

Paithani Saree

Background

Paithani is a variety of saree, named after Paithan region in Maharashtra state where they are woven by hand. Made from very fine mulberry silk, it is considered as one of the richest sarees in Maharashtra. The art is more than 2000 years old developed in the then splendid city of Pratishthan ruled by the legendary Satavahanas ruler Shalivahana, now Paithan in Marathwada, some 50 km from Aurangabad. It is believed that the Nizam of Hyderabad was also attracted to the Paithanis and made several trips to the small town of Paithan.

Raw Material

Main raw material used for weaving Paithani saree is Mulberry Silk yarn and Zari. Preferably, filature silk is used as warp and charakha silk is used as weft. Another major raw material is pure gold and silver 'Zari'. However, nowadays, imitation gold and silver zari are used to bring down the cost of the saree, thus making the Paithanis more affordable to medium class.

Paithani evolved from a cotton base to a silk base. Silk was used in weft designs and in the borders, whereas cotton was used in the body of the fabric. Present day Paithani has no trace of cotton.

Technique applied

It is woven in simple pit or throw shuttle frame loom without having any designing devices. In its weaving, the picks will not move directly from one end to the other end of saree, width wise, but the weft yarn of small lengths returns being interlaced or interlocked with the threads of different weft colors as per designs. This procedure of returning of threads is called "Tapestry" weaving which is the most labour intensive and time consuming one.

How to distinguish genuine Paithani Saree

- A heavy weight bright coloured silk saree with zari designing work in body, border and pallu.
- No extra warp or weft thread is applied for designing.
- Threads of short lengths in different colours or materials interlock as per pattern across the width of the saree and create design in the weft way.
- No weft threads are put continuously in the width, but in small lengths and hence cannot be taken out from the saree.
- Generally, patterns of birds like peacock, parrot, flower, bangle, creepers etc of geometrical character are woven on these sarees.

