

Ahimsa Peace Silk- A New Way of Gandhian Clothing.

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Abstract-

Silk fibre is the most beautiful natural fibre to be found by the human civilization. It was founded in China. In India it is produced in Karnataka, Assam. In India, mulberry silk is produced mainly in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir and West Bengal, while the non-mulberry silks are produced in Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Orissa and north-eastern states. Mulberry Silk is produced from the silkworm, *Bombyx mori* which solely feeds on the leaves of mulberry plant. This larva secretes a liquid secretion which solidifies when it comes in contact of the air and forms a cocoon. This cocoon is further used as a raw silk. To take out the silk these cocoons are boiled in heated water and are killed. So after prolonged research a new method has been invented in which the silk larvae are not killed and the cocoons are taken out without. The production of the silk through process is called Ahimsa Peace Silk. As it is a non-violent process a name synonym with Mahatma Gandhi.

Introduction

The Hindi word "ahimsa" means "non-violence." This new way of the production of silk yarn is also known as "peace silk." Both names are very fitting as they help sum up the movement behind the product.

It would have certainly pleased the father of the Nation to know that someone was weaving Ahimsa saris in India! The saris are woven through a complicated process, an eco-friendly process of manufacturing mulberry silk yarn.

The traditional production of the silk saris requires killing of thousands of moths. Silkworms are fed on mulberry leaves, in the privacy of bamboo baskets. They exude a viscous fluid through their heads, which hardens into raw silk as it comes in contact with air. The strands of silk create a cocoon around the silkworm, which normally dies when the silk is extracted.

The larvae are boiled alive, roasted or centrifuged. The female moths are slit open to check for diseases after they have laid the eggs for the next generation. Most consumers are not aware of the cruelty involved in the process of production. So there was a requirement of the development of a process so that the silk moths are not killed and the consumer should get non-violent silk without killing the silk worm.

Ahimsa Peace Silk

Silk can also be made in a non-violent, eco-friendly and sustainable way. A process of the production was developed in Andhra Pradesh.

Ahimsa Peace Silk does away with brutal practices in the silk production without compromising on the quality of the silk and the productivity of operations. Unlike the conventional method where the pupae are killed before reeling yarn from the cocoons, in the process of Ahimsa Peace Silk production the adult moths are allowed to emerge alive from the cocoons and then the silk yarn is spun from the open ended or pierced cocoons found in the wild or from those used in breeding cycles.

The silk moths best suited for the production of ahimsa silk are the Eri Silk Moth (*Philosamia ricini*). These feed on the castor plant in contrast to the conventional mulberry feeding silk moth. Other species that are being used for Ahimsa Peace Silk are the Tassar moths (both tropical and temperate- *Antheraea mylitta* and *Antiheraea proylei*) and the Muga Silk Moth (*Antheraea assamensis*). These are wild and semi wild silks. Therefore, after this process a silk is produced without killing of silkworms so all consumers who care for the environment and respect the right of life for all the living beings can wear this product with a clear conscience and enjoy the soft and luxurious feel of spun silk.

While ahimsa silk may lack the shine of regular silk, it is comfortable to wear. It's also wrinkle free and has a better fall. Now a days it is very much in demand and large range of products are available in the market.

Ahimsa Peace Silk creates unique products that appeal to the demand of environmentally conscious and non violent clientele all over the world. It provides an alternative for discerning and aware consumers to make their choices in such a way that even as they buy silk they are able to accord the respect that our fellow living beings on the earth deserve from us.

Products Developed from Ahimsa Silk

A huge range of products are developed from ahimsa silk such as Shawls, stoles, scarves, ties, saris, made-ups, furnishing fabrics, knitwear, 'modern' traditional Indian items, casual wear, dress materials, apparel fabrics, rugs and other diversified productsetc. All these items are made of pure ahimsa silk fiber or blends. Dyes used are natural dyes as well as chemical .

The product are tested in the laboratories for its durability, content and colour fastness. Reputed designers and professionals working in this field have provided the groups with the latest design inputs.

This constant interactive process between the weavers and designers has resulted in the production of a wide range of Ahimsa silk . Traditional designs have been revived and adapted to current trends to cater to this new market.

So one can say that it is a great revolution in the field of silk production as lot many celebrity people have started using ahimsa silk fabric. The examples are Menka Gandhi , Chitra Gandhi etc.

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