

Silk Tidings

Greetings from Salt Spring Island

We look back with gratitude and forward with excitement and anticipation in these first few days of 2010. We like to take stock and recall all the happenings of 2009 both happy and sad quietly calling to mind our gratefulness for all; even the sad things add to the mix of making us stronger and more caring people.

Each new year is full of intoxicating hope for the potential of making the world a better place

for our children. For most of us, the realisation of that desire is fulfilled in our own homes and communities. The little things we do each day, in our own way to radiate a little kindness, joy, inspiration, love, peace, creativity and hope is the stuff that does make the world a joyful place.

Take heart all you creative fibre artists in these subdued times. Working with natural fibres and spectrums of colours to create

beautiful things to adorn our bodies or decorate our homes fills us up with joy and satisfaction which reverberates out into the planet.

We thank all of you for your support and creative work over the years. We wish you all a healthy, joyful and prosperous 2010. We will continue to work hard to offer you the best of products and service, as well as technical and creative help.

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Specialty Fleeces

New Zealand Specialty Fleeces

The fleeces we received this year are exceptionally lovely. However, there is not as large a selection of breeds nor of quantities as we had hoped. The environmental climate of each year differs and affects the sheep fleeces differently. If the fleeces of a particular breed are not of a sufficient quality, they are not even offered to us.

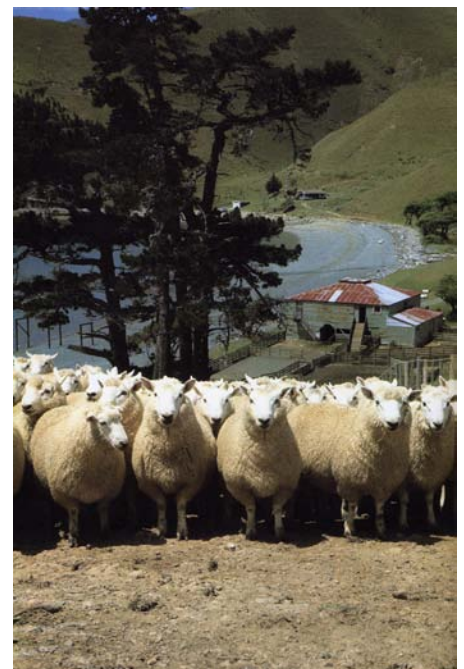
As usual we had a blast sorting, touching, smelling and labeling all the fleeces. There weren't many I did not want to just sit and spin right then and there. Have fun choosing!

The information below regarding breeds is from New Zealand Sheep and Their Wool published by Wools of New Zealand and New Zealand and Its Sheep by Godfrey Bowen and is also provided to us by Ashford Handicrafts.

Corriedale

The lovely fine fibres and long staples have made this breed a favourite spinning fleece for many years. Flick card only and wash carefully in hot soapy water after spinning. The Corriedale is a cross with longwool breeds and Merino. It was developed on the South Island of New Zealand at the turn of the last century as Merino was not suitable to wetter country. British breeds were used to cross with the Merino giving it the strong body of a British breed and the medium to fine wool of the Merino.

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Perendale sheep in New Zealand from New Zealand Sheep and Their Wool by Wools of New Zealand

Treenway Silks is located at 501 Musgrave Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada, V8K 1V5.
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 Email us at **info@treenwaysilks.com**. See our website **www.treenwaysilks.com**.

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Greetings from Salt Spring Island

Clay/Straw House

There has been lots of VP (also known as Visual Progress) since our last newsletter. Last fall we had just finished repairing the cracks in the earthen floor. Terry's unwavering nature through the trial and error of fixing the cracks was admirable. After three weeks the cracks were finally fixed and we applied six coats of linseed oil to make the floor strong. We simmered up a final coat consisting of beeswax, carnauba wax, earth pigment and thinner which was applied by hand when still warm and buffed afterwards. This coat has given the floor a rich leather look with highlights of straw showing through. It has a tough finish with a shine that is water resistant. The earthen floor has a natural give and it is said to be the best for the health of your feet all the way up through your spine.



Earthen floor coated with beeswax/carnauba wax/earth pigment/thinner mix.

The bamboo floor has already been installed in my studio. So it is just the baseboard trim and a good cleaning before I can move into a bright workspace that would be the joy of any artist. We have chosen local



Studio with bamboo flooring installed. Douglas fir is stacked awaiting installation elsewhere in the house.

Douglas fir for the flooring in the rest of the house.

The bathrooms are tiled and looking great. Now we are working on all the beautiful woodwork. The kitchen cabinets are being installed as I type. The wood was gifted to us by our dear friends from New Zealand, the Ashfords.

The cabinets are made of two New Zealand woods, NZ Silver Beech and Rimu and they are stunning. We are also working on lots of beautiful woodwork like built-in bookshelves and window seats.

The journey continues with the septic field yet to be put in, hooking up the in-floor heating, laying the wood floors, hanging interior doors and building bathroom cabinets. But the list is diminishing quickly! This kind of visual progress is fun and exciting. One of the best things is the list of decisions and shopping is getting near the end.



The floor and walls of the shower in the master bathroom are tiled and separated with a glass wall.

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Custom kitchen cabinets in NZ Beech and Rimu from New Zealand.

continued....

Greetings from Salt Spring Island

Greetings Carol and Oria & Adieu Sue

We are happy to introduce you to our two new teammates: Oria and Carol. They bring a variety of skills and lots of enthusiasm to help keep us moving forward with energy, style and caring for your needs. They will be happy to greet you on the phone and fill your orders with attention. We have always been blessed with warm and fascinating people who come to work at Treenway. Our new additions possess such life talents as: aerial silk acrobat, art and drama teacher, gardener, and musician.

At the same time, we wish Sue great success on her new path. She and John have an organic vegetable farm where she will be directing more of her energy. We are extremely grateful to Sue for all the creative spirit she has given to Treenway over the past eight years and we will miss her. She has



Carol, left, and Oria

been the smile you hear on the other end of the phone and the know-how in getting your parcels out to you in a timely and caring manner.

The colour and creativity that is Treenway has always been a cooperative effort of all of us here. The organisation behind the scenes, the beautiful ads and

website, the creative artwork, the brilliant colours of our yarns and fibres and, of course, the balancing of the finances are fueled by a small, but potent, crew. Our intention is always to do the best we can for you, our valued customers and friends. However, we invariably make mistakes. We welcome you to let us know when an error has occurred so we can correct it as soon as possible and contact us whenever you have any questions.

Web Specials

In addition to our newsletter specials, we have specials posted on our website. We notify everyone on our email list each time we post new specials. You can also check our website periodically. See the Specials button in the drop-down menu or go to www.treenwaysilks.com/sale.html.

If you would like to be added to this list, please send us your full name and email address to info@treenwaysilks.com. Please add us to your address book to ensure you receive our emails.

English Leicester

The heavy curly lustrous wool is even in length and fibre diameter. You could show these lovely staples off using them as surface texture in felting or weaving. English Leicester is one of the Old English breeds developed in Leicestershire and dates back to the 1700s. For many years it was the most popular long wool sheep in the North of England with a dual purpose of large meat body, with a heavy strong fleece of wool renowned for its wavy crimp and big round locks.

Gotland

We are fortunate to be able to offer these lovely fleeces again this year. The colour choice is varied and scrumptious as always. The fibres are soft and silky for spinning, with a high lustre and low bulk. It is popular in the high fashion industry as well as with handspinners for knitwear and weaving as well as felting. The Gotland originated on the Swedish Island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea. It is a native Landrace breed belonging to the North European short-tailed group of sheep. Lambs are born jet black and have developed their distinctive grey curly pelt by the time they are about five months.

Merino

These superfine fleeces are easier to manage if you separate out the staples and wash them one by one carefully in hot soapy water to soften the lanolin before spinning. Spin them very fine with a high twist. For people wanting to spin some super-fine threads for the first time, we can recommend the book [Merino](#) by Margaret Stove. This takes you through the step-by-step stages of sorting and washing and the techniques of spinning the fine Merino fibres. The Merino is the oldest established and most numerous breed in the world. It is believed to have originated from Spain or North Africa. Merino is a sheep apart from the many British breeds. It likes dry conditions and is renowned for its fine quality wool.

Perendale

Perendale is a Cheviot and Romney cross which is an easy care breed that can forage in the hill country of New Zealand. The fleece settled into the finer crossbred range with exceptional spring which gives good shape retention to knitted garments and adds bulk and stand-up ability to carpet pile. It has a high insulation factor in blankets.

Polwarth

This breed was developed in Australia in 1880 by using Lincoln-Merino cross ewes and bred back to Merino rams. The objective was to combine the fine wool of the Merino with the longer staple of the Lincoln. Its long stapled, soft wool is very sought after by spinners for woven and knitted garments.

Romney

This fleece is very popular because of the unique way it combines several traits. The fleece is lustrous, hangs in separate locks, with minimal cross fibres between the locks. Uniformity of crimp from the butt to the tip of lock is typical. Romney wool has the finest fibre diameter of all the long wool breeds, with a spinning count from 40-48 which is 38-31 microns. It spins easily with a low grease content that makes it a very light shrinking fleece. These qualities enable Romney to be used for many products, ranging from sweaters to outerwear to carpets. The Romney originates from the wet fens of south-east England.

Orders

This year we have a **one fleece limit**. Fleeces are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Once the neweletter has been out for a month, we will send out an email giving everyone a second chance if there are any fleeces remaining.

Pricing

\$26.50/kg (\$12.05/lb) All fleeces except
\$29.50/kg (\$13.40/lb) 100% Merino fleeces

Notes

1. Prices in Canadian funds.
2. Weights in kilograms. 1 kg = 2.2 lb
3. Fleece numbers with an A or B at the end are one half of a fleece.

Fleece #	Breed	Weight (kg)	Description	Fleece #	Breed	Weight (kg)	Description
1	Corriedale	2.0	Mid grey with nearly white tip	68A	Merino	1.9	White
2	Corriedale	2.1	Light grey to beige	68B	Merino	2.2	White
4	Corriedale	2.8	Light grey with white tip	69A	Merino	1.9	White
6A	Corriedale	2.2	Taupe to light beige	69B	Merino	2.8	White
7A	Corriedale	2.3	Pearl	70A	Merino	2.8	White
8A	Corriedale	2.5	Soft brown, mid grey to light grey	74	Organic Gotland	1.4	Dark grey
8B	Corriedale	2.5	Soft brown, mid grey to light grey	75	Organic Gotland	1.4	Light grey with white tip
9	Eng.Lieicester	4.3	White	76	Organic Gotland	1.6	Dark grey with brown tips
10	Eng.Lieicester	4.4	White	77	Organic Gotland	1.8	Mid - dark grey
12	Eng.Lieicester	2.0	Dark grey-mid grey with brown tip	78	Organic Gotland	1.8	Dark greys / brown
13	Eng.Lieicester	2.8	Dark grey with brown tips	79	Organic Gotland	2.0	Mid grey with caramel tip
15	Eng.Lieicester	2.8	Curly, dark grey-white	108A	Perendale	2.2	White
16	Eng.Lieicester	3.0	Near black with brown tip	108B	Perendale	2.3	White
17	Eng.Lieicester	3.0	Dark chocolate / mid grey / latte	109	Perendale	2.4	White
18	Eng.Lieicester	3.0	Mid grey with silver tips	110	Perendale	2.8	White
19	Eng.Lieicester	3.1	Near black with brown tips	111	Perendale	2.9	White
21	Eng.Lieicester	3.4	Mid to silver grey	112	Perendale	3.0	White
22	Eng.Lieicester	3.8	Black with caramel tips	113	Perendale	3.4	White
24	Gotland	0.8	Cream with grey spots	114	Perendale	3.4	White
28	Gotland	1.0	Mid - dark grey	115	Perendale	3.4	White
32	Gotland	1.2	Mid - pale grey	116	Perendale	3.4	White
34	Gotland	1.3	Dark grey to silver	117	Perendale	3.5	White
35	Gotland	1.3	Pale grey cream	118	Perendale	3.7	White
39	Gotland	1.6	Black soft light cut ends	119	Perendale	3.7	White
41	Gotland	1.7	Mid to silver grey	84	Polwarth	2.7	Mid brown with light tips
42	Gotland	1.8	Mid grey to silver	86	Polwarth	3.2	Milk chocolate with latte tips
43	Gotland	1.8	Mid grey to white tip	94	Romney	1.4	Mid grey with brown tip
45	Gotland	2.0	Black to light grey tips	95	Romney	2.6	Mid grey to light brown
48	Gotland	2.2	Mid grey with dark spots	96	Romney	2.8	Dark chocolate / grey
49	Gotland	2.2	Dark spots and pale	97	Romney	2.8	Dark grey to light brown
50	Gotland	2.4	Silver grey curly tip	99	Romney	3.0	Mid grey and light grey with caramel tip
52	Gotland	2.5	Mid grey with pale tips	100	Romney	3.0	Dark grey - mid grey with caramel tip
56	Gotland	4.5	Dark - light grey with white tips	101	Romney	3.4	Grey to brown
61	Merino	2.4	Rich brown	102	Romney	3.4	Light grey to white tip
62	Merino	2.4	Multi grey / steel / chocolate	105A	Romney	1.9	Palest grey
63	Merino	2.5	Milk chocolate with latte tips	105B	Romney	2.0	Palest grey
64	Merino	2.6	Milk chocolate with latte tips	106A	Romney	2.2	Near black with caramel tip
66	Merino	2.8	Dark grey / black coffee with cream on top	106B	Romney	2.3	Near black with caramel tip
				107A	Romney	1.8	Light brown to caramel
				107B	Romney	1.9	Light brown to caramel

New Products

Bombyx Oblongs

Also called Laps in Britain and Australia

Cocoons that cannot be used to make reeled silk yarn are used to make oblongs. The degummed cocoons are carded on a large carding machine to make "batts" approximately 56" x 60" and weighing approximately 500g.

This shipment is lustrous and very silky. These lofty oblongs are great for felting, nuno or silk fusion.

Available in two sizes:

Full Batt: 500g

Approx 56" x 60" (approx 17.5 oz)

\$144/kg

Half Batt: 250g

Approx 28" x 60" (approx 8.75 oz)

\$148/kg



Sari Silk Series

We wanted to remind you of the fun and very versatile sari silks we received last fall. They have been very popular and our customers are doing some creative things with them. There is a kaleidoscope of colours within each package. Blues and greens and yellows and oranges are gaily mixed together. They do not come in specific colourways. The colourful fabrics and yarns will give all your fibre work a lush, exotic edge.

Sari Strips

2 or 3 strips of beautiful silk sari fabric with widths varying from 2.5" to 9".

2 – 3 yards

\$4.95/pkg

Sari Ribbon

Strips of silk sari approx 1/2" to 1" wide have been sewn together to make one continuous kaleidoscope of woven silk ribbon.

5 yards

\$4.95/pkg



Recycled Sari Yarn

Strips of multicoloured sari fabric have been spun with silk fibre to make a firm and vivid yarn.

5 yards

\$4.95/pkg

Recycled Silk Yarn

Recycled silk fibres are handspun into a vibrant and textured yarn.

10 yards

\$4.95/pkg

Mini Skeins

Selected Colours in Silk Threads (20/2, Fine Cord, 8/2 in 10 yd lengths) and 3.5mm Ribbon (in 5 yd lengths)

We currently have all of our 100 hand-dyed colours in mini skeins in three types of silk threads (10 yards each) and in 3.5mm ribbon (in 5 yard lengths). We will be discontinuing these mini-skeins in 50 colours. The colours and numbers are listed to the right.

We are offering **50% off** while supply lasts.

Sale Price:

20/2 Spun	\$1.25 / 10 yd
Fine Cord	\$1.45 / 10 yd
8/2 Reeled	\$1.45 / 10 yd
3.5mm Ribbon	\$2.35 / 5 yd

Silk 85% / Cashmere 15% Fibre 100g packages

The cashmere goat originates from the high Himalayan Mountains of Asia. China is the largest producer of cashmere and maintains the best fibre comes from the extreme cold of Inner Mongolia. It is the fine undercoat we prize for its feel. Cashmere fibre is combed from the goat during the spring molt in China and Inner Mongolia. The outer guard hair is clipped first making it easier to comb out the 1-3 inches of down. The costly dehairing process is necessary to separate the guard hairs from the undercoat before spinning.

Cashmere is luxuriously soft, fine and lofty providing light weight warmth. The addition of silk makes cashmere more affordable and durable as well as adding lustre. Cashmere provides silk a



Cashmere goats in Upshi (www.swisscashmere.org)

Black Forest #208	Gypsy Passion #958
Irish Rover #954	Cherry Blossom #47
Celadon #213	Diva #45
100 Acre Wood #212	Fireweed #959
Eucalyptus #215	Slate #54
Pistachio #41	Platinum #25
Smokey Topaz #17	Silver Lining #50
November Maverick #226	Soft Iris #216
Champagne #35	Love-in-a-mist #218
Spiced Cognac #34	Silk Pyjamas #219
Tiramisu #33	Wisteria #217
Canyon #224	Winter Solstice #3
Sand Dune #9517	Blueberry Haze #2
Evening Spirit #9510	Midnight Blue #1
Wild Bordeaux #209	Intrepid #48
Ballet Slippers #22	French Blue #955
Harlequin #43	Persian Night #220
Creole Spice #222	Danish Blue #206
Pondicherry #21	Peacock #207
Flamingo #30	Turkish Bath #19
Christmas Cactus #27	Mermaid Tears #14
Hollyhock #26	Glacier #214
Cantaloupe #31	Sea Spray #16
Persimmon #9513	Emerald Dream #9
Paprika #204	Sea Lyric #11

down softness. This scrumptious blend is a joy to spin, weave and knit.

As part of our move to change our packaging to smaller sizes, we are offering the 100g package at a 25% discount while 100g packages last.

Regular price: \$33/100g

Sale Price: \$24.75/100g (approx 3.5 oz)



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Phaeng Mai Gallery Silk Scarves & Shawls

We continue to supply beautiful handwoven items from the Phaeng Mai Gallery in Laos. Founded and run by sisters, Kongthong and Viengkam, the gallery is a cottage industry that trains women from villages all over the country in traditional designs, dyes and structures. They return to their homes with weaving as a supplementary income to farming and while they raise their families. Phaeng Mai Gallery supplies the silk for the weavers and buys back their handwoven items and finds markets worldwide for these exquisite works.

We have a variety of colours, most naturally dyed, patterns, sizes and prices. Usually there are no two pieces alike. Each item is beautifully woven and makes a heart-felt gift that helps fellow weavers in a poorer part of the world. This is a conscientious way of supporting cottage industry promoting a traditional lifestyle which is vital to the economy, heritage and mental health of developing countries.

Phaeng Mai Gallery

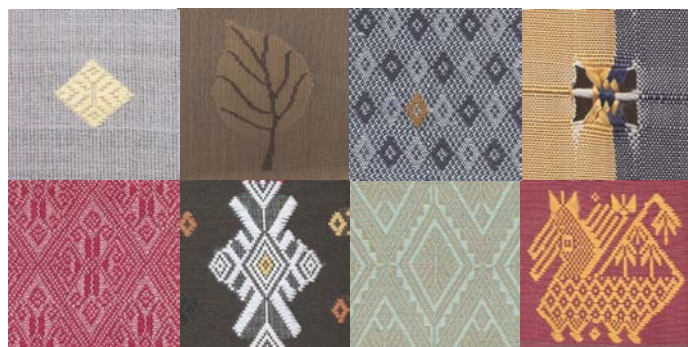
www.phaengmaigallery.com

Phaeng Mai Weaving at Treenway Silks

www.treenwaysilks.com/scarves.html



*Clockwise from top left:
Weaving at the Phaeng Mai Gallery;
Phaeng Mai handwoven silk textiles;
Treadling a simple bamboo loom;
Kongthong at a weaving conference.*



Details of Phaeng Mai silk textiles available from Treenway Silks

Phaeng Mai Gallery sells an exclusive collection of exquisite fabrics made using naturally-dyed silk painstakingly hand woven on traditional looms. To preserve the weaving heritage of Laos, designs used are derived from antique textiles such as those commissioned by the ancient royal courts.

Phaeng Mai Gallery is run by two sisters from Samneua Province who supervise the entire weaving process in an extended family manner. A highlight of its work was in 1991 when it participated the South East Asia Textile Weaving Contest, held in Chiang Mai and sponsored by UNESCO. Phaeng Mai has won a number of awards in recognition of its work in weaving, notably in 2004 under the UNESCO-AHPADA Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Programme scheme.

In 1990 Phaeng Mai Gallery opened its handloom weaving facilities to train Lao people and others in the intricate skills and techniques required to produce Lao textiles. Each course is adapted to suit weaving experience and the specific needs of clusters of trainee weavers. www.culturalprofiles.net/laos/Units/540.html

Tropical Tussah (tasar), *Antheraea mylitta* Orissa and Chhattisgarh, India

Our story of tropical tasar continues with reeling the cocoons.

The men we met and worked with in the CSB (Central Silk Board) are scientists whose job it is to increase production of the silk caterpillars, the food source and post cocoon production of reeling and weaving. The CSB chaps we have met along the way are also closely connected to the tribal people who have been traditionally involved in the rearing and/or collecting of tasar for centuries in a caring way. They talk about the people with compassion and intense resolve to help make life better for them.

In Orissa the head of the department told us, "Raising tasar has always been a poor man's culture. Silk is nature's gift and tasar is god's gift which has been entrusted to the tribals [indigenous people]."

In Chhattisgarh, Mr. Chakravorty who cares about all wild things says, "Wild silk has its own language."

Reeling

The tasar cocoons are very hard compared to the *Bombyx* cocoons. The protective protein coating on the cocoon, called sericin, must be removed before the silk can be released. Until recently the ashes from

burned banana leaves and stems were used to degum or remove the hard sericin from the cocoons. The ash is alkaline which helps to break down the sericin. Today washing soda powder is used to degum the cocoons; it is easier and more cost effective. The cocoons are simmered for ½ – 1½ hours depending on how hard they are. The peduncle (stem, see *Forming the Cocoon*, Sep 2009 *Silk Tidings*) and outside floss are taken off each cocoon until the single continuous filament is found for reeling. Different breeds of tasar yield varying weights of silk from their cocoons from .6g to 3.6g. On average the silk content is 1.5-2g per cocoon. Five or six cocoons are drawn together and reeled into a twisted thread. It takes about 4,500 cocoons to produce a pound (454g) of reeled tasar silk.



Tropical tasar cocoons (right), removed peduncles (centre) and yarn spun with peduncles.



There are three methods of reeling tasar silk: the traditional village method of thigh reeling, bowl reeling and machine reeling.

Thigh Reeling is accomplished by twisting the filaments of silk on the thigh and is the preferred method of the village girls and women for transforming cocoons into yarn. They can easily feel the diameter of the yarn and imperfections of their work. The spinner either sits on the floor or a stool, legs straight out in front, with her sari pulled up to expose her left thigh. The degummed, damp cocoons, sit on a black cloth on the floor. The background of the black cloth helps the reeler to readily see if the filament of any of cocoons has broken. With her right hand, the spinner pulls filaments from the cocoons and rubs them across her thigh, adding a small amount of twist. With her left hand, she winds the newly formed yarn onto a natei, a handheld spindle made of wood and shaped like a paddle or

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constructed of strips of bamboo and shaped like a closed umbrella. The yarn wound on the natei is soaked in water used to boil rice. The starch in this water gives strength to the yarn. A drawback of this method of reeling is that some woman experience an allergic skin reaction on their thighs due to the alkali used to degum the cocoons.



Thigh reeling

Bowl Reeling was introduced by the CSB to help avoid this problem. The reeler squats on the floor or sits on a stool in front of a round, overturned clay bowl, which is the size of a soccer ball. She twists the silk filaments over the bowl and piles the yarn on the floor in a very unruly looking mess. Before winding the reeled silk onto the natei, the reelers keep a pile of sand onto of the little mess on the floor. The weight of the sand allows the newly formed silk yarn to be wound neatly onto the natei in the reverse order it was laid on the floor.

Machine Reeling has only been available for the last 25 years. The reeling machines have been developed



Bowl reeling

and continue to be improved by the CSB. The machines are set up so a worker can be making four silk yarns at a time. The machine does the unwinding and twisting. Most of the machines are stationed in co-operative centres. The women are trained to use the machine



Machine reeling

and then they come to the centre and can use it to do the reeling. To date, there are not enough machines to accommodate all the reelers. They rotate coming to the centre and reeling on their thigh or bowl at home.

In eight hours, a worker can thigh reel about 60 cocoons and produce about 1.6 ounces (45g) of silk threads. In the same amount of time, a person working at a machine can process 700 cocoons and produce 8 ounces (228g) of silk.

It is said the thigh reeled yarn is less strong and can't be used as warp. Being a little skeptical, I asked what happened 25 years ago when no reeling machine existed. The CSB fellow replied, "Food leaves were more nutritious then. Acid rain has depleted the goodness in the leaves, making the silk weaker."

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Sand used to hold yarn in place as it is wound onto a natei



Orissa state



Chhattisgarh state

The Journey

There were road trips in the old stand-by Indian car, the Ambassador, short hops on the back of a scooter, dusty rides in buses and the clackity clack rhythm of the train rails that got us out in search of the wild silk.

It was the clackity clack of the train that carried us from Orissa to Chhattisgarh. The train stations are always wild scenes in India with lots of people, loud shouting, jockeying for position and jostling of luggage. It has always been our wisdom to have a porter lead us and our luggage to the correct platform and car. But the luggage is never touched until the price has been negotiated. Then bags are hoisted up onto the cloth buns on top of their heads and we can barely keep up to their pace to get to our car.

The 17 hour train ride was mostly peaceful except for the porter shouting “chai” at nearly every hour, on the hour, in the middle of the night. The countryside changed from the damp lush green of Orissa state to the red dry soil of Chhattisgarh through the filmy train window.

Upon our arrival, it was mayhem with shouting and porters tugging at our sleeves. My eyes searched for Mr. Chakravorty who was to meet us. We saw him on the other side of the tracks and he waved us to get a porter and go up the steep metal grated stairs and across the walkway over the tracks and down the other side.

He took us to Hotel Mahua and explained in his mild manner that the Mahua is one of the host trees for tasar caterpillars with strong, sweet smelling flowers and fruit that is used for brewing beer. I liked him immediately.

The next newsletter will continue with reeling and weaving of tasar silk in India.