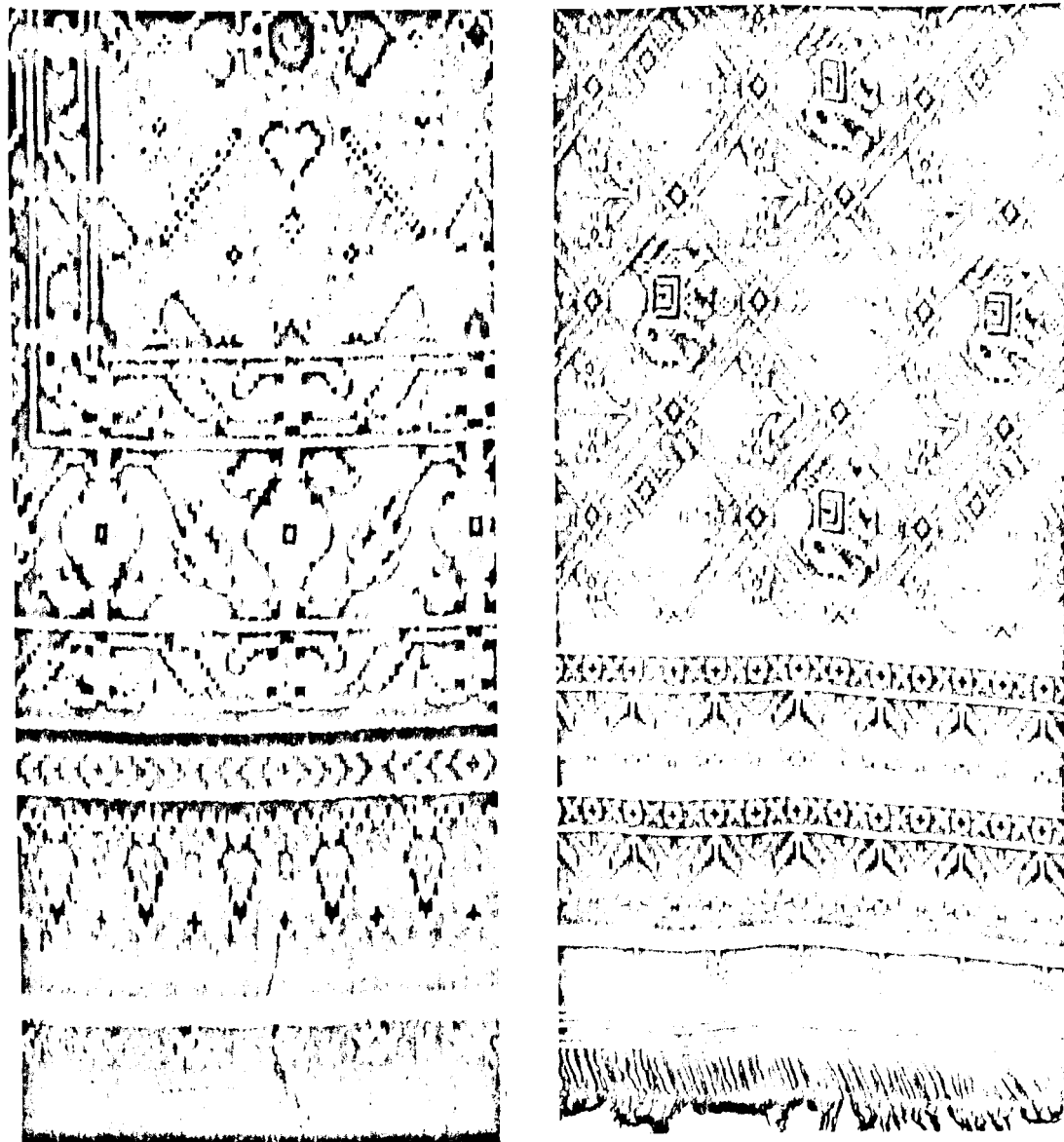


Plate 3. Traditional patola designs of Patan, Gujarat. Both the warp and weft threads were tie-dyed before the weaving took place. (32, Plate CXXXII. From: The Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmadabad [left]; and the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery [right])

"flowers, elephants or birds enclosed in a geometrical trellis..."(12, p. 137). T.M. Abraham confirms the use of traditional village colors: "The field colour is often dark blue or dark green with patterns of red, white, and yellow" (1, p. 147). He is also daring enough to state boldly that this form of tie-dyeing began in India in the 5th century A.D. Coomaraswamy stressed antiquity by saying the characteristic V-form designs, which appear in many areas, "can be unmistakably recognized in some of the Ajanta paintings" (12, p. 139). The fabrics, possibly due to the careful planning required, seem to be more limited in production and in designs. Agrawala says this technique produces only two main styles, one of them being simpler and therefore cheaper to produce. Both support the idea that "Once a design has been established it persists in tradition and continues to be repeated" (3, p. 37). The finished fabric, called a patola, is associated with the occasion of a wedding.

As there was reference to embroidered fabrics at the Ajanta caves, mention must be made of them before leaving village textiles. Here, design was applied after the formation of the fabric, but the art of dyeing was still important in the coloring of the yarns. Specific embroidery stitches in combination with certain background materials influenced designs, as did methods of fabric dyeing. Aggregates of distinguishing traits became distinct enough that products almost spoke the names of specific regions. Of the most often described

traditional types, phulkari (Plates 4 and 5) and Kutch embroidery (Plate 6) are chosen to illustrate the qualities inherent in some of the village work. The author has had the opportunity to closely examine the skirt, hanging and turban illustrated.

Phulkari work has its origin credited to the Jats, an Indo-Aryan people (1, p. 138), and the Punjab is the area where it has been known to the greatest extent. Characteristic needlework is a "darn stitch" (12, p. 139). Using a coarse, hand-woven cotton as background, the embroidery is put on in such an extraordinary all-over way that it entirely covers the fabric or leaves only enough material to give the appearance of an applied outline at completion. In both illustrations (Plates 4 and 5) the background seems to form black design lines around the flat and close needlework. Other commonly used background colors are red, blue or white. The soft, untwisted silk yarns for the embroidery were often yellow, white, green and red. An appearance described as tapestry-like was further attributed to the design being worked from the reverse side of the cloth (1, p. 139). The turban and hanging shown are typical of the strictly geometric type of design, but Mehta described a second major category of conventional floral arrangements that meander over the entire surface. The category of phulkari work which incorporates pieces of glass to reflect the embroidery colors is seen only in heirloom pieces today (32, p. 112). The shiny round accents on the



Plate 4. Phulkari embroidered turban (ends only shown). Colored silk of red, green, gold and white creates a chevron effect on the full length of the fine black wool. Only enough background shows to outline the design. One end (right) is turned for a back view of the embroidery. Full size, 180" x 13 1/4". (14. In. 1)



Plate 5. Phulkari wall hanging from Punjab (nearly full view). The shiny accents are small mirrors held in place by the chain stitch. A thin outline is all that remains visible of the black cotton background. 14 3/4" x 15 1/2". (1. In. 3)



Plate 6. Kutch embroidered skirt, possibly from Saurashtra. The chain stitch and brilliant satin ground are characteristic of this work. Both the motifs and their spacing are important qualities in identifying the region of origin for traditional crafts. 34 1/2" x 96" at lower edge. (13. In. 5)

Tracing from an album. . "Embroidered Woman's Sari, Pheasant and Floral Design. Indian, about 1800" (37).

hanging (Plate 4) are mirrors held in place by the chain stitch. Occasional black circles appear in a row of mirrors where the inserts have been lost.

In the Kutch area, the chain stitch has been used to create a representative type of embroidery. The more open work, as well as the wide spacing of the large flat designs, take advantage of the beauty of the satin, usually forming the background fabric. In some cases Kutch work is inset with mirror fragments, calling to mind the heirloom Punjabi embroidery. It is misleading that, oftentimes, mirror work of any area is called "Kutch embroidery." Agrawala says Kutch embroidery designs, as representative of the region, are "conceived of the most pleasing styles of colour and design consisting of peacocks, flowers in a field, and lotus rosettes alternating with parrots" (3, p. 38). This provides almost an exact description of the Kutch skirt shown in Plate 6. The embroidery colors of the skirt are primarily yellow, white and red. However, in older embroideries there may have been greater variations of colors with the effect more subdued. "Gradual introduction of coloured threads in chain stitches to indicate the veins, the stems and other subtle tones of the motifs" were said to be characteristic (1, p. 139). Traditionally, Kutch embroidery was done with a crochet like hook and, like the phulkari work, had yarns introduced from the back. The skirt illustrated has a deep green ground, but Coomaraswamy (12, p. 140) reported that a black

or dark blue satin was often used.

Court Fabrics

The above examples point up the qualities of village textiles that make them seem worthy of recognition. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the court textiles have been more refined, costly and lauded. As examples of these other works, particular reference is made to the production under the Mogul courts.

Dacca muslins were praised most for their lightness and almost transparent nature. These characteristics result from the long and fine staple cotton being woven to an almost incomparably high count. Some say such achievements can never be duplicated elsewhere because the atmosphere was as important as the extreme patience of the weavers. The rainy season was considered the time to construct the best quality fabric, and it took five to six months to weave one standard length--one yard by twenty yards (3, p. 37). Reifstahl says "thin muslins," sometimes brocaded in colored silks, were one of the specialties of India when the Mohammedans gained ascendancy under Baber (37, p. 9). Flowered muslins were mentioned particularly in reference to Bengal, while design on Dacca muslins was described as being of "fine darn and satin stitch work...done in old gold and wheat colored silk" (47, p. 140). This appears to be the type illustrated in Plate 7. The specimen purchased in the 1930's may be



Plate 7. Dacca muslin. This very fine handwoven specimen is embroidered in yellow silk. The floral motifs are $4 \frac{1}{8}$ " x $2 \frac{1}{8}$ ", evenly spaced in rows across the fabric. 17" x 13". (2. In. 3)

from the 19th century, but unfortunately is not dated. At a much earlier time, delicate muslins were said to have had their place among textiles identified in the Ajanta murals (32, p. 1). There is no pictorial proof known of earlier existence, but passages in the ancient epics praise the high quality of woven cottons. They mention specifically the offering of Ganjam, Carnatic and Mysore muslins as a gift to the king.(1, p. 135). Some Egyptian mummy shrouds, now thought to have come from India, may be the oldest existing samples of Indian weaving. Although unornamented muslin, they show first-rate quality of material and technique. Crawford (14, p. 7) says the earliest of these date from the Sassanian Empire, although India was thought to have been a partner in trade much earlier. She expressed doubt that the finer Dacca muslins ever were an item of trade. Even in days of cheap labor they were "expensive...reserved for royal usage and as gifts to friendly courts" (14, p. 67). Slightly older than the Egyptian remains are records of Greek and Roman travelers who were "tremendously impressed" with Indian cottons which they took home with them (30, p. 60-61).

There must have been some continuity of textiles during the Middle Ages for that seems to explain the apparent relationship of some of the ancient styles and methods with the great Mogul achievements. It is likely that there was a definite decline between the two periods. Swarup mentions a decrease in painting during the medieval

period when there was a revival of the Hindu religion. He says this faith, in contrast to the Buddhist, sought a "lasting and abiding form. . . . The art consciousness of the age, therefore, gave the art of the sculptor and architect the foremost place in all religious works. . . ." (46, p. 20).

Islamic arts began very simply and plainly. The rulers at the greatest heights of vast empires, however, found it to their liking to use amassed riches in shows of luxury and elegance. The most popular of the arts encouraged by the Mogul rulers in India were the fine miniature paintings, with subject matter frequently centered on the court. Like earlier Indian art, this was produced under a religion permeating many aspects of life, but Islam was a much more "earthly" religion than India had hitherto known. Artists who closely followed religious regulations were at the same time very much exposed to the courtly life. They painted what they saw and what pleased the rulers. Some of the familiar topics were "important dignitaries of the court, the picturesqueness and pomp of camp life, with armies on the march, hunting, battle. . . . scenes." Also, the Moguls were said to love "blossoms and plants in bloom." These, like the other subjects, were painted in a very realistic way as against the attitude of the early Indians who had sought to represent the essence rather than, or as well as, the visual reality. It is apparently the Persian influence that led to realistic portrayals in contrast to the more

conventionalized designs of the western Islamic empires. Riefstahl acknowledges that "Indian textiles, too, were entirely under Persian influence," except for the printed chintzes which he believes carried Indian motifs to Persia (37, p. 9). Within the miniature paintings there is proof of the high regard held for textiles as they were portrayed in "brocaded canopies, silken curtains and awnings," as well as in elegant clothing (46, p. 20-24).

In contrast to the Dacca muslins called the "classical achievement," Swarup describes the silk brocades as the "most gorgeous and highly ornamented fabric of India" (46, p. 82). The Benares brocades, especially, were encouraged by and made known under the Mogul court (Plate 8). Even today these are generally woven by Moslems who are descendents of Buddhists converted to the new religion by the invaders of the 13th century (43, p. 79). The designs are grouped into three main classes: individual floral motifs or sprigs of flowers, geometric designs (particularly scrolls), and animals. One hunting scene is considered unique and has been repeated for centuries. It bears close resemblance to some miniatures of the Mogul court, but Indian authors say there is an almost exact description of the same design in Homer's Odyssey. The claims indicate the belief that although the Mogul design came to India from the Western Mediterranean, it was originally inspired by Indian techniques and designs. Regarding the scroll pattern, there is again indication of a



Plate 8. Benares brocade. Gold and colored silks in this heavy material almost seem to vie with the sun for brilliance. The allover pattern of small flowers, curving stems and leaves are disposed in $1 \frac{3}{8}$ " rows across the fabric. $26 \frac{1}{2}$ " x 23". (2. In. 25).

long historic tradition in their representation in the Ajanta caves (32, p. 99).

In the 14th century Muhamed Tughlaq was said to have had 500 weavers of silk and gold brocade at his court in Delhi (32, p. 95). One has the impression that they derived or developed their techniques and designs from traditions already prevalent in other areas of the country. Mehta is bold enough to say that gold brocades as well as the muslins are probably "older than the Code of Manu," (32, p. 95) recorded in present form about 200 B.C. Those who were patronized and brought to the central area had the finest materials with which to work. Competition for favor caused increasing refinement and inclusion of details in fashion at the court. Benares, the original home of some of these weavers, had been a holy place to many religions and is so old that it may, in fact, be the oldest existing city in India. It has been sacred to the Hindus, the Buddhists and most recently to the Moslems. Besides its attraction as a shrine, it has little to offer but the production of a few art or handicraft products. Some of the most notable are the gold brocades and saris.

The Kashmirian shawls (Plates 9, 10, 11) and their main design, known most popularly today as the "paisley", certainly are a part of old India. As with other finer textiles studied, these were of high-quality materials as well as technique. The use of fiber from the Tibetan goat is doubly interesting because of the high-grade material



Plate 9. Kashmir shawl (left). The fabric may be representative of the mid 18th century when floral motifs began to set in a more rigid outline, but were not yet completely abstract. Circa 18th century. 71" x 56 1/2". (No catalog number)

Scarlet Kashmir shawl (right). A very elongated pine motif with the tip angled back on the design is considered a characteristic of work between 1820-1830. Solid embroidery forming designs on the 22" central section, on the narrower bands above and below, and on the corners is all done on separate pieces of material. Probably 19th century. 80" x 17". (2. In. 2)



Plate 10. Fragment of Kashmir shawl. This specimen handwoven with Tibetan wool would have to be dated 1815 or onwards due to the more formal abstract outline and the bent tip of the cone. The two borders at the top were stitched on separately. 9 1/4" x 14". (2. In. 24)



Plate 11. Fragment of embroidered Kashmir shawl. The cones in the central section typify the period before the final stage of abstraction when the motif was barely recognizable. In this sample, the elongated and almost scroll-like cones are just one unit in a more involved over-all design. Practically invisible stitches join small irregular pieces of fabric to form the whole. $22\frac{1}{2}'' \times 22\frac{1}{2}''$. (1. In. 2)

and because so little wool is used in Indian textiles. The "richest" colors used were deep red, gold, turquoise and emerald green (47, p. 27). There were two main ways in which these designs were incorporated in the shawls: small woven panels, or pieces with embroidery simulating woven fabric (Plate 11). Sometimes both methods were employed in one shawl. In any case the construction of the whole fabric was unique in that numerous sections were united with an almost invisible stitch. The woven designs were really an art form as they were done in the technique known as "twill-tapestry [with]...design formed by the weft threads only" on a horizontal loom (32, p. 102). The almost perfect formation of the design caused some authorities to describe them as being more like painting than weaving (30, p. 71). In addition, shawls designed to please the taste of the Mogul rulers were ornamented with gold and silver threads and had applied fringes (32, p. 103).

The Kashmir shawls, like the muslins and brocades, were developed as an exquisite art under the Moguls. Authorities often acknowledge a strong Persian influence in the designs and styles that became popular after the 16th century. Irwin, who devoted an entire booklet to shawls alone, thought that the earliest floral motifs used on the shawls were ultimately derived from Persian ornament. However, his tracing of the actual development of designs supported the idea that "the cone in the varied forms in which it became associated with

shawls was clearly the product of separate development" (23, p. 11). Riefestahl's reference to the Indian pine motif suggests he believed in a more direct Persian design infiltration (37, p. 9). He shows examples that could easily be forerunners to the Indian forms. But Irwin's illustrated commentary on the evolvement of Indian patterns is good proof that even if the influence of Persian patterns is evident, they still took a separate course. There may have been some type of wool pattern weaving in Kashmir before the arrival of the Moguls, but documentation of its exact nature has not been found.

As Irwin portrayed the design situation, Kashmir's development of a stylized cone came about after the Mogul period. During the 17th century he shows a typical motif as being more naturalistic than is usually thought representative of the area. This is in line with the realism attributed to Mogul art work as a whole. An extremely graceful delineation of "delicate, freely-spaced flowering plants" with roots was most characteristic of their Kashmir designs. By the early 18th century the individual floral motifs began to carry a great many more flowers on a single stem and the entire design apparently merged with another Indo-Persian motif which included a vase rather than roots at the bottom. It is believed that only in the mid 18th century did the motif really begin to set in a more rigid outline. The first illustration in Plate 9 (left) may be considered representative of this approximate date. After the pine motif was more sharply defined

in outline, it became increasingly elongated and twining in form. Any motif with the bending of the tip would have to be dated as coming after 1815.(Plate 10). The very elongated motif with the tip even more angled was discussed by Irwin as being representative of work between 1820 and 1830 (Plate 9, right). Towards the final stage of abstraction, the cone became so elongated that it began to take on scroll-like windings as seen in the central motifs in the handwoven embroidered shawl (Plate 11). Also noted here, in contrast to the earliest designs, is the tendency for the cone motif to be only one unit in a more involved over-all design rather than a single motif repeated at regularly spaced intervals. Irwin's specimen most similar to that in Plate 11 was dated about 1850. If there were an example of the last version of the cone motif, it would show a scroll-like pattern, impossible to identify as a cone unless seen in order alongside the chain of developments just described.

There were other designs used in Kashmir but not so well-known as the pine motif, popularized by being extensively copied in Paisley, England. The most common Kashmir designs were described as "mostly formalised imitations of nature..." (32, p. 102).

These categories of court-promoted textiles could each be further classified in subdivisions meaningful to those who made and used them. However, these are enough examples to understand the characteristics of court fabrics.

Summary

In historic Indian crafts, there is accepted the idea of a natural division between village and court items in regard to techniques and specific usages of the art elements. Generally the village fabrics were more bold in combining large areas of intense colors. One might credit this difference to spontaneity as contrasted to the more reserved and restrained formality of the courts. Furthermore, exact color relationships in village textiles were thought to reflect regional origin due to the influence of the environment. Such color associations also might have been considered one of the symbolic supports of group unity. Through repetition of what was considered correct, people felt they were acting appropriately.

Another contrast between design of village and court textiles is the "concept of mass and volume" in the former with "expressions of an exquisite and highly-developed knowledge of line" in the latter (25, p. 42). Village textiles are compared to carving in red or gray sandstone where the shadow forms a background to the designs which stand out in relief. The effect of court designs was closer to that of "precious stone inlay work in marble." The design had a feeling of depth while the background surrounding the inlay seemed to come forward to form the pattern (25, p. 46).

Under court patronage, textiles became a competitive product.

The court craftsmen, rather than working on the traditional barter system for a community of which they were inherently part, were provided a "fixed salary on a piecemeal contractual basis" (32, p. 2). Workmanship and quality of the product came to be ends in themselves. The consumer to be pleased was in an entirely different social situation from the craftsman. It was probably an individual seeking prestige instead of identity with a group. Jayakar says rulers determined fashion changes. Certain textile pieces can actually be associated with specific royal personages. Indications are that villages carefully guarded and preserved the techniques and designs of their ancestors, while the court work saw sudden declines as the taste of a master might be inferior to that of his predecessor. The person in the village had his pace and action determined by real needs and patterns of nature, but the court artist was artificially oblivious to almost everything but his specific project and the royal setting. It would not be unusual to find inclusion of ideas from foreign styles momentarily considered in vogue. Utilization of the finest materials from many sources, disregard for time involved, encouragement of specialization, and a search for ever greater superiority were all a part of the court attitude.

One more distinction which may be noteworthy is the Mogul court being highly dependent on woven design, while the village textiles laid stress on intricate dyeing processes. Since Crawford

believes most of the woven designs "probably originated in Asia Minor and are a reminiscence of the Assyrian, Grecian and Parthian Art" (14, p. 64), we might logically assume that the village textiles were more "pure Indian."

The court did include some traits of the local Indian philosophy, because part of the weavers' local background couldn't help but persist. In fact, to be fair to textile historians, one must go beyond the admission that there was free acceptance of foreign influences with each new period. Eventual assimilation of foreign ideas into the strong indigenous spirit, rather than continued dominance of the superficial new idea seemed an inevitable happening.

ENSUING TEXTILE DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the tremendous age of India's civilizations and the common references to the antiquity of her textile achievements, we have found the most-recognized fabrics reaching their height within the last 300 years. As these textiles are now regarded as belonging to bygone days, the next step is to investigate their cessation or decline. There are some differences of opinion concerning the exact factors that contributed to the decline, but only a few persons deny a deterioration in the standards of textile production. These few Crawford refers to as "just plain smug and sanctimonious" (14, p. 78).

Along with distinctive design character, superiority of Indian textiles was attributed to highly-developed technical skills and use of finest quality materials. Factors changing these aspects, then, must account for the decline.

Since the production of the most elegant textiles was so closely dependent on the support and encouragement of the Moguls, the disintegration of the empire in the early 17th century held disastrous consequences for the arts of weaving and dyeing. The European traders had entered the Indian Ocean in search of trade goods as early as the founding of the Mogul empire. It was at the end of this empire, however, that the Europeans showed real interest in wielding power or exerting influence over what was received in their trading posts.

Undoubtedly, the Europeans came into contact with some of the textile treasures which had been made at the court as well as with village goods. It would hardly seem likely that trading companies looking for bulk merchandise could pause to appreciate the time-consuming skill required to weave such as the Dacca muslins. Neither were these fabrics suitable to the Western climate. The standards of the traders were quite different from the Oriental's who might be said to have "held beauty as a creed" (14, p. 78). The demands of the European traders could be thought of as a substitute for the patronage of the earlier courts. Considering this fact, it is actually quite amazing to learn that there was continuation of the fine Dacca muslin weaving up to the 1880's (1, p. 37).

The profit motive and the removing of products even further from the producers brought about a great change in the working atmosphere. The demands brought by the traders caused much more drastic adjustments than had the need to please court patrons.

Before changes were brought about, one can imagine the first attraction the finely-developed Indian textiles had for Europeans. Cotton, so common to us, was not even woven in Europe until the 13th century. Even then its spread was slow, and India continued to almost monopolize use of the fiber. Her long-developed skill in handling it could not be easily surpassed or even matched. The printed cottons of India seemed almost as guarded a secret as silk had been

in China. Once brought to market, even the less intricate samples created as much or more demand than silks. Thus it was that calico and chintz, relatively less significant during the earlier periods of achievement, were the categories of goods to provide Western traders with the most tremendous profits.

Printed panels were the specific textile "to make the fortune of European companies providing imports from India" (32, p. 119). It had been the custom in the Mogul palaces to hang decorated curtains in the rooms where court guests were entertained. However, these were not of especially refined construction. Perhaps this was due to the frequent design changes considered necessary. On these were portrayed either currently significant events or scenes intended to bring the atmosphere of the outdoors inside. The designs themselves were described as "excellent" (14, p. 71). They evidently provided much of the inspiration for the calicos adapted to the European market.

A block print was involved in one of the two common processes for decorating the calico bedcovers in demand in France and England. In fact, the technique of using numerous hand-block prints in the decoration process was the primary factor which distinguished the palampores from the kalamkars. The second type had the entire design drawn freehand and then the solid areas of color filled in with a brush. Both the palampores and the kalamkars were of cotton with the designs

set in with the application of dyes. By either technique, the designs were said to be "as carefully laid out as paintings" and to require a "colossal amount of work" (30, p. 70). The design of the Garden of Paradise, sometimes called the "tree of life", was commonly used on both types (Plates 12 and 13). Plate 14 shows details of a palampore (left) and a kalamkar (right) of similar design placed side by side. The full view of the kalamkar from which the detail was taken illustrates the use of an allover design with a central cone motif (Plate 15). The way in which the corners of just one end of the central panel are filled with quarter circles and the directional emphasis of the cone pattern give an interesting impression. There is a hint that prayer rugs as well as court hangings may have served as prototypes for the kalamkars.

Whether these palampores and kalamkars should be included under the period of decline or regarded as an aspect of textile superiority could be questioned. Lewis talks of block prints as if they are entirely a result of the European drive to produce more goods faster. She says they were not used until after the 17th century and then they "limited somewhat the opportunity for a variety of designs," although their five to ten inch size allowed some versatility (30, p. 63). Other authors indicated the development of block prints may have come at a much earlier date and spoke of them as a worthy achievement alongside other textile methods. Mehta (32, p. 120) says block printing



Plate 12. Kalamkar, garden of paradise design. The decoration is hand-painted on coarse unbleached cotton. 89" x 37".
(3. In. 5)



Plate 13. Garden of paradise detail. The black outline drawing completed before solid areas of color were filled in is apparent in this upper left-hand section of the above kalamkar.
(3. In. 5)



Plate 14. Similar palampore and kalamkar designs (detail). The palampore (left) was block-printed while the kalamkar (right) was hand-painted. The hues are largely the same, but intensities vary. (3. In. 3)



Plate 15. Kalamkar, allover design. This fabric is the source of the above detail (right). A prayer rug may have been part of the design inspiration. 37" x 82". (3. In. 3)

had been commonly used in India, but he makes no attempt to indicate specific origin. A few researchers think the art in the Ajanta caves implies the use of block prints. However, even Mehta, who seems willing to speculate rather freely, is not entirely convinced and says that the Fatimid burying grounds were the source of the earliest blocks for printing cloth. Nevertheless, the Chinese most likely used them first, and there is ample proof that Chinese designs had a strong impact in many areas of the world during this period of time.

Speaking on behalf of a long tradition for printed and painted panel designs is Justina Singh. She described the kalamkar cloth as "unsurpassed in vigor of design, freshness and richness of color" (43, p. 80). To her, the designs appear to have similarity with the fresco paintings which illustrated stories from ancient myths. Research led her to believe that such textiles were originally used only for temple cloths. From there, they came into popular usage and were not limited to any one region of India. The significance which they held and the use to which they were put did vary in different states. Traditionally, materials ranged from fine silk to coarse cotton. It may have been from the village art that the Moguls developed the designs which in turn impressed the Europeans. Madras was the area especially noted for material of the type exported to Europe and intended for use in bedspreads, draperies and dress materials (43, p. 152).

Regarding woven Kashmir shawls, "the over 300 color tints" used in Mogul times were said to have dwindled to 64 by the early 19th century.(32, p. 118). The same author who presented this fact as a proof of degeneracy also said the Kashmir shawls became "more and more complicated" in the 19th century. This seems inconsistent with factors expected during a decline, but division of labor was introduced to meet quantity demands of foreign traders. For greater and faster output, as many as eight persons and two or three looms might be involved in producing a single shawl. Among the six or so preliminary specialists then employed, the most important were the "pattern-drawer" and the "colour-caller" who was occasionally the same person (32, p. 102).

No matter how noteworthy the woven shawls, embroidered shawls (Plate 11) evidently captured the market at this time. Earlier these had been limited in production and were rather rare. The embroidery, described previously as imitating the woven detail, was a "kind of parallel darning stitch, the thread being made to nip up the loop of the warp threads, but rarely permitted to go beyond the whole texture of the cloth." Silk or wool was used to further outline the design with stitches so small they were barely visible. By the 1850's, coarse stitch work was said to be replacing this delicate technique. This was especially true of those designs including human figures which had never been made to appear woven (32, p. 107).

While much credit for the character of the Kashmir designs is given to the Persians, the influence of the European traders has already been indicated. In the 19th century their role was intentionally hidden by deceptive publicity that talked of the shawls as an object of the "romantic and unchanging East" (23, p. 14). In actuality, by 1800 European agents were established in Kashmir and demanding adaptations of quality and patterns to make the products appealing in their markets. Representatives of Asian countries were doing the same thing for their interests, on a smaller scale. In the late 18th century, John Irwin says, the Europeans appreciated the "warmth and unequalled softness of the texture" before they noticed the color or design of the shawls. By the middle of the 19th century foreign taste exerted tremendous influence on the designs. This was the most profitable period for the merchants, but resulted in artistic decline for the Indians. The year 1850 is said to be when certain Frenchmen "arrived in Kashmir to 'improve' traditional design" (23, p. 15). French patterns and even new colors such as magenta largely replaced the more "true" Kashmir qualities. The earlier charm of a semi-naturalistic character related to the rich environment was lost. In the next ten years exports to Europe reportedly doubled, but then even more drastically declined. By that time, new Jacquard looms of Paisley, England, and Lyons, France, could produce Kashmir designs of better quality at a lower price than the originals. Also, the

Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 cut off French trade and put many Kashmir weavers out of work. Kashmir shawls were also losing their novelty and therefore their fashion appeal. With the "patronage" of the Western traders lost and no one available to replace them, the shawl industry in Kashmir almost collapsed.

Village textiles remained relatively unaffected during the early periods of European influence. The major trading posts remained in coastal areas even after the British colonized India, and the majority of villages continued to produce for themselves in the usual way. The Moguls had done little but collect tribute. It was the coming of the industrial revolution that finally upset the traditional scheme and caused the decline of village crafts.

When in the 17th century trade with India had become a mania and a cause for rivalry between European nations, textile producers of Western nations became distressed about the quantity of imports. Attempts to reproduce fabrics led to frustration since the necessary patience to employ Indian techniques was lacking (30, p. 62). The British finally found mechanical means which allowed development of a rapidly produced and inexpensive competitive product. In design, of course, the results were more limited and less creative. There were superficial effects such as lines to suggest a crack that would naturally appear only once in an actual wax resist product. These British achievements slowed Indian exports and also production for

home use as explained by Lamb:

The cottage industries of India suffered from the competition of machine-made British goods and from the declining fortunes of their many former patrons--Mughul Emperors, local governors, and others. This was especially true of the weavers, whose inherited skills had placed India in the forefront of the textile nations of the world, but who were ruined after 1815 when British textile goods began flooding the Indian market. Although the British textile industry had earlier protected itself by tariff from Indian textile exports, the Indian textile industry was not allowed tariff protection until 1921 (28, p. 71).

Decreased demand for craft products upset the village exchange system which had become an accepted and almost necessary way of life.

The patola craft not only diminished but has almost disappeared. Evidently the finest patola technique was a well-guarded secret kept within certain families in Gujarat. Even daughters were not taught its intricacies for fear they would carry the process to other areas. In 1957, because eligible apprentices had been enticed to more lucrative positions, there were only two families who barely kept the art alive (43, p. 125). Their quantity of production by means of a process which is basically tedious and slow made their goods a rare item in a country as large as India.

Special crafts may be thought of as originating in small regions and then spreading to greater areas. Declines seem to take the reverse route. Singh has found that tie-dyeing which was at one time widely practiced throughout the country has more recently become restricted to Rajasthan and Gujarat where it is popular even today

(43, p. 136). There were refinements of methods and motifs as various effects such as dots or stripes became regional specialties. Undoubtedly some of these designs disappeared. Nevertheless, the practice of tie-dyeing where it has continued is still an intricate art.

The phulkari craft (Plates 4 and 5) is another which, although it has deviated from its original standards, continues to be practiced. Adris Banerji is quoted as deploring changes in the craft in regard to both technique and color:

There are no parallel furrows of the embroidered cloth alternating with masses of silk threads in the later works. The length of the silk threads has become prolonged to as much as 2"...The colours too have undergone change, and the place of rich golden yellow on an Indian brown field, relieved with white, deep yellow, or scarlet red on crimson field, occasionally with specks of green and blue are taken by indigo, blue, black, etc. The embroidery is done with ugly green, white, purple, red, silk, etc., dyed with aniline dyes. We realise with a pang and heartache that another magic world of art, patterns and colours created by voluntary effort, has been lost (32, p. 112, from Marg VIII, 3, 1955).

Kutch embroidery (Plate 6) certainly must have been influenced by the changes in color and background material which were experienced in other areas. However, comparisons of the sample under examination with plates of similar pieces preserved in museums gave the impression that old standard goods are being duplicated. Enough versions of this design are illustrated in books and catalogs to suggest that it might be an interesting topic for an in-depth study of a single Indian design. Bhushan shows two versions of the design in skirts

thought to be from Saurashtra and one in a Rubari tribe petticoat. Another fabric of similar design was in a sari dated about 1800, but not specified as to region (37). Such likenesses show the persistence and extensiveness of Indian design traditions. Comparisons also might be found for other fabric designs shown.

The first Western-educated Indians merely watched while the village textile system was upset by foreigners. In fact, they were willing to degrade most Indian things until early in the 19th century.

When the British first became involved with India, there was no interest beyond trade. Only a few hundred Europeans settled in India during the first 150 years, or specifically until the second half of the 18th century. These Europeans in coastal areas actually adopted some of the local cultural and social traditions. However, as the British established areas large enough to function in isolation, European traditions were brought and used. Indian ways came to be derided. "It became no longer quite the thing...to appreciate Indian textiles or other products" (28, p. 59). During this later period some of the Indians who helped the British administration or became capitalists themselves took on Western ways. Along with their European associates, they began to express contempt for the traditional and encouraged industrial development in India. The British government and various missionary groups brought Western education even to some remote villages, but the influence of these people was not so

immediate and was quite different from that of Indian capitalists.

In summarizing this section it might be said that the "decline" of traditional Indian goods was related to political and social changes taking place in the country, and economic and industrial changes taking place in Europe. The slump could not be blamed directly on a loss of skills or changing attitudes of the traditional producers. Meeting the demands of a less aristocratic consumer who analyzed textiles on the basis of profitable gain could not help but bring changes.

Although the techniques of the industrial age were not immediately adapted, products of the phenomena in other countries were brought to India. The deluge of industry's textiles on the village scene almost completely eliminated some specialties as the old craftsmen were unable to compete with the cheaper goods. British encouragement of an economic system which used money where previously only barter was known destroyed the dependence of local peoples on each other's goods. Those traditional items which caught the fancy of the foreigner and were produced in quantity for him could not be expected to have the same charm as when created for associates. Also, the division of labor as on the Kashmir shawls almost approached the situation of modern industries' separation of designer and producer. This is deplored within our own culture as being the cause of some rather ugly results.

A few authors go so far as to describe the textiles of the Mogul

period as degenerate because of the new attitude of the people and purpose of the goods. However, since the products of that period have been considered as heights of achievement and since they are so regarded by a great many Indian authors, this is dismissed as a minor opinion.

OBSERVATIONS OF CURRENT TEXTILES

Influences of Nationalism

Nationalism is obviously a strong force in India today. However, the powerful counterforces visible at close view might surprise the casual observer of world situations. They do not seem odd to one who understands the conditions under which the national spirit evolved.

It can be traced quite specifically to the move for independence from the British. The All India Congress founded in 1885 and composed of Western-educated Indians was the first group to demand self-representation in their foreign-run government. Under Mohandas Gandhi, the congress gained mass support and eventually demanded complete independence. Since this was granted in 1947, the congress has continued to exist as the main political party in a democratic system of government.

Lamb says Rammohun Roy, of the early 19th century, is often considered the "father of Indian nationalism." However, she considers modernism to be a better term for his theory, which sought ways to reform social and religious beliefs by integrating the best of traditional India with Western ideas (28, p. 75). It took several decades before his quietly intellectual ideas were lit with the fire of self-pride which seems to be one of the identifying aspects of nationalism. Then, some individuals tried to stress using Western ideas only to

reinforce Indian traditions. Others supported Gandhi who spoke of Western influences as contaminants that would bring eventual ruin to the natural trend of Indian civilization.

The growth of nationalism was largely encouraged by the expanding group of Western-educated Indians and the increasing dominance of the British colonizers. It has been noted how, at first, Indians were inclined to degrade their own traditions as they were exposed to new ideas. In a short time, however, they came to the conclusion that their original standards had some merit but were being corrupted. The educated turned their newly-learned ideas of rights and equalities on their teachers. They demanded solutions to social, economic, and political problems which they thought the British unjustly ignored. As exploitation became apparent to the educated Indians, bitterness increased.

Gandhi, one of the educated elite, personally advocated redevelopment of a meaningful village system. This he emotionally presented as the destined plan for continuity in Indian life and the only way the culture could survive its present debility. His ideas, although presented with religious zeal, were progressive as his foremost concern was for the social welfare of the people. Included in his plans for the village revival were cottage industries using craft skills. The fact that he chose non-industrial means as suited to India's character has caused unfair criticism of his aims. P. Gossett is an

example of one who misrepresents Gandhi's intentions:

...Gandhi never wanted to raise the standards of his fellow countrymen...it would bring them sin while dreadful poverty might lead them to fruitful lives beyond the grave (20, p. 48).

Actually, Gandhi's concern for India's national character was closely related to his attitude about art. For him, "beauty was not an isolated aspect of reality, nor art a specialized portion of life...[as] he regarded life itself as an art" (35, p. 156). This was an ancient idea in keeping with the desire to reinstate the importance of the villages. The school system he proposed included the crafts and he stressed the importance of music for the students. However, his role as a leader allowed him little time to plan for growth of particular artistic outlets.

Instead of discussing continuity of styles or motifs, Gandhi emphasized the need to continue the approach which softened "the disparity between the life of nature and the life of man" (35, p. 157). Gandhi's life reflected an artistic attitude. His use of beauty as a guide for everyday judgments is found in his analysis of textiles:

To him the most expensive mill cloth...conveyed the impression of 'dead polish'; but a garment of khaddar was something supple and flexible. He looked upon machines...as hideous and ugly (35, p. 160).

India's resentment was expressed in demands for independence which united factions that normally found little cooperation with each other. Once that common goal was met, however, subgroups returned

to expressing loyalties and seeking benefits of a regional nature.

This was the situation which Jawaharlal Nehru faced and which he desperately tried to control. As the leader of India, his foremost problem was holding the unity of the various regions. The All India Congress shifted its energies to developing national programs with which every region could identify. Also, it encouraged cultural and economic exchanges between regions as a means to soften barriers. Difficulties were compounded after World War II, when the Communist Party of India had an open platform for dividing the country into 17 areas of self-determination. Although this group received ten percent of the vote in 1962, strength has probably declined since the Chinese invasion late in that year (28, p. 235-242).

A subgroup which Nehru protected but never promised independence was the Adivasi. These people, however, were of national as well as regional interest. For centuries, they had maintained isolation of their communities and avoided the interference of various outsiders. But more recently such factors as the expanding population, the redefinition of boundaries, comprehensive schemes for development, and the expansion of the transportation system and communication media threatened their situation. Chances increased that they would be absorbed into modern villages and cities unless these forces were limited. Now, it seems as if areas will be reserved for them (34). They are of special interest to anthropologists, but also

represent one of the few aspects of Indian cultural history which it is advantageous for a nationalist to exploit. In the majority of cultural heights in India, one area has been dominated by another. It is hard to point out achievements without making some group remember suppression. As Selig S. Harrison puts it so succinctly: "For all the temples and traditions the fact remains that there exists no one historical golden age cherished in common by all or even most citizens of the Union" (21, p. 13).

Besides the problem of unity, Nehru had a country so low in standard of living that unless he took immediate action it would have strength to express nothing but basic needs. This desperate position of his people was so often used as an appeal for world aid that the major problem of maintaining unity has not been noted by many Westerners. Although Nehru's desire to help the people may have been as strong as Gandhi's, his character and training led him to take a more scientific, rational, and modern approach to saving his country. He favored industrialization but had to be satisfied to let it exist alongside cottage industries. Provisions for these were included in the constitution, and disregard for them might interrupt some of the national spirit kept alive in groups who practiced near-worship of Gandhi.

Now that preservation of some traditional practices seems a certainty, the emotionalism about the country's heritage may

decrease. Professor A.L. Basham indicated this in the foreward to a recent book about Indian culture. He spoke of the great service provided by the author.

At a time when...my Indian friends complain about...the decline of interest among the youth of our country in the Indian cultural traditions in favour of imported music, art and literature...(35, p. vii).

Types of Establishments

Although village life under the British had become increasingly despondent, the potential for going back to old activities was evidently still alive. Gandhi called for this because he sincerely believed it would encourage the mass of the people to use their energies to improve their plight. The masses listened to him because they saw him as representing themselves and also were awed by him as a holy personage. The people needed some concrete way to improve their position and to replace the attitude of acceptance and resignation which seemed to express their life philosophy.

Despite the flood of inferior British goods and its consequences, a colony of caste weavers continued work on simple looms in almost every village (46). It is unlikely that they knew other skills. In the early 1960's about 20 million people were engaged in cottage industries (more than any occupation but agriculture, 70 percent of the population) and about 7 million of these were weavers (28, p. 385-86,

293). Riemer calls textiles "the largest employer in India" (40, vol. 1, p. 163).

Emotional appeals for village revival included reference to handwoven textiles and handspun yarns as symbols for the whole movement. Gandhi would go from village to village wearing nothing but a loincloth, made from yarn spun by himself (38, p. 77). A nationwide call encouraged the use of indigenous goods, and people were discouraged from buying any foreign goods that might be displayed. Women who joined Gandhi's drives hoped to gain recognition for themselves as well as for the local textiles. Singh quotes a plea they proudly delivered to cloth merchants.

If you give up this sinful trade, our industry can be revived again. The homes will hum with the song of the spinning wheel and the drone of the loom. Mothers will have milk to feed their babies and a ready meal for their weary men when they come home at night. How many today lay their bodies down at night racked by the pangs of hunger (Tara Ali Baig, et al. Ministry of Information Report, Delhi, India, 1958, p. 24).

Another dramatic way of carrying out the theme was with bonfires fueled by clothing made of imported material (28, p. 82). The weaver could have been encouraged by the same movement to keep alive traditional patterns and techniques and to revive some which had died. But in the early stages of Gandhi's movement, the plain, coarse cloth known as chaddar became identified with the cause of the honest and true Indian character in contrast to the material and nonspiritual way

of the West (43, p. 378).

Gandhi's complete denunciation of Western methods is one judgment the Indian industrialist of today seems to regret. This began when industrialization was monopolized by Europeans and was causing the loss of jobs by local people. Now, however, some Indian businessmen have established themselves independently and claim they could provide jobs for unemployed and lower the cost of fabric for the poor. In some cases, there is still resistance to mechanized industry even on a small scale.

The appeal of Gandhi still lives in directives of the constitution. The "directive principles of state policy" are interesting because they are not directly enforceable but are ideals or purposes to be kept in mind when pondering any legislation. Of relevance to the textile establishments are two which speak of promotion of the cottage industry and stress equal opportunity for all. These and the others, Lamb says, "have been followed with a seriousness hardly anticipated" (28, p. 212). They have certainly led to close scrutiny and tremendous restriction for any person involved in textile production. Those in favor of modernizing say it is true that some handweavers may be displaced temporarily, but in the long run employment would be increased. Somehow, it seems inconsistent with our times to deny the use of steps which could provide a better life for many people. A major problem of India may be to acquire the necessities of life, but

alongside this is the almost impossible task of convincing the people to accept methods which would provide improvement.

Nehru, who seemed more realistic in recognizing need of modern methods, made provisions for textile industrialization in his term of office. Industrial textiles had come to be regarded primarily as export items. Mill executives expressed the fear that lack of immediate modernization might cause the loss of foreign markets, particularly in the Middle East and Japan. In 1955, an actual sales decline in some areas began to convince the government that steps must be taken to meet the competition. Now permission for installation of automatic looms is likely to be granted, if such equipment is designated to produce export products (40, vol. 1, p. 168). Emphasis here is on maintaining standards and meeting requirements of the various consumers. This implies that the products for export would willingly be varied from the domestic goods and that they are planned primarily for economic gain. Although the government rationalized some of its basic directives in favor of exports, it rigidly held to them in regard to domestic goods.

In spite of India's socialistic front, it is worth noting that most of the textile industry is in the hands of private entrepreneurs even though the government has much to say about who they are and how much they control. Government ownership is confined mainly to heavy industry which needs huge capital investments. In recent years,

this emphasis has caused the public sector to show a greater growth rate than the private segment of the economy. The Indian industrialist has, nevertheless, shown his perseverance and grown far more rapidly than proposed by the government, despite discouraging restrictions. Lamb says:

The Indian Government would like to achieve industrialization without increasing the gap between rich and poor. For this reason and because capital and foreign exchange are scarce, Indian private industry is under government regulation. Through a system resembling compulsory arbitration, the government can fix wage rates and fringe benefits. It can prescribe prices, methods and volume of production, and channels of distribution. Private industries must turn to government for permission to float capital issues, to import or buy scarce materials, to produce new articles, or to change their location (28, p. 289).

It seems that all of the government prerogatives are being employed to make allowances for the cottage industries. However, this often-times means that industry has to operate in the least profitable ways.

It seems just that the economy should work for the betterment of the society as a whole rather than for individual gain. However, it is remarkable to think of business leaders as interested in devoting their total efforts to such a goal. Many of the industrialists taught Western methods of production also appear to have learned the concept that an individual should expect gains commensurate with his ability. Industrialists who remain in India certainly deserve admiration for dedication and for their cleverness in working their way around regulations. As many Indians go abroad with hopes of learning

new ways to solve social and economic ills, they gain the foresight to visualize the formidable barriers that await them on return. Regrettably, they frequently do not go back to share this knowledge.

Economic authorities have questioned whether India's almost panicky concern leading to strict controls has hindered more than helped her cause. A comparison of India's achievements with those of Japan, also a strong textile leader, shows vividly that much more has been gained under the latter's free enterprise system. Milton Friedman, who outlined the contrasts, does admit that there are variables within the two societies. But, perhaps, India should at least consider methods proved successful in meeting goals similar to her own, rather than continuing the risk of untried and idealistic schemes (19).

Harry Riemer, formerly editor of the Daily News Record, included India on an unofficial tour of great nations of the world in 1955. Fortunately, his usual involvement with the textile industry led him to make specific observations regarding the use of various fibers and the production of fabrics in India. His recorded comments were limited to industrial settings, and one of his first stops was at the Delhi Cloth Mill using primarily imported cotton, but including nearly all grades. One of the main products he mentioned was towels, smaller ones important locally, with the larger sizes used in export. Shirting in striped, plain and poplin materials was in demand locally, and

coarse sheeting for bagging was also an important item. Perhaps most relevant to design interest were upholstery fabrics, some of double weave. The mill had quite a few Jacquard looms, and fabrics produced on them were said to be "big for export." The greatest quantity went to Australia and the European countries. Riemer pointed out, however, that the great percentage of Indian cotton production was in coarse goods because India had found less competition for that quality on the world market. In 1955, only five to ten percent of the total cotton fabric output was in the finer category and this readily found a local market. It is anticipated that finer goods will be increased if India's current experiments for growing better quality cotton are successful (40, vol. 1, p. 162).

The rayon industry, started in India between 1935 and 1937, has begun a revival following its World War II decline, resulting from a decrease of raw material from Japan. In 1955, about three-fourths of the fiber for rayon fabrics still came from imports, mostly from China, so there may have been a slump in the early 1960's also. Before the Chinese invasion there were over 1,800 rayon mills in India, but exports which at one time reached 24 million yards had dropped to a low of 3/4 million yards per year. There were about twice as many handlooms as power looms using the fiber.

Rayons never have been well-accepted by the Indian people, and the per capita consumption remained much lower than in other large

countries. Most of the material was sent to Ceylon, Afghanistan, Sudan, and the Middle East. Pakistan had been another major market, but sales in that area were forced out by the competition of other suppliers. A representative of the Indian rayon mills indicated considerable improvement to the extent that the goods could "stand competition with any other country, especially varieties such as georgettes, satins, jacquards..." (40, vol. 1, p. 166). A major obstacle to the Indian business has been the need to import rayon, with the accompanying high tariffs. This raises the manufacturer's expense and is reflected in higher cost in the market.

The government has provided some support to the rayon industry. It has a council for "the export promotion of rayon goods, and has taken steps to accelerate exports to the Asiatic countries" (40, vol. 1, p. 165). At the same time, however, the government has such strict limits on the import of yarns that the looms have been able to work at only about 50 percent capacity. To better their position, most of the rayon producers have organized themselves to present a united voice through the Silk and Art Silk Mills' Association. Attempts to gain government approval for the installation of automatic looms has been one of the most assertive efforts of the association, along with the request for protection of the type given to cottage industries. In 1955, the rayon industry was looking forward to the completion of a new rayon yarn plant. The Silk and Art Silk Mills'

Association encouraged this endeavor in which an Italian had "invested greatly and furnished much of the know how" (40, vol. 1, p. 165). The government indicated it would provide help. The yarn would be available to any rayon weavers, association members or not. By 1958, Bombay, Hyderabad, and Travancore were the three cities in India with units producing rayon yarn (6, p. 79).

Dedicated at the same time construction of the rayon factory began was the new research institute of the association, located in Bombay. This was to have several different levels of operation but seemed to have two main aspects. It first

would undertake investigations into the manufacture and improvement of the materials used in the weaving of silk, rayon and other man-made fibers and products of the rayon weaving industry (40, vol. 1, p. 163).

It also included a technical college for training those who would like to make a career in the silk or rayon industry. Until that time, there was no facility in India specifically for training in the use of these fibers in an industrial setting (40, vol. 1, p. 164).

The silk industry, apparently closely allied with rayon interests, is considerably smaller in size. Riemer, after surveying the situation said, "Evidently, efforts to keep up a silk business have not been successful" (40, vol. 1, p. 166). The import of raw silk, if it was not accompanied by high tariffs, was actually prohibited. The association indicated that silk fabric production represented only five

percent of the capacity of the power looms that had been engaged on silk fabrics. Most power loom work on silk is located in Bangalore. The remaining looms of the industry, including hand looms, have been converted to rayon. Sericulture was reported as making "great headway" in Madras and Mysore, but a fair amount of production is scattered in other states, including Kashmir (6, p. 80).

Jute is another fiber which earned its place in the Indian textile industry. The fiber once played a major role in making Calcutta an economic success. However, jute has lost much of its significance since India's independence, as the main supplier of the fiber was East Bengal, now East Pakistan. This partially explains the deteriorating status of Calcutta today and, in turn, the shift of industries to Bombay or other more favorable settings. Before partition, India provided almost the entire world's supply of jute (45, p. 62). Sources speaking of the industrial use of the fiber referred to "jute manufacturing" as if India's jute fabrics were not very noteworthy. Bagging and burlap are about the only two fabrics made from jute (45, p. 61).

Wool has been noted historically for its limited use in the north of India, and this is where the finest wool is still produced. Riemer found in 1955 that the government had in mind a "scheme to establish production centers for the development of the cottage woolen industry" (40, vol. 1, p. 167). In 1958, there were an estimated 100,000 handlooms engaged in weaving wool. The 42 woolen mills were located

primarily in the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Mysore and Kashmir. The production in Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab concentrated almost entirely on heavy coarse goods such as blankets and rough pile rugs (6, p. 80).

Summary

In examining types of textile establishments today, much attention is directed to the cottage industries, as their development is an official government program. The industrialists who find the present system a loss to the economy are subtle in expressing opposition. They need government approval for the limited operations they are allowed to run. The restrictions of the government discourage creative design innovation in the industrial setting.

The cottage industry aims primarily at the domestic market, and has exclusive rights to produce the more exquisite fabrics. Although a large operation extending to every region, it is almost entirely dependent on the government for its existence. Even where independent cooperatives are established, government officials are needed to make sure they run efficiently. Cotton remains the predominant fiber in Indian textile production. Rayon and domestic silk are gaining importance, but wool is limited to areas of the north. Jute manufacturing has declined, since the area which is now East Pakistan was the major supplier of the fiber.

Lamb indicated that government officials are beginning to consider small-scale industries a better use of manpower than the present cottage establishments. Some craftsmen are being diverted to small businesses, made possible by cheap metal being available for simple machines. However, these new operations are not usually involved in cloth production. Presently, concentrated efforts are still aimed at making weaving operations on the cottage level successful. In regard to design, products of those establishments are the ones currently of interest.

Designs Used in Clothing

Singh's recently completed doctoral thesis contrasts costumes accepted and worn by educated Indian women today against the dress of the two preceding generations. Her work is pertinent, for, as she points out, "The foundation of the ritually oriented costumes lies in the often intricate textiles themselves" (43, p. 78). It does seem significant (and consistent with earlier comments in this thesis) that in mentioning these design sources, there is no reference to the use of industrial designs. However, it hardly seems possible they could be entirely absent.

In her investigation, Singh used a sample of 150 Indian university students, studying at home and in the United States. These women, representing the majority of Indian states, were asked to recall

information about earlier generations with whom they had lived. All of the most recent generation had worn the fibers silk, cotton, wool, rayon, nylon and "others"--possible answers in a questionnaire.

About a third of the grandmothers had worn no silk or wool. Two-thirds of the grandmothers and half the mothers had not used rayon, while even greater percentages of these groups had not used nylon.

Miss Singh did not explain whether today's increased acceptance may have been due to: greater diffusion of fibers throughout the country, changes in attitude, the mobility of the younger people, or other reasons. Probably, the earlier generations were more stable and were introduced only to fibers which might enter their regions. The question of whether the daughters or some other educated person in the family may have been the one to introduce the fiber in the home was omitted. Nevertheless, cotton was the most common fiber to people surveyed from all areas and from all generations. The use of cotton could be significant in explaining dominant design techniques which in turn influence the character of designs.

Findings regarding textural preferences in fabrics showed plain chaddar and, in fact, any very coarse fabric was little used among the youngest generation. This suggests resistance to accepting plain, simple cloth in dress as part of a national image. The breakdown of fabrics sometimes used follows:⁴

⁴ Respondents = youngest generation.

Textural quality	Grandmothers	Mothers	Respondents
transparent	0	5	120
fine	117	122	150
medium	125	138	150
coarse	101	80	5
Khaddar	43	62	12
(fine to coarse)			
(43, p. 307)			

Other textile surveys, as well as Singh's research, omitted comments on handspun yarns, indicating that they are not necessarily part of the emphasis on handwoven goods. This factor, however, does seem important in regard to changes in general design quality and the visual effect of contemporary fabrics. The following caption accompanied a sample of Moroccan weaving in an international fabrics show:

...natural modulation of hand-spun ungraded fiber gives this...an authentic character which suggests hand-spinning--not hand weaving--was the sacrifice of the industrial revolution (41, p. 21).

At a government design center, the importance of texture is realized and experiments in regard to this element are under way. Natural fibers are being employed for varied effects, and possibilities sought with wastes from jute and silk were given as an example. Perhaps such textural variations inserted during the weaving rather than spinning process could replace the traditional ways of obtaining textural interest. Jayakar quotes ancient sources referring to silk "like bark of trees," or so fine as to be like "the slough of a snake," or "resembling foam" (26, p. 29).

Design techniques used on garments which students wore were also surveyed by Singh. Here again there was apparently the limitation that only those produced by traditional processes are of interest. The following listing of processes includes the geographical areas considered their major source:

1. Tie-dyed--Rajasthan and Madras (small amount in latter)
2. Silk and cotton embroidery--Punjab, Gujarat, Maurharas-tra, Bengal
3. Gold and silver embroidery--Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maurharastra, Gujarat
4. Wax printing--somewhat restricted to Gujarat and Rajasthan
5. Block printing--widespread over India
6. Special border decoration--all over nation (43, p. 309).

It is possibly more than coincidence that the techniques chosen for her study and those which were selected for this thesis, before hers was consulted, were primarily from the same region. Earlier in the background of her work, Singh had referred to the great "printing, color, and pottery belt" and noted how it today "lies at Sindh, Cutch, Kathiawar, and Rajputana, very near to or continuous with the early sites" (43, p. 80). The responses about fabrics sometimes used were summarized as follows:

<u>Design technique</u>	<u>Grandmothers</u>	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
tie-dyed	30	30	111
embroidery:			
silk and cotton	50	70	150
gold and silver	80	90	140
wax printing	30	30	80

(43, p. 309).

Everyone for whom there was a response had worn block prints and border decorations. Singh explained the results as being partially due to government emporiums where products from every region are newly available. Her concluding remark was that the younger generation seemed to be wearing significantly greater varieties of decoration produced in a number of Indian regions.

Design Traits

Before the traditional textile arts were rescued by government subsidy, they continued on a token basis because of their requirement in social and religious ceremonies. A coarse cloth has always been woven at home for the use of the poorest people (1, p. 29, 30). Continuity of traditional designs may have been encouraged by present conditions such as: belief in the cottage industry, dispersion of textile producers through all regions, and efforts to re-establish and support disappearing textile skills.

Certain factors cause deviation from the traditional designs. There is no longer patronage of a wealthy class of people willing to pay any price for the finest textile achievements. The movement of the rural area from a barter to a money economy is changing the producer-consumer relationship. Marketing of goods outside the producer's immediate village is causing regional design exchanges. The change from natural to synthetic dyes seems primarily an economic move because the length of time to prepare and apply these is considerably less. Also, the new dyes replace some old color tones. A number of the crafts which had been secret to small family units have been introduced to larger groups through outside apprenticeship. Standardization of colors and designs gives the individual weavers less control of their situation.

Those observing the current design situation show much interest in relating it to India's cultural heritage. However, their definition of a style that is truly Indian seldom describes visual elements or motifs considered purely indigenous. The philosophical idea of India's ability to assimilate and yet not lose her identity has been important.

Earlier reference was made to Solomon's description of an ancient Indian viewpoint--composed of the purely decorative, the realistic, and the purely spiritual (44, p. 94). He indicates there has always been a natural instinct to preserve this quality which could never be revived if it died. The attitude and the instinct together have provided continuity of tradition to this day. The instinct is held responsible for much of the "conservatism," "lack of reciprocity," and "determination to arrest the attrition of his artistic territories," which have been evidenced. In the contemporary setting the Indian attitude is viewed as part of the "contest between the affirmation of the Utilitarian and the Negations of the Idealist..." Solomon suggests the Indian legacy is carried within each Indian, no matter what his period in time. This he uses as an explanation of why the artist in India regards the great antiquities left by his ancestors "not as ruins but as living oracles of art" (44, p. 95).

In the past, trade as well as foreign invasion was an encouragement to outside influences. At the same time the Moguls may have

made demands, Swarup suggests Indian merchants also had a desire to produce designs which would capture distant markets. The willingness of current mill executives to meet the whims of their consumers is actually considered quite exceptional. Riemer states this well:

Contrary to the typical American operation where a mill prefers to run as few styles as possible, or at least on a minimum of warp sizes, the policy here was to make a wide variety to meet every demand. Mill executives like to think of their set-up as flexible enough to do this (40, vol. 1, p. 157).

Maybe these export items will eventually leave their traces on indigenous goods as did the earlier trade items. As examples of current Indian items originally developed for a trade market, Swarup mentions Farrukhabad prints, Masulipattam curtains and the Shikargarh brocade saris of Benares--all having influences from Persian embroideries.

The traditional role of the designer himself is changing. Bhushan sees as a "new element" in Indian crafts a "spate of designers." The demand for variety has freed him of reproducing more or less set patterns. Previously, the designer had no particular significance in the total textile situation. He now has new vistas for creativity and "we can safely assert that the twentieth century will mark a turning point in Indian crafts" (6, p. 63). Jayakar differs with this viewpoint since she considers the tendency toward separating the designer from the craftsman as destructive to the good form known in the past. She

says there is a tendency to "revive old designs and patterns but with a lack of knowledge of materials, form and pattern." Today "a large group of hereditary craftsmen work solely for foreign demand." She adds that their innate skill used in this new direction allows them to easily adapt their technique to new forms (25, p. 46).

As traditional craftsmen have had repeated motifs handed down to them, some of the ancient forms have been kept alive in India. Designs have been adjusted by influence of outside forces, but many are clearly related to past styles. One might question whether there is any survival of the original significance of these motifs. Singh compiled from various authorities, interpretations of 50 Indian designs. Every design was listed with several definitions, although she mentioned going through "volumes on textiles, which mentioned motifs used but scarcely touched on their meaning" (43, p. 368).

With the regional, religious, and social divisions of India, it seems likely that common forms would take on diversified meanings. Even with the numerous "correct" interpretations, her survey of current college students of India, showed few had knowledge of the meanings behind motifs in use. Of the 150 respondents, only six could give answers for more than half of the designs, and 129 did not attempt to explain the significance of any designs (43, p. 312-317).

Despite loss of meaning, Singh said, "each ethnic group maintains separate characteristic types which become symbols of

recognition and identification." The arrangement of the patterns becomes as important as the designs and techniques (43, p. 78). None of the various authors consulted advocated widespread relearning of ancient symbolic meanings, although they did seem anxious to have them recorded.

No comprehensive picture of textile designs allows much consideration of the individual forms. Singh sums up the Indian design inspirations by saying they were "derived from the supernatural powers which wholly or in part could determine the fate of man: the sun, moon, fire, storms, rain, animals and flowers" (43, p. 76). Since many of the weavers producing Hindus' textiles are Moslems many mixtures occur, and Moslems in India adopt design traditions not entirely separated from the Hindus'. It is intriguing to think that designs with their origin from religious forces may survive due to spiritual attitudes of people in the land where they originated.

Specific Techniques

Concern about design quality in the cottage industry seems to increase as more weavers are organized and supported by the government. Rather drastic adjustments have been made in the majority of traditional crafts: few were unscathed, while many were lost.

Dacca muslins as one example are described simply as "a thing of the past" (32, p. 96). Although muslins of coarse to fine quality

are still produced in several areas of the country, no author claims any as fine as the Mogul's are produced today. They have become an important legendary subject, and texts boast that this is one thing the industrial age has not been able to reproduce technically, much less aesthetically.

The ancient technique which best survived is tie-dyeing. Its technicalities, often less complex and of varying qualities could probably be more easily reinstated. This widespread craft was decentralized and independent of the vicissitudes of patronage. Ceremonies have helped preserve traditions. The fact that tie-dyed items are associated with weddings and funerals would suggest regular and frequent demand for such products. The significance of these events might discourage replacements by newer products. Red, green and yellow in various combinations are the colors traditionally used in those areas which associate tie-dyeing with the wedding ceremony. Plate 2 shows a lower-class wedding sari, probably of the 20th century, which follows this scheme of colors with the addition of white accents. Tie-dyeing "still has a place in the sartorial fashion of the vast majority of the people in the countryside" (3, p. 38).

Singh mentions that three traditional types of tie-dyeing exist in western Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madras. One might expect each to be accompanied by its own characteristic arrangements of design, but these are not defined. Today as in the past, tie-dyeing continues

as a family practice, but each step may be done by different families. A customer may provide his own fabric--preferably with loosely twisted fine yarns; closely and smoothly woven structure; and good dye absorbency. Few of these specifications fit the example (Plate 2) which has a limp irregular yarn and extremely loose weave giving it the character of cheesecloth.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the patola craft involving the tie-dyeing of yarns before weaving did not fare so well. By 1957, only two Patan families were practicing this beautiful art. At that point, the government hired one of the families to save the craft by openly teaching it to others. There is now a center for patola weaving in Rajkot, in western Gujarat.

Singh visited a patola operation in Patan and noted that cloth previously woven in sari-lengths was being made in quantities five to eight yards in length and 45 to 54 inches in width. This suggests the anticipation of new uses and possibly of consumption outside the traditional market. Also, silk which had formerly come from China was now strictly from Bangalore, seeming to follow the national policy to lessen dependency on foreign raw materials. At Patan, the plain weave is used exclusively and all patterns are done in squares which enclose one of nine possible floral or animal motifs, traditional in style. These specifications were outlined in a way that made the entire process seem quite highly standardized. Here also synthetic

dyes had replaced the natural, although no indication of the effect on appearance was given. Eight colors besides white were employed, either by single or superimposed applications of dyes. The account of the visit suggested no alteration of the actual weaving processes or methods of dye application. Weaving still required the time of two persons to produce just eight to ten inches a day. Previously six to eight weeks were required for a single patola (43).

Another cottage industry for a half-patola process, where only the weft or warp alone was predyed, illustrates how some fine traditional weaving has been organized by groups other than the government. In Barpali, a village in Orissa, assistance was offered by a Quaker Project located there in 1952. Families which had formerly woven fine fabrics were either unemployed or producing only coarse goods. Now through encouragement of staff on the project 55 weavers have redeveloped old skills. During a trial period, experiments determined adjustments of colors and traditional designs which were necessary to make fabrics acceptable in the United States. Colorfast dyes (presumably synthetic) were used and here, as in the government projects, designs, sizes, and workmanship were standardized.

When the experiment was replaced by a functioning industry, production increased and the fabrics were marketed at a cooperative in Bombay. At first Indian demand was small, but later almost an equal percentage of goods was consumed by American and Indian sales

(totalling about \$25,000 in 1961-62). The weavers now operate independently as a cooperative with their own small building and dye house. Individual earnings are 50 percent higher than that of the other weavers and the members have gained new respect in the community.

The weaving is done both with cotton and wild silk from the region. As with many traditional crafts, the method of tie-dyeing used in Barpali was kept secret until recently. The design in this cooperative is woven only on the border of the cloth and is a variation of the elephant and fish-lotus motif. The design shown was composed of repeat units of pairs of elephants facing each other and a stylized tree between them. Evidence the Orissa weavers have become involved with government projects is seen in an informal listing of the types of designs being investigated at a design center (26, p. 29).

The government has stepped in to help organize and encourage about 90,000 weavers in Benares who have skills for producing elegant brocades. More uniform standards are needed in material, quality and type of work among the many independent weavers. Traditional Benares designs such as the famous hunting scene continue to be used, but many looms revert to plain fabrics when demands for such intricate work is low. Colors and materials are the aspects of the brocades changing most drastically from the past. Flashy and heavy designs are seldom produced today, but at one time fabrics

almost entirely of gold were the specialty. Next, there was a dominance of colored silks in both the warp and weft. Tones were adjusted to produce more subtle effects. Recently, the scarcity of silk encouraged substitution of rayon for the natural fiber. Some analysts feel this may be a disastrous turn, for other areas of the country already produce rayon brocades and may eventually force Benares from its position. The gold, used in smaller amounts than in the past, is sometimes real but more often imitation. The Benares brocades are some of the most high-priced fabrics of the handloom industry, but the greatest proportion of Benares weavers are working to meet increasing demands for cheaper goods.

Although Kashmir shawls are no longer a European fashion item, some old men continue to work on them and train their children to carry on the craft (6, p. 51). The small quantity produced is still directed to a non-Indian market, as tourists who come to the beautiful area are the main buyers. Namdas, a sort of pressed felt rug, is a more commonly produced textile item of Kashmir today. These are embroidered with the same bright colors of the old shawls, but involve much less intricate work. Bhushan says they find a ready market in India and abroad because of their cheapness and colorful embroidery. He provides the following description of design:

These are generally embroidered with chain stitch and have the usual Kashmir floral motifs which are necessarily bold because of the thickness of the material. With a

growing awareness of the world's needs, these are produced in various designs, including children's motifs for the nursery (6, p. 51).

Paithan, the city famous for the Ajanta Caves, is today in ruins. Until the first quarter of this century, the chief industry was the production of gold and silver threads used to embroider designs derived from the murals (Plate 16). After that time, the craftsmen became mere copyists and would even reproduce photographs if that was what the customers desired. Designs were developed as the fabric was created on the loom.

In a magazine article from the late 1950's it was interesting to find illustrations of "Paithan" weavers in Bombay using a tapestry weave to create "designs derived from ancient Ajanta Cave frescoes" on fine textiles. The warp counted 200 threads to the inch, and the weft of fine silk and metallic thread was reportedly so fine that the fabric was transparent (2, p. 20-23).

Southern India, Bhushan says, "abounds in embroidery of the modern type." Production of items such as table linens was evidently begun under missionary influence and Western nations still consume the embroideries from the area. The workers copy set patterns and are said to consider their work no more than "a job to be well done" (6, p. 55).

Various traditional embroideries exposed in new areas have become popular and caused new hope for some craftsmen. However,



Plate 16. Silk embroidery, the design being after a fresco from Ajanta. (34, Plate CCXXXI. From The Journal of Indian Art and Industry)

the increased demand is short-lived and soon shifts to another region's work, leaving the economic value of cottage industries in question (6, p. 55).

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND SUMMARY

Signs of Cultural Heritage in Current Textiles

It is obvious even from the surveys of this thesis that the cultural heritage of India is not only reflected in, but is to some extent a living part of, the current textile practices. Most efforts to emphasize and develop a link with the country's heritage have involved encouragement of a declining skill, rather than the need to revive something long absent from the normal activities of life. Concern has led to some valuable steps to retard cultural disintegration, but also to some actions (which although well-intentioned) actually may be quite destructive. As an example, an outside agency's standardization seems incompatible with a thriving tradition.

The common traits of the past and present have real cultural significance where both are genuine with current work having depth of meaning. Such cases do exist in India. In the Introduction, the thought was expressed that one able to decipher the language of a fabric would know much about the economic, religious, and social, as well as artistic ideals of a people. Accordingly, the fact that India today produces and uses some textiles so similar to her past, supports history's revelations that there is cultural continuity in the villages.

Probing of specific motifs sometimes clearly shows early and late

cultural relationships but fails to explain why these exist. Since the more general approach gave much insight for the Indian situation, it is considered a fortunate choice. The Indian designer's attitude and his working conditions are determined and kept quite constant by a rather static society. The hereditary nature of Indian crafts, the link of arts with religion and tradition, and the dependence of numerous styles on specific techniques are examples of general facts found to spread much light on specific designs' continuity. So, it seems best to advance to making comparisons of a few more general aspects of textiles.

In antiquity, India gained its major fame in skill with the cotton fiber. Although cotton lost some of its status during the time that Western attitudes were blindly accepted, it remained the most commonly grown and worn fiber. More recently, it has begun to regain deserved respect. This is due to the national program to encourage wider appreciation of traditional textiles and the fact that many of the styles are dependent on techniques applied to cotton goods.

Silk was introduced relatively late and always remained in a secondary position, partially because fine-quality fiber had to be imported. The natural beauty of silk has been appreciated by those able to afford luxury. Even now many Indians have refused to accept rayon or other synthetics as a substitute. Figures show India has an amazingly low consumption of rayon compared with other large

countries who have found that the low cost has great appeal and advantage. Government programs influenced by the perseverance of conservative attitudes in the culture explain some of the restraint in using new fibers. Also, disillusionment following failure of Western-type projects has convinced some Indians that sacrifice of a creed of beauty is not worth the risk of questionable gains. One feels that the old idea of pleasing the spirit as well as the body is still dominant. Indian idealism remains set against Western economists with their practical analysis that such a value is a hazard to survival in the modern world. As each segment of India has practices suitable to itself, so India as a whole takes the stand that it is unnecessary for all nations to follow the same path to fulfill their needs.

The role of the central government, as one of the strongest nationalistic forces influencing the use of fibers, is worth mentioning. Rigid restrictions on import of all rayon and silk fibers have been noted. However, this is apparently unrelated to a cultural interest. There is concern that cheaper rayon-mill goods may force handloom fabrics off the market and cause unemployment. Fine-quality silk fibers from abroad are facing high duties as the government tries to encourage a sericulture industry. Although it is meeting some success in quantity, grade is still below the finest. Weavers required to use domestic silk must find this influences the quality of fabrics. The national aim at this point seems to be control of the total economy so

it relates to the social well-being of the individual citizen. The government works diligently to do away with programs which benefit a few and bypass the many. The development of a class of people who could patronize fabrics in the manner of the courts of old is actually discouraged.

So far, no other institution seems willing to provide the support needed for exquisite fabrics. Of the traditional textiles under the court category, it has to be conceded that most are a thing of the past. The Dacca muslins are a specific example. Kashmir shawls, also encouraged by the Moguls, actually enjoyed their peak while being dramatically exploited by the Europeans. However, the last burst of energy was largely a matter of coincidence as traders managed to promote the shawls as a fashion item at that time. Soon they were imitated at a low price and lost status and appeal as is usual in the Western market. Benares brocades are one legendary item which have managed to linger, possibly because of the association with a pilgrimage site which brings in many tourists looking for souvenirs and having money to spend for an elegant item. Mogul designs are still used, but colors are more subdued for the taste of modern consumers. Real gold thread is less common and there is fear that rayon is about to replace silk. Since a demand for the finest materials was part of the court tradition, it seems that Benares brocades of history may be lost except in name.

In place of a village-court grouping of textiles, authors today tend to substitute a village-city division. The city textiles, although seen as a balance in place of the court goods, certainly can't be accepted as a parallel to the exquisite past. The cities are inclined to use much lighter values and less strong contrasts of color than the villages. Fabrics from different areas of the country may be brought together so the picture is much more heterogeneous. Also, the idea of changing fashions has gained importance in determining the materials most in demand. Foreign textiles, since they are most expensive and scarce, sometimes have the greatest status. The large cities might be considered the place where there is a truly national trend. It is likely that village folk just coming to the city would bring with them patterns from the surrounding area, but authors talking of trends of the city emphasized tastes of educated and established people.

Little relationship of fabric design of the city can be made to that of the past, largely due to fashion trends making it difficult to define a specific city design. In general, authors do indicate much less pattern or the use of completely plain fabrics in dress. Lamb did say:

Particularly since independence, fashion has indicated the use of lovely colorful Indian handloom fabrics for the window draperies and the hangings at the doors [which]... remind one of the vigorous new interest in old Indian skills and crafts (28, p. 262).

Perhaps most cultural heritage reflected in the city has seeped in from the villages. Those things which truly contrast with village ways may be primarily developments without much foundation in the past.

Today in the villages, handweavers have been encouraged, through the government, to counter the influx of industrial fabrics. Some traditional crafts have barely survived, but once re-established, one can still see continuity of color and design style in village arts.

Comparisons regarding old and new colors and dyes may well be handled at the same time. The specific art of the dyers who worked with natural sources is unquestionably a thing of the past, as even traditional centers have substituted chemicals. When these were first accepted, there were lamentations that the resulting colors were harsh, cold, inartistic, and one of the most ruinous changes in the production of fabrics. However, today staunch critics have been convinced that it is not so much the synthetic nature of the dyes as inexperience in applying them that causes poor results. Chemists will say that the synthetic dyes are actually more "pure" than the old natural ones, and subtle tones of any intensity or value may be achieved. However, it was probably the particular "impurities" and different sources that gave the natural dyes their special character and caused such subtle but distinguishing differences as the innumerable reds used in various regions of India. Synthetics have led to a broad

standardization of colors that is probably creating likenesses across India as a whole that never existed before. There are research centers at work to study the new dyes, but it will probably be some time before there is a class of people who will feel as much at ease with them as did the old craftsmen with centuries of experience behind their materials.

The ranges of synthetic dyes employed are quite in line with the regional palettes used traditionally, as exemplified in the case of the patola in this thesis. However, certain colors which were previously created by superimposition are now developed in a single step. The new "pure green" is a good illustration, and it has added significance because such a tone was not available before the arrival of synthetics. Authorities say that the nature of green dyes has served as a deciding factor in dating a number of textile pieces otherwise of questionable age.

Both past and current times reflect interest in textural qualities of fabrics. Ancient legendary textiles had descriptive names, many indicating texture. Today, Jayakar explains how government research centers include focus on textural effects. It is felt that textural appeal in traditional fabrics may have come more from the hand-spun yarns than from the handweaving process. But there is no evidence of an attempt to imitate the handspun yarns in industrial spinning, nor of a desire to return to the process of hand spinning. A

search for new and creative ways to replace lost character, while accepting modern yarns, is taking place. In common with the past, there is concern for textural quality but the manner of achieving this is being replaced.

An ancient Greek traveler was quoted in several accounts as noting the striking contrast between the austere life of the Indians and their desire for the most elegant fabrics. Knowing a little of the Hindu philosophy, one is better able to understand this apparent contradiction. Perhaps, it has to be seen as a balance in a plain life. When Gandhi led the nation, he represented the extreme in straightforward beliefs and practices which included homespun dress. For a time, the use of chaddar became a symbol of the Indian attitude about life. However, while some think Gandhi's ideas have had even stronger influence since his death, the importance of chaddar is as a legendary symbol rather than an ongoing tradition. Perhaps love of finery in textiles is a continuing cultural pattern not easily dismissed.

Persons working with cottage industries in the villages indicated that traditional crafts are staying close to the designs of the past. However, as colors were standardized, so were designs. This was deemed necessary because markets outside the village needed reassurance their orders would be met identically each time. With many village traditions upset, craftsmen are said to have lost sensitivity to nature and the arts. They need this kind of guidance until they once

more know their heritage. The changes in today's culture will never allow the village craftsman the freedom of determining his own work, or the control and direction of intimate group influences he once knew.

The weaver in many cases was his own designer but now accepts the dictates of another. Even though he controls the movement of the loom, there is almost as much separation of the designer from the handloom, as from the industrial loom. In fact, the same demands heard in industrial settings of the need to bring designers and producers closer together is already being voiced in the Indian cottage industry. A university faculty member who witnessed a cottage operation indicated her feeling that a "Handloomed in India" tag could hardly be taken as assurance that a fabric was artistically planned and developed in a traditional manner.

Much more could be said about those modern situations which make the continuation of the past cultural adjuncts not only unlikely, but actually inappropriate for current ways of life. But the aim in this study was to find any positive correlation of the past culture and current practices in textiles. The search for negative aspects of the same question could be the subject of other research.

Analysis of Hypotheses

When the hypotheses were presented, it was stated that they would be tested by observation. It would have been an almost

impossible task to designate facts as entirely supporting or contradicting the statements, so calculations could be made for a statistical study. Many qualifications and exceptions would have had to accompany each tally, since analysis in the arts is oftentimes a subjective or personal thing. Also, similar appearances can vary in significance for each different situation.

It is hoped that the facts presented were organized and explained well enough that the reader has formed his own ideas concerning the degree of accuracy in each hypothesis. It is expected that each reader's background and values may lead him to slightly different conclusions. The writer with her present understanding believes the following inferences logical.

First: it was hypothesized that in a country which once had exceptional achievements in textile arts, stress on a national culture will encourage attempts to again achieve superiority in those skills. The research revealed that India has been extremely conscious of her cultural heritage since the drive for independence. However, much of the understanding of the heritage and encouragement to develop relationships further has been limited to government officials and a portion of the educated elite. Some businessmen would support an international trend as more realistic but find it advantageous to their interests to refrain from publicly supporting this viewpoint.

Before independence, Gandhi recognized textiles as such a

significant object in the Indian culture that he used them as a symbol to gain emotional support for his ideas. Significantly, his concern was more with the person making the cloth than with the design impressed upon it.

Since independence, the government has had persons put great efforts into developing cottage industries so traditional weaving might be continued. Again, the first concern was almost entirely centered on the social welfare of the people. More recently, design centers have been added to the program. Early results proved the need to develop latent artistic sensitivities in the people. Certain craftsmen had managed to continue the routine of the past, but had lost much of their natural understanding of design elements. Some of this was due to confusion caused by introduction of synthetic dyes or new working situations. Research centers have been set up to acquaint craftsmen with necessary adjustments.

Presently the cottage industries are openly praised and idealized by certain elements of the population. At times India seems frantic in attempts to cling to the traditional and to shun what other nations consider modern and desirable. As standardization was the only way to guarantee the continuity of some traditions, a certain amount of earlier spontaneity has been lost. There may be those who regard the need for such protection as proof that something is no longer part of a living cultural tradition. The writer believes it will

take a person at a later point in time to determine the true significance of present actions.

Referring to another point in the first hypothesis, it seems that the aims in encouraging textile skills have not been to achieve superiority, but to assure continuity with Indian ideals. Part of the pride revolving around the Dacca muslins centered on the fact that they were "inimitable." It is almost as if the people do not feel the need to consciously strive to better past achievements. They act as if the past is a part of the present greatness. The Indian attitude will support primarily integrity and honesty in the work of an individual. The lack of competitive spirit and the refusal to aim for personal originality and recognition eliminates the choice of "superiority" as a goal in itself. At this point, such an emphasis would seem incongruous with the cultural traditions which are still alive.

The reply to the second hypothesis has been partially given in the statements regarding the first. The question was whether we would see some relationship to past textile heritage in the emphasis of current textile production. Certainly enough evidence has been presented to say that attitudes similar to those which dominated in the past are present to a large degree among the handloom workers. The section in this thesis regarding industrial production showed that international interpretations of modern economics are desired by most large businessmen. Government regulations have kept the mills from

attempting what might be considered artistic textiles, which are the major interest in this paper. Consequently they needed little attention in the search for cultural relationships. The mills have obtained permission to produce largely for export markets.

Going from the attitudes of the handweavers to their more significant actions, relationships with the past were still evident. However, it was clear that modern methods are encroaching and might replace the traditional were there not strong organized efforts to encourage the latter. The tenacity of the traditional is proved by the fact that it managed to survive at all when it was hopelessly challenged for a rather lengthy period of time. The central government has acted as a guardian of the traditional in many ways. At the same time it has encouraged, as did earlier outside influences, the incorporation of some new ideas. There are attempts to teach craftsmen to manipulate colors as tastefully as before but through the use of synthetic dyes. Old color tones are occasionally subdued for a modern market, but the basic relationships are left quite similar to the past. While there is central protection and guidance of the weavers, work continues on a local level. Production of designs and use of techniques associated with particular regions have remained in their natural settings, although the new idea of marketing finished products outside the region is encouraged.

Woven or printed motifs are the familiar ones of the past.

Among the educated consumer there is acceptance of the old motifs without much awareness of significance. However, the loss of specific meanings may have come about before the traditional processes experienced a decline. The government is concerned with eliminating discordant mixtures of old and new styles. Besides fostering the old motifs, authorities are considering exposing the craftsmen to ancient arts of all kinds with the hope this will inspire new creations with the traditional spirit.

If publications provide a correct indication, not much attention has been directed to the indigenous embroidery. Comments do suggest that certain villages continue to meet needs for embroideries demanded by custom, but in an increasingly coarse and simple manner of work. These products are omitted from the usual lists of products in new national interchange.

As a final statement regarding the second hypothesis, it is suggested that we can see some relationship of past heritage in the emphasis of current textile production. Persons directing the cottage industries have taken great efforts to strengthen some traditional aspects and to secure other phases which were never greatly threatened. A number of modern influences have been incorporated, but only time will tell whether these will outweigh indigenous tendencies. Assimilation is considered a strong Indian characteristic, but it may be idealistic to think the modern could eventually be tempered and

absorbed into the Indian spirit as outside influences of the past have been. Sometimes it helps to attempt thinking in other's patterns, for it is often their desires and will to succeed that determine the success or failure of their programs. Idealism is also considered significant in the Indian tradition.

Differing viewpoints make a meaningful answer to the third hypothesis the most difficult of all. The question is basically: the appropriateness of a certain cultural outlet to its time.

The Western analyst says the Indian textile situation is completely unrealistic and actually self-destructive. It may fit the setting in which the people find themselves, but there is the need to change the outdated setting and to move ahead with modern methods in all aspects of life. One interpretation says the Indians are ignoring needs which are obvious to the rest of the world. The country is suffering from what is commonly known as a cultural lag.

The Indian government is attempting to overcome a feeling of hopelessness ingrained in the mass of the population. However, many officials are not convinced that Western attitudes and solutions are the correct answers to their problems. There are varying opinions among the Indians themselves as to which aspects of the old Indian culture are significant today and which are simply outmoded. One cannot say the Indians are ignoring the prevailing situation and contemporary attitudes, when he sees that the Indian knows what is

happening but considers the traditional as part of the present culture. Again it might be said that he is idealistic and that only time will tell whether his heritage will be sufficient to carry him through the current challenges to his existence.

The developments in regard to handloomed textiles fit very well into the picture of other cultural happenings in India. Lamb speaks of the excitement in New Delhi where numerous traditional arts are encouraged. Outstanding representatives from many regions have come together and are creating what may be a cultural renaissance in dance, music, painting, literature and other arts. Regional exchanges are encouraged and talents are meshing to form some truly national styles. Although centered in large cities, painters are said to seek contact with village life for their most valuable inspirations. People in all the arts seem to be gaining new status (28, p. 172-174). Handloomed textiles, now governed by a central plan, exchanged between regions, associated with village life, and encouraged to represent Indian ideals contain the traits considered important in the arts today.

Summary

The current textiles in India are divided according to manner of production.

For internal consumption, the mills are prohibited from producing fabrics that would compete with handloom goods. For this reason

the industrial fabrics have been plain or designed with the taste of a foreign market in mind.

Handloomed goods are being technically produced in much the same way as those fabrics which are famous in history. Many of those legendary fabrics can be traced specifically to their heights under the Mogul empire. Although these contained influences of foreign styles, particularly Persian, textile authorities believe certain traits are part of an ancient Indian tradition. There are almost no samples of Indian fabrics earlier than the 16th century A.D., but legends dating from hundreds of years B.C. talk of gossamer fine fabrics and golden brocaded designs that sound undeniably similar to what is definitely known of Mogul textiles.

Fabrics of the exact design and quality of those known in the courts have not been continued. Patrons who would pay the price for fabrics requiring intense specialization of techniques, fastidious intricacy of design, and use of the finest quality of materials disappeared with the Mogul empire. The socialistic stance of the present government discourages development of a rank of people who could promote or even desire such textiles.

However, some traditional village fabrics which go even further back in antiquity have continued to the present day. Costumes portrayed in the frescoes of the Ajanta Caves (1st - 7th century A.D.) are commonly used as evidence of their age. These village fabrics

sometimes show inconsistencies between poor quality material and tremendous technical labor. Being a product of poor agricultural peoples, the raw materials were limited to those available at minimal cost in the surrounding area. Until recently, a number of the complex textile crafts were family secrets produced in limited regions of the country. The excellence of particular skills may have been exquisite enough to please a king, but the over-all tone was probably too bold and flashy for refined tastes. European traders most likely considered them inferior.

Fortunately the village textiles were not dependent on the whims of individuals or the short-term interest of fashion. Fabrics were much more than a passing fancy or something different with which to impress one's neighbors. They had an important part in religious and other traditional ceremonies. Specified patterns and techniques held symbolic significance that people resisted changing and enjoyed seeing repeated. It was only when the European traders with their industrial goods made plans to change the village economy that the long undisturbed areas were affected. The results were quite disastrous for the handloom weavers who could not possibly meet the competition of mass production. Complete collapse was avoided largely because certain ceremonies included the deep-rooted custom of using traditional fabrics.

During the nationalistic movement, village life came to be

idealized and considered the indigenous pattern of life that reflected the spirit of the Indian sub-continent. Gandhi chose spinning and plain handweaving as a material way to express some of his concern for village simplicity. More recently, the government has become fascinated with all village arts as a part of the country's heritage. There are attempts to appreciate colors and design styles as suitable to village culture and the Indian setting. Government programs help assure continuity of traditions and re-development of techniques close to extinction. Educated people have started studying these items which they had ignored as inferior under the first Western influences. There is analysis of meaning and interest in the history of village arts as never before. New interregional exchanges are being encouraged. Village arts, so much related to their environment, are examined for inspirations they can provide for styles which would be as appropriate to modern India.

Truly there is no denying that the great cultural tradition of the court fabrics is past. Such items would seem out of place in present conditions. But the village fabrics are now gaining recognition due to the image which the Indian leaders have chosen to express their country.

This appears to be a period of documentation and some standardization. It will take some time before we can see how successfully cultural heritage preserved in the village blends with modern times.

Fabrics reflect the period in which they were made, thus it is not surprising to see the exuberance of nationalism influencing the direction of textiles.⁵ Some of the results of products first incorporating modern adjustments were highly criticized. But there are signs the natural good taste historically credited to the Indian artist will eventually cause proper adjustments. The willingness to accept some new along with the old suggests that the people appreciate the traditional with proper respect, but without undue sentimentality. The present situation is the deepest challenge ever to the traditions of the mass of the Indian people.

⁵ The approach of this paper might be applied to other countries experiencing strong national feelings and having important textile traditions. Egypt and France are two possibilities for consideration. It would be interesting to contrast textile developments caused by different cultural traditions.

Another idea is to become much more specific and trace a single design trend in India. As an example, the designs of the Kutch skirt mentioned in this thesis almost asked directly for further analysis and consideration.

A special effort could be made to learn positively whether embroidery arts of India are encouraged today. If they continue despite disregard from authorities, they may actually relate more closely to past cultural traditions than any other textile art.

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APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Adivasi - an Indian people who are remnants of aboriginal tribes, outside of Hindu society.

Ajanta Caves - 29 temples begun by Buddhist monks about 1-2 B.C., and decorated with frescoes between 1-7 A.D.

Calico - any cotton fabric from India.

Chaddar or Khaddar - plain hand-woven, hand-spun cloth used by Gandhi as a symbol of the revival of village life.

Chintz - Painted or stained cloth from India.

Code of Manu - rules of a great law-giver of Hinduism recorded in present form about 200 B.C.

Kalamkar - handpainted calico wall hanging popular in European trade in the 19th century.

Kutch - former state of western India, now in Gujarat state. Traditional embroidery is a chain stitch on satin. Embroidery with inset mirror fragments sometimes carries the name.

Mogul Period - 1526-1857 A.D. The duration of the kingdom founded by Baber when Moslem dominions were consolidated.

Mohenjo-Daro and Harrapa - probable capitals of the earliest Indian civilization existing as early as 3000 or 2500 B.C.

Namda - compressed felt rug made in Kashmir. A coarse embroidery outlines traditional designs.

Mauryan Period - Buddhist empire in India founded about 300 B.C.

Palampore - block-printed calico wall hanging popular in European trade in the 19th century.

Patola - a type of fabric with design created by tie-dyeing both warp and weft threads before weaving.

Phulkari - traditional embroidery of the Punjab. The background is almost entirely covered so it may appear to outline the embroidery.

Sassanian Empire - the rule in Persia from 226-641 A.D.

Tie-Dyeing - a resist method of decorating cloth. Strings binding areas not to be colored are removed after dyeing, to reveal the design.