

Ahimsa Silk: A Humane Silk Variety



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It is said that 15 silk worms have to be killed to obtain 1 gram of silk. Imagine the number of silk worms killed in the world, if 1500 silk worms sacrifice their lives to give 1 meter of woven silk cloth. The conventional method of silk production kills millions of silk worms.

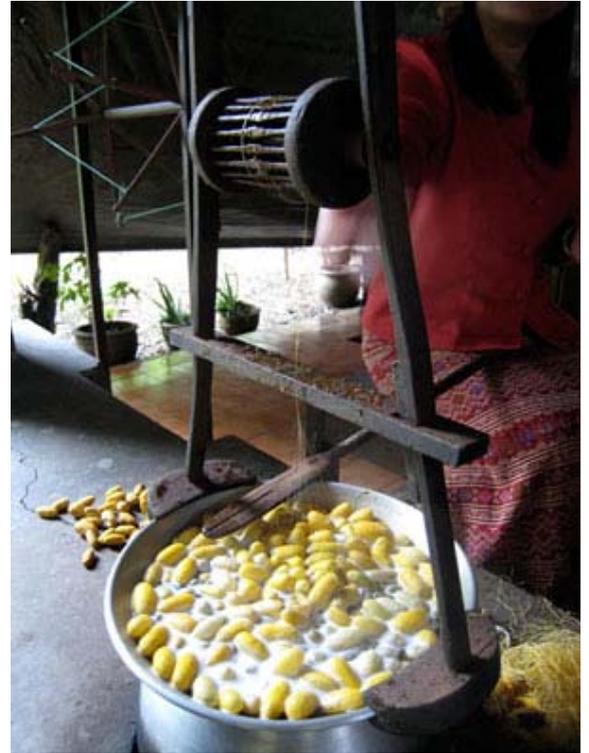




Recently, a big step towards a more eco-friendly and non-violent method of silk production has started in India. The silk produced by this method is called the Ahimsa silk. The silkworms are not killed to obtain the yarn and therefore this is also called the “Peace silk”.

The silk is obtained after the silk worm has undergone a complete metamorphosis and escapes out of the cocoon.

Silk worm are the larval forms of *Bombyx mori* which is the species used for commercial cultivation. The larvae are placed in bamboo baskets or bamboo shelves in a temperature controlled room with good air circulation. They are fed mulberry leaves during this stage. As they go into the pupal stage, they secrete substances called fibroin and sericin around them. These substances harden when they come in contact with the air, thereby producing a cocoon.



The cocoons are immersed in boiling water to kill the worms and collect the silk threads. In ahimsa silk production, the cocoons are allowed for another week to 10 days for the worms to complete their metamorphosis. After the moths have emerged and free them from the cocoon the extraction of peace silk begins. Ahimsa silk may have less lustre, but it is very soft to touch and gives a message of peace to the world.

