
1850 TO THE PRESENT - HIDDEN TEXTILE TREASURES RECOVERED

Kasturí Gupta Menon

The Industrial Museum section of the Botanical Survey of India located in a red-brick heritage building next to the Indian Museum, Calcutta, has unexpectedly stumbled upon 18 volumes containing 700 samples of Indian Textiles in silk, cotton, muslin and wool, being one of the 20 sets captioned “Textiles Manufactures and Costumes of the People of India” compiled by John Forbes Watson in 1866. This discovery of the 18 volume set, along with a 15 volume companion set on “Natural Dyes” by Thomas Wardle, has generated immense excitement and interest among scholars and NGOs working with the different communities of weavers in the handloom clusters of India. Before we proceed to analyse the value of its contents, it is important to find out who exactly Mr. John Forbes Watson was, and for whom he undertook this very comprehensive collection.

Mr. John Forbes Watson was appointed to the post of “Reporter On The Products Of India” in 1858, following the death of his predecessor who was co-incidentally also called John Forbes Royale. Forbes Watson had earlier served for 3 years in Bombay as Assistant Surgeon in the Medical Service, but had to go back to England on account of ill-health in 1853. He returned to India in 1857, and assumed charge of the post of reporter as well as the directorship of the India Museum in 1858.

When Forbes Watson took over as reporter in 1858, the Government of India Act had established the office of the Secretary of State for India in Council, and a new department called the India Office, had been set up. Like his predecessor Forbes Royale, Forbes Watson too, felt that a permanent “Trade Museum” should be set up, and it was his vision for a “Museum Of Empire” that prompted the collection of a new type of “Trade Museum” which took the form of 18 volumes of carefully selected and classified samples of Indian hand-woven textiles.

These 18 Volumes (of which 20 sets were prepared) contained 700 specimens, each sample indicating the character of the whole piece from which it had been cut. Alongside was an accompanying explanatory text on Indian costumes and dress. These 20 sets came to be regarded as the “20 Industrial Museums” illustrating the Textile Manufactures of India.

The purpose of preparing these volumes had been to promote “trade” operations

between the East and West, and as Mr. Forbes Watson himself explains, _ “to serve the interest of the People in India as well as those of the people at Home in Great Britain”. Each volume has been classified as per samples collected according to Function, Quality, Material and Decoration.

The first volume contains samples of “turbans” and the next three contain samples of fabrics which were converted into garments for men. Volumes 5 & 6 are samples of cloth which were converted into garments for women. Volumes 7,8, & 9 are samples of exquisite varieties of muslin woven by the weavers of DACCA. The bulk of the collection takes the form of plain cloth, or cloth with woven patterning. Printed cottons form a very small component of the total. But this appears to have been deliberate.

One cannot but admire the elaborate and comprehensive manner in which this documentation was undertaken. Of the collection itself, Forbes Watson states _ “the specimens exhibit a sense of beauty which has a quietness and harmony which never fail to fascinate. There is no waste of ornamentation which is present where it should be, and absent where it should not be. A careful consideration of all the evidence leads clearly to the conclusion that the Indian weavers produce fabrics which for fineness as well as for all other good qualities has nowhere been equalled”⁴.

So valuable was the collection, and so comprehensive its extent, that Mr. Forbes Watson is today universally recognized as a life-long student of Indian Textiles and the author of the most extensive single volume on Indian Textiles and dress.

Although the original intention was to send all 20 sets to England, Mr. Forbes Watson had felt that some of the volumes should be retained in India, “to enable the agent in India to refer to the merchant or manufacturer for reproduction.” Out of the 20 volumes therefore, only 13 were distributed among the Chambers of Commerce of Belfast, Glasgow, Bradford, Halifax, Liverpool and Manchester. They were also distributed among the “industrial museums” of Scotland (in Edinburgh), Ireland (in Dublin) and the Huddersfield Mechanics’ Institution, and to the towns of Macclesfield, Preston, and the Borough of Salford (for the Royal Peel Park Museum)

The last volume was deposited with the India Museum attached to the Department of the Reporter On The Products Of India, India House, London, and which thereafter found its permanent home in the Victoria & Albert Museum in South Kensington. The seven sets retained in India were sent to Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Karachi and “in such places in the N.W. Provinces in the Punjab and in Berar as the respective governments in the Divisions may decide upon”.

Although the India Museum was first chosen for the receipt of the 18 volume set intended for Calcutta, its trustees appear to have had some difficulty in accepting this responsibility (as they were possibly facing problems of accommodation) and it was ultimately

decided in 1876 to deposit the set, along with 15 volumes of Thomas Wardle's "Specimens of Fabrics dyed with Indian dyes" with the Bengal Economic Museum, now known as the "Industrial Section" of the Indian Museum under the Botanical Survey of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Natural Dyes

As already mentioned, along with Forbes Watson's invaluable 18 volume collection, the Economic Museum also took over 15 volumes of Thomas Wardle's "Specimens of Fabrics dyed with Indian dyes"

The art of dyeing or reproducing colour by extraction from natural resources, was a skill practiced both in India and Egypt from ancient times. It is a skill likely to have originated in either, as both possessed the raw materials for producing a great variety of colour from plants and flowers.

Mr.L.Liotard, writing in 1881, in his Memorandum on Dyes of Indian Growth and Production made the following observation – "The natives of India have long possessed and known how to manufacture the several salts which have long been employed as mordant. The latter they prepare by macerating iron in sour palm wine, or in water in which rice has been boiled. The alkalis and acids with which they are acquainted, may have assisted them in changing the shades of colours"

But it was the Great Exhibition of 1851 (in London), followed by the Paris Exhibition of 1867, that showed the people of Europe that the inhabitants of India could dye every colour and produce a great variety of shades in complicated patterns, and to contrast the various colours so as to produce a harmonious whole. In fact it was a letter written by Thomas Wardle in 1875 to the then Secretary of State for India, that led to the steps being taken for the collection of information on "dye-stuffs" of Indian growth and production, and for procuring this vast array of samples (along with each formula) which constitute the 15 volumes of Thomas Wardle's "Specimens of Fabrics dyed with Indian Dyes" – which is the most comprehensive and complete documentation on this subject.

And it is this caché of documents which are now in the process of being conserved and digitized so as to enable their being disseminated among a larger audience.

For those of us in the CCI who work with crafts and weaves and attempt to improve the lot of the artisans who nurture our traditional skills, access to this rich textile heritage will be like a journey into the past. of encounters with the nameless faceless weavers of Varanasi and Kanchipuram; of the muslin weavers of Dacca who created magic on their looms and gave their creations poetic names such as- "Arawan" (running water), "Shubnam" (evening dew), Nanyansook and Tunzeb. Skills which sadly, we seem to have lost forever.

I take this opportunity to thank Mr. D. Gomes, Manager NHDC and

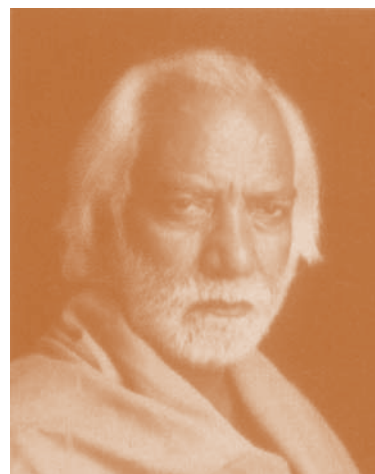
Mr. S. Bandyopadhyaya, Deputy Manager NHDC and “Cluster” Development Officer of the district of Burdwan (office of the D.C. Handlooms, G.O.I) for apprising me about this “treasure trove” about a year and a half back. To Mr. H.S.Debnath, Deputy Director, Indian Museum (BSI) for his single-minded tenacity in doggedly pursuing his mission to conserve and digitize this priceless material with the higher authorities of his ministry until he received the sanction. And finally to the former Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests – Miss Meena Gupta, who promised to come and then did indeed visit Calcutta to appraise first-hand this wealth of material that had been lying locked-up in a forgotten almirah and for the conserving and digitizing of which she granted financial sanction before she demitted charge on superannuation.

MEET SHILP GURU

Shri. Fazal Mohammad

Pushpa Chari

Shri. Fazal Mohammad is a master of ‘zardosi’ and ‘reshamzodi’ crafts, both ancient embroidery craft forms. He learnt zardosi done with beaten gold wires from Ustad Muniruddin Khan and reshamdosi or silk thread embroidery from Ustad Sarwar Khan Lodi. Shri. Mohammad has been practicing the craft from the age of 10. Meticulous detailing, exquisite delicacy in the conceptualizing of flowers, vine and tendrils, animal and figures and superb delineation of facial expression as well as the use of vibrant colours distinguish Shri. Mohammad’s work. He has trained more than 1300 people in the craft of zardosi and has also been associated with the welfare of zardosi craftspersons.



Winner of the State Merit Certificate for 1990 National Award for Excellence in craft for 1991, he was honoured with the ‘ Padmashri Award ’ on 2002. Shri. Fazal Mohammad was conferred the ‘Shilp Guru’ Award in the year 2004 by the President of India

Errata

CCI regrets the error by oversight which appeared in its July 2008 issue of its Newsletter under Smt. Gulshan Nanda’s curriculum vitae.

It reads as “Smt Nanda was coordinator for the Arts Council of Great Britain”

Whereas it should have read as follows:

“Smt Nanda was coordinator for Arts Council of Great Britain’s live demonstration and exhibition of contemporary crafts in U.K.”

KNOW YOUR CRAFT - BAMBOO

Vidya Sastry

Did you ever wonder what one could do with bamboo? Well try making a list of things you could make with bamboo and in all likelihood you would end up saying “it’s easier to make a list of things I can not make with bamboo!”

Typically – consider the three basic needs of a human being – food, clothing and shelter – and there you can use bamboo in all three!

Also true that when one thinks of the states of the North East region in India, bamboo comes to mind first. So as we prepare for the North East Festival in New Delhi, it seemed appropriate to write about bamboo, the fine baskets, their varying shapes suitable for different functions.

Here are some amazing facts of bamboo listed in the website of the National Mission of Bamboo applications.

Lighting up the planet

In 1854, Henricg Globel, a German watchmaker made the first true light bulb. He used a carbonised bamboo filament inside a glass bulb. In 1879, Thomas Alva Edison too used bamboo splits as filaments, working with bamboo obtained from Japan. The bamboo filament tended to last about forty hours before burning out.

Polo balls – made from bamboo rhizome

The modern and glamorous game of polo owes its origins to Sagol Kangjei, a sport that originated in the Imphal valley of Manipur. To this day, Meitei riders astride sturdy Manipuri ponies play many-a-side polo, using rattan sticks and a ball fashioned from bamboo rhizome. The practice of using a ball made from bamboo rhizome continued for many years, to be replaced only well into the 20th century with balls made of hard plastic material.

Teething troubles solved with bamboo

Mr. Dodhi Pathak makes artificial teeth from bamboo. He made the first set for his own use, but now designs and fits dentures for anyone who needs them. Many people in Nalbari, his home in Assam are now wearing bamboo teeth. With them, they can chew anything and eat mutton and fish. Mr. Pathak makes a tooth in half an hour. The teeth last up to 10 years and can be fitted permanently or be removed like dentures. His work has been recognised by the National Innovation Foundation of India, which is helping him expand the business. Mr. Pathak has also made a bicycle entirely from bamboo – except, of course, for the tyres and tubes.

THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA - THE ROAD AHEAD

Vijaya Rajan

The Crafts Council of India is an unusual NGO, rare in its spirit and letter of volunteerism. I'd even go further and say that it represents perhaps a diminishing bastion of volunteer workers who have over the past decades given generously of their time, talent and indeed financial resources, to make it the country's best known NGO working in the crafts sector. However as the old guard grows older and newer volunteer entrants come to the fore, I'd like to share a few thoughts with you.

In volunteer work there are no tangible returns barring the intangibles of satisfaction and fulfillment. CCI specifically works for the goals of craft development and sustainable livelihood for craftspeople, and it is not so much what CCI can do for the volunteer members as what they can do for the organization and the millions of craftspeople it works with. Over the years members have given unstintingly of their time, energies and talent, from graphic designing to writing and journalism, from innovative fund raising and awareness-spreading to organizing workshops, decorating venues and traveling throughout the country and to venues abroad as representatives of the country's matchless handcraft heritage. In our journey there have been some wonderful moments whose depth and reach cannot be quantified. Recently at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas I was touched by the fact that many craftspersons we work with regard us as a part of their family, Bashir Ahmad Jaan gave me a moment of total fulfillment when he said " But the Crafts Council members are my family.....". When I told Abdul Jabbar Khatri and Vankar Arjun Vishram that unfortunately there was not much direct sales as expected for their products at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, they said that it was a matter of great pride for them to be associated with the Crafts Council of India, to be part of the larger craft family that is CCI. They also mentioned that it was an eye opener for them to see how deeply the CCI members are committed to their work. There is nothing more euphoric than meeting craftspersons and artisans in remote parts of the country whose lives have been touched and even transformed by CCI interaction.

Today CCI is a credible well respected craft NGO, playing a crucial role in craft development and welfare of craftspersons both nationally and internationally. Its stature is recognized by the Government, other NGOs and above all by the craftspersons. CCI has partnered with Unesco in some of their major international programmes and at present are partners with UNESCO involved in selecting and choosing craft products from South Asia for the Award of Excellence from the SAARC countries, etc. CCI has collaborated with Aid to Artisans(ATA) Connecticut, USA and has participated in the Santa Fe Folk Art Market, New Mexico, USA.

However, if we wish to take this meaningful movement forward we need CCI members to put in all their effort and commitment. There should be no clash of interests and total loyalty to the organization. We need a concentrated, single minded focus. We need funding and financial security and I appeal to CCI members to work towards this from every possible direction and to tap every possible source.

In the next 2 – 3 years we want to take CCI to a level when we can hire professionals to do most of the administrative jobs while the Executive Committee works not only in an advisory capacity but also gives specific guidance on developmental and other activities. We have many plans on the anvil, many dreams to fructify, many projects to mature. We need a bigger office area where a space can be created for designer, craftsperson and entrepreneurs to be able to interact on a regular basis. Our Kamala outlets in New Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata are well established and are known for their quality products at a good price. But we still have miles to go. Volunteerism is not easy. I ask you to stay the course with dedication and passion and come forward in this mission of CCI's to develop our crafts and provide a sustainable livelihood for the vast communities of craftspersons spread all over India.

A SIGNAL HONOUR FOR INDIA

Usha Krishna

The 16th General Assembly of the World Crafts Council was held in Hangzhou, China, from 6th to 9th November 2007.



Smt. Usha Krishna giving her acceptance speech

The World Crafts Council (WCC) is a non-government, non-profit organisation. The WCC was founded in 1964 in New York City by Mrs Aileen Webb with co-founders Ms Margaret Patch and Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. Its stated aim was and is the establishment of a craft movement to provide a better future to the craftspeople of the world. The WCC is the only International NGO working in the craft sector. The WCC is

affiliated to the UNESCO in a consultative status. The WCC is structured as a Federation of Nations and Organisations, members being national entities, associate members, group members and individual members.

The WCC is organised into five regions – Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, South America and North America. The countries within these regions are members of the WCC and represent the crafts and craftspeople of their respective countries. Each of these regions

has its own President, Vice President and a Governing Body. The WCC is headed by the President, elected at the General Assembly once in every four years. The role of the President is to facilitate interactions between different regions by means of shared information, data and other inputs to encourage new membership in the different regions and help in the organisation of annual/bi-annual meetings. The crafts traditions are maintained through improvement in education, technology, design inputs, training and marketing programmes.

This term the World Crafts Council decided to have the President from the Asia Pacific Region which requested India to take on the Presidentship. CCI being the National Entity representing India was asked to nominate the candidate and the Executive Committee of which I am also a member proposed my name for the Presidentship. The proposal was seconded by Srilanka. I am very happy and proud that at the 16th General Assembly held in Hangzhou, China, the members of WCC elected me as its President, the first Indian to occupy this office ever since its inception. I deem it an honour for the country and for the Crafts Council of India. After assuming charge as President, I reaffirmed to the Assembly that my main focus would be on advocacy, taking the cause of crafts and craftspersons to the governments, policy makers and business community and that I would also strive to ensure that crafts and craftspersons are recognized as an integral part of society as well as brought into the mainstream.

Coming to the General Assembly, the inaugural ceremony was held at the Zhejiang People's Great Hall in the afternoon on the 6th of November with a grand display of drill and a fashion parade. The inauguration coincided with the opening of the Exhibition organised by the International Handicrafts Development Forum where a number of crafts were displayed in a sprawling complex spread over three floors. Live demonstrations were also held for the public to see how the exquisite works are done by the craftspersons. The inaugural function concluded with a grand banquet hosted by the organisers.

Along with the regular meetings as part of the proceedings of the General Assembly, the organisers had also arranged tours to the City of Hangzhou and to the Crafts Centres in Putian and other places. Post-conference tours to Suzhou, Zhouzhuang and Shanghai were also arranged for the benefit of the participants of the General assembly.

The General Assembly came to an end with a grand closing ceremony on the 9th November evening. The awards for the UNESCO Young Craftsperson Competition were also presented during this function.

RUPAHI SHYAM-INDIGO DYEING IN ASSAM

Nandini Dutta

Rupahi Shyam is a 76 year old lady living in a remote village called Chala Pother Shyam Gaon in Upper Assam. This immensely talented lady is a descendent of the Tai

tribe which migrated from Burma. Originally inhabited by agriculturists, the village of about 80 inhabitants was self sufficient in outlook, and wove and made things only for their use. Today the residents are slowly waking up to the benefits of commerce.

Rupahi is the last of the artists involved in Indigo dyeing from a locally grown variety of grass. It is a much simpler method than what we know of Indigo dyeing. Shalini Sahoo, a lady who worked in the area had first introduced her to me. The Crafts Council of Assam has tracked down the lady and is trying to preserve, promote and encourage her unique talent and method. Two of our nominated weavers, Jamini and Anuradha visited her and have been awestruck by her method and knowledge. Rupahi has shown them the art and also given them the special grass for planting in their areas. Jamini, being not too far from Rupahi's village, is visiting her regularly for lessons.

The Crafts Council of Assam is keen to help Rupahi with recognition and will be seeking the government's help to promote and preserve her art. It is also trying to encourage the reluctant villagers to learn this unique method. Once they see the commercial aspect of this art, they will seriously look at Rupahi's talent. We are encouraging this by starting marketing the small amount of weaves made in this natural dye. This disappearing art has to be preserved and CCA is trying to do its bit in this direction.

KAMALA DELHI - HYDERABAD - KOLKATA!!!

Gita Ram



Inauguration of Kamala at Kolkata

Do we really need to do this? Why the risk, why sink in so much money in retail? Is it really worth it ?

Our vision for the craft sector is that crafts should be a sought after livelihood option for Generation Next

To achieve this, we have to make sure that crafts sell and that the artisan has a continuous income. To make crafts sell we find that the best way is to do it ourselves. Of course retail is not the only way we secure

new markets for the artisans, but for now lets just look at retail in India

We started Kamala Delhi very hesitantly in 2005 but wow, now in 2009, it has become a destination for craft lovers.

With that heady success, we plunged into Hyderabad and have learnt to wait

Kolkata was irresistible with both the location and the costs involved playing a large part in the decision to open the third Kamala.

We are learning a lot.

Each city has a different clientele. What customers look for in Kamala is very different in each city

Delhi has always been exposed to craft bazaars and melas and so to sell crafts that people haven't found anywhere else in spite of all the emporiums Delhi is famous for, is something Delhi Crafts Council's shop team who run the Kamala shop on CCI's behalf have excelled in.

In Hyderabad we have many factors to battle through. Very high rental, the inability to put up signage has made it very frustrating. However Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh's shop team who run Kamala, Hyderabad on CCI's behalf has delved into the matter and we seem to see some light at the end of the tunnel. Strategies for increasing the turnover have been put in the pipeline and we look forward to a better year.

Kolkata has been a dream. Kolkata's public have a deep respect for crafts and have not been very exposed to all of India's vast resources

The bit about the business being successful or not is essential because to have an impact on craftspeople, we have to make sure that we are on solid ground

So, how many artisans are we impacting? We need to reach out to more and more artisans .and NGOs

The artisan's interaction with the shops has had a very positive result. Confident that their work will sell in the shops, their own business acumen has sharpened. With every new shop, one can feel their excitement growing. This is a path we need to tread together — side by side.

THE 16TH WCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEET: A BIRDS EYE VIEW

Rajeshwari

The World Crafts Council (WCC) General Assemblies have been organized every four years with rotation of venues among five regions. This year China was the host of the 16th WCC General Assembly, which was held in China's southern city of Hangzhou.

A 46 member delegation of The Crafts Council of India, an active member of the Asia Pacific Region (APR) participated in the Assembly. Smt. Prema Paranthaman was the National Delegate representing India and Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon the second National Delegate. We were received at Hangzhou by the members of the organizing committee.



The 16th WCC General Assembly gets under way

baggage would all come in safely. God! Just imagine going through a 10day Assembly with one saree !.

The reception committee at the New Century Grand Hotel was an experience in itself. A 120 young volunteers were mobilized to take care of the same number of delegates or maybe even less. Our rooms were already assigned, delegate kits handed out with invitations cards for all the major events and our ID badges with meal coupons distributed. We were asked to assemble at the lobby in an hour to collect our baggage. So we all decided to go up to our rooms to freshen up. An hour later when some of us met up at the lobby the bemused and shocked expression on most of the faces was hilarious. The problem? All the beautifully appointed rooms had equally beautifully done up 'open to the room' bathrooms. The only partition between the room and the bathroom was a clear sheet of glass. Everybody had a theory and a solutions but suffice it is to say that we all managed. In fact, we became experts at bathing and dressing in total darkness.

On 5th November we were into serious business. The 31st APR General Assembly was held at the New Century Grand Hotel itself. Dato Abdullah HJ.AB Rahman, Regional President, World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region 2004-2008 welcomed the gathering and reported on the activities organised for the benefit of all craftsmen worldwide during the four year tenure. The 5 Regional Vice Presidents - Mrs. Ruby Ghuznavi, Senior Vice President of South Asia; Dr. Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi, Vice-President of West Asia; Ms. Deng Ying, Vice-President of Far East Asia; Mr. Chinnaphat Sangkhawuttichalyakul Vice-President of South East Asia; and Mrs. Dinara Chochunbaeva, Vice-President of Central Asia presented the reports of their region. At the end of the day the new President, Kun Surapee Rojanawongse of Thailand took over from Dato Abdullah H.J.AB Rahman of Malaysia

The opening ceremony of the 16th WCC General Assembly took place in Zhejiang People's Great Hall on the 6th November. A hundred and odd men and women all dressed in red danced to the tune of Chinese drums. The beat and rhythm of the whole exercise was enchanting. Equally compelling was a fashion show of ethereal Chinese outfits.

We had buses waiting for us but not for our luggage !. We had forgotten to warn the Chinese organizers about the way Indians ladies travel - two sarees per day, sometimes three to be on the safe side and of course the matching accessories and an extra suitcase for shopping and another 'just in case' suitcase. So we had to leave all our check-in baggage at the airport parking lot, to be brought in later to the hotel in a special bus. The journey to the hotel was unusually quiet, because we were all praying that our

The Contemporary Arts and Crafts Masterwork Exhibition is an annual event organised by China Arts and Crafts Association. This year the exhibition was held to coincide with the 16th WCC General Assembly from 6th to 10th November. The exhibition was divided into two sections, National and International. Unesco had its booth in the International section with a fabulous display of the Seal of Excellence awarded products. The National section included an array of beautiful and exquisite handicrafts of every craft category from all over China. The day ended with a grand banquet. I might add that Chinese hospitality is something to be experienced to be believed.

The WCC General Assembly had its deliberations on the 7th and 8th of November. The closing ceremony was on the 9th of November. The awards for the young Craftsperson competition 2008 were handed out at this function. The award ceremony of the Unesco's 'Award of Excellence for Handicrafts' also took place at the closing ceremony.

The outgoing President of WCC, Ms. Maria Celina Rodriguez Olea handed over the mantle of Presidentship to Mrs. Usha Krishna who is also a CCI Executive Committee member. It was a very proud moment for all of us. The appeal of India is universal. The night ended in typical Bollywood style - everybody shook a leg to old Hindi filmy songs.

On 10th of November all the delegates were taken around the city for a guided tour of Hangzhou. The boat ride on the famous West Lake was a serene and romantic experience. But the piece de resistance was the outdoor musical performance at night called "Impression West Lake", directed by renowned Chinese director Zhang Yimou. Staged entirely on the lake itself, Impression West Lake was a sensational spectacle of light, music, dance and theatrics.

On 11th of November all the delegates were flown into one of the biggest crafts manufacturing bases Putian in Fujian Province. The craft manufacturing base housed hundreds of craft showrooms with their manufacturing units situated at the rear with special wings dedicated to wood, stone and jewellery.

The grand scale, excellent organisation, large hearted hospitality, beautiful hotels, the exquisite and wide range of handicrafts have all left an indelible mark on our hearts and mind. And yes, I must tell you that one visit to China is all you need to hone your skills of bargaining.

POST CONFERENCE TOURS: THE WONDER THAT IS CHINA

Rajam Subramaniam

China, to use a Hemingwayism, is a moveable feast and through the well organized Post Conference tours we were able to savour its sights and sounds, its unique, unforgettable beauty.

To the 10th Century poet, Su Dongpo, West Lake, which we visited on 10th November, is comparable to the most beautiful woman of ancient China. As indeed it is. The natural setting, the strangely shaped peaks, heavily wooded forests and springs and the flowering trees and shrubs made for an intoxicating sight. Near the lake we visited Ling Yu Temple famous for its architecture and a major centre of Chan Buddhism.

Then it was on to Zhonghuang with its beautiful chrysanthemum gardens and lovely canals. Here we visited the Zhenu embroidery workshop and lace factory. Next on the agenda was the 'Oriental Venice' the magical town of Suzhou with its 2500 years of history. Built in 574 it is the historic centre of the Chinese silk industry and has the most beautiful harmonious gardens, 60 of them world heritage sites. The water townships of Suzhou have well preserved buildings going back to the Ming and Qing era. The cradle of Wu culture, Suzhou is famous the world over for its calligraphy artefacts, embroidery and brocade.

Tang dynasty's North Temple Pagoda now beckoned with its history of 1700 years. It is a brick and wooden Buddha Pagoda with a height of 76 metres; and unbelievable in its mix of history, architecture, culture and scenic beauty. There was shopping too in 1100 year old Shanlang Street and we had a ball visiting antique shops and tea houses.

The Arts and Crafts Institute at Suzhou which we visited on November 14th is easily one of the best in the world. We were taken around the campus with buildings each of which has artisans crafting different handicrafts. It also has a superb exhibition stall where Chinese crafts are wonderfully displayed. Later in the day, we paid a visit to the ancient embroidery home of Zhenhu ecological town. Every woman in the town is an embroiderer. There is a 1700 metres long embroidery street in the city and a magnificent Chinese Embroidery Art Gallery celebrating China's ancient, living embroidery culture.

And finally to Shanghai on the 15th and 16th November with its impeccable roads, glittery malls, sky scrapers, Oriental Pearl TV Tower, Pudong airport and other marvels. We also had a taste of the 'olde' Shanghai at the famous 'bund', the serene Buddha temples, the ancient gardens and the quaint, winding streets. More shopping, endless sight seeing, much ingestion of exotic Chinese cuisine and at last we were ready albeit reluctantly to say good bye to China.

Nurturing the Craft Future

CCI Scholarships for Children Working in Crafts

Pushpa Chari

That CCI's scholarship for children of craftspersons is a step in the right direction is hardly a debatable issue. Infact, it is an admirable step to nurture the future of Indian crafts. Not only are deserving children of craftspersons given the means of school education while they simultaneously work on their hereditary craft vocation, they are able to confidently face the future equipped with education and training. A somewhat similar scholarship scheme instituted by the Delhi Crafts Council called Kamaladevi Puraskar for children of hereditary craftsperson who practise handcrafts has been a remarkable success. Ten years on, most of the Puraskar awardees are doing well in their respective crafts and many are famous names such as Bhagaban Subudhi.

But CCI's vision has always been not "just the truth but the meaning behind the truth" as Japanese printmaker Hokusai put it. Or, as Gita Ram who traveled in remote parts of Orissa to meet the scholarship holders, puts it "the idea was to gauge the scholarship scheme in its totality to see the children in their environment, to meet the parents. It was a learning experience for me, it opened so many new windows and perceptions"

There is a 7 year old scholarship holder in Raghurajpur, a little girl who is in the first rung of mastering the craft. She merely cleans the stone all day and will take one year to perfect the craft. Then there is Ramananda Basak's son, another scholarship holder who sent us a spindle which had taken him many months to craft. "We have to be patient", continues Gita, "and see that the scholarship holder stays in the craft and continues doing it".

Obviously, the whole 'scholarship and staying in the craft' issue needs to be seen sympathetically and not as an 'outsider', as urban 'givers' bestowing a favour. And expecting instant results at 'our' pace. There are issues of 'isolation' which the children in remote areas face. There is also the problem of the girl child not being allowed to, or not practicing the craft after marriage. Walking the thin line between consistency, empathy and firmness, between nurturing the child and craft is never going to be easy. The scholarship schemes requires one to do all this and more.

UNESCO AWARD OF EXCELLENCE 2008

A REPORT

The Unesco Award of Excellence for Handicrafts - South Asia 2008 was given to forty quality craft products from across seven of the South Asian countries.

This event now in its 5th year, had a total of 167 handicraft product submissions in the South Asian region. The list of successful 40 awardees include: Bangladesh 1, Bhutan-1, India 27, Maldives 1, Nepal 1, Pakistan 5, and Sri Lanka 3.

The international jury met at the Harrisons Hotel, Chennai on 24 and 25 September 2008 to review the 167 submissions received. The jury comprised the following experts, selected on the basis of their long-standing experience and expertise in the area of crafts and marketing:

- Judith Espinar (USA), Founder-Chairman, Santa Fe Folk Art Market
- Mr Kim Jing Tae (Korea), Chief Director of the Korean Craft Promotion Foundation
- Ms Liliana Fassino (Italy - Auroville), Researcher and Designer working with Asian craft traditions and
- Ms Rathi Vinay Jha (India), Secretary General of the World Travel & Tourism Council and former Director General of Fashion Design Council of India.

This year saw an increase in the number of entries and for the first time submissions have been received from all the countries concerned, including the first ever participation from Maldives.

Launched in 2002, the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicraft is a recognition granted to quality craft products that combine the excellence of traditional skills, design innovation and aesthetics. This year submissions were reviewed against the key criteria of incorporating excellence, innovation, authenticity, marketability, eco-friendliness and social responsibility. By recognizing such attributes in craftsmanship, the programme aims to set quality standards, raise international awareness and strengthen market demand for Asian handicraft products.

YOUNG CRAFTSPERSONS COMPETITION 2008 - A REPORT

The Young Craft persons competition 2008 was jointly organized by the World Crafts Council, Asia Pacific region and Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation, a government agency under the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Malaysia. CCI was the national coordinating entity for entries from India.

This competition aimed to recognize the talent and skills of young craftspeople of the region to generate international awareness and to promote aesthetics in creativity.

The theme for this year was traditional textiles in three categories: 1) Hand printed / block printed/tie and dye, 2) Weaving and 3) Embroidery.

Twenty two entries were received from India. Out of these 9 were selected by a sub-committee of CCI. For the final selection a 5 member international jury was appointed by the WCCAPR during its General Assembly held in Hangzhou, China in November 2008.

CCI is proud to inform its members that in the hand printed/tie and dye category Mr. Abdul Jabbar Khatri of Kutch won the second prize and was presented with US \$ 500 and a certificate.

In the hand block printed /tie dye category the 1st prize went to Malaysia and the 2nd prize to India. In the 2nd category of weaving the 1st prize was bagged by Bangladesh and the 2nd prize by China. In the embroidery category China won the 1st prize while Bangladesh won the 2nd prize.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

Supriya Sundararaman

The Crafts Council of India had an opportunity to interact with the non-resident Indian diaspora to present its work with Indian crafts particularly in the area of adapting crafts to



Interaction with mastercraftsperson at CCI stall

the contemporary milieu. This was at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Non-resident Indians Day) held at the Chennai Trade Centre from the 7th till 9th of January, 2009. This event was organized by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in partnership with the state government of Tamil Nadu and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

The event aimed to connect more than 25 million non-resident Indians with India's social development.

The CII invited the Crafts Council of India to showcase its activities and to present the best of India's handicraft traditions to the visiting dignitaries and guests. The CCI selected 20 of the best of India's craft traditions and invited mastercraftsmen and award winning artisans to display and demonstrate the craft.

CCI provided 6000 sq ft of space with a basic structure of walls and roof. To this CCI added a compact and beautiful structure creating space for the 20 stalls and a craft display area.



CCI Stall at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

CCI's endeavour through this interaction was to seek new markets for artisans and craftsmen along with identifying potential donors for some of our projects. A special folder describing these projects and inviting specific sponsorship was prepared and distributed to interested persons and organizations. Due to heavy security at the venue there were not many visitors but queries for some exhibitions outside India seem promising and details are being worked out.

CRAFTING INDIA KOREA LINKS

Pushpa Chari

The first collaborative programme between The Crafts Council of India and the India Korea Centre (InKo) was held at Daegu in Korea where CCI participated in the International Symposium and Exhibition of Natural Dyes (ISEND). India is the original home of most of the natural dyes that the world knows today and tapping the Indian craftsperson and dyer's immense knowledge which is fast disappearing is a prime focus of CCI activities. CCI has been active in taking up the cause of natural dyes at various podiums in the past. In 2006 CCI in collaboration with Unesco organized the International Natural Dye Symposium in Hyderabad, the largest congregation of natural dye weavers, resource people, scholars, craftspersons and others. CCI's decision to participate in ISEND 2008 was therefore a natural progression.

The Crafts Council of India sent Sri. Vankar Shamji Vishram and Smt. Jagada Rajappa to participate in ISEND. Vankar Shamji has been working with lac dyeing derived from the actual insect for the past five years with the aim of reviving its use in Bhujodi textiles. He comes from a family of traditional Meghwal weavers also called Vankars from Bhujodi, in central Kachch, Gujarat. Jagada Rajappa took on the cause of natural dyes from the early 80s and was a close associate of the world renowned expert in vegetables dyes late

Shri.K.V. Chandramouli, for over twenty years. In these years she has learnt from him several traditional techniques and has in turn, trained several craftspeople in different parts of India and in other Asian countries.

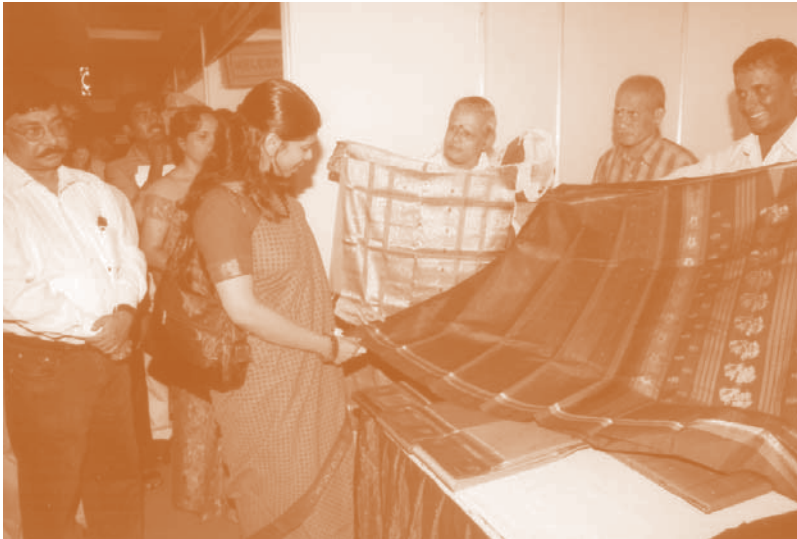
CRAFTBYTES

- A tenth of the new year is behind us. A lot of work needs to be done. More so as Usha Krishna takes on the mantle of the President of the World Crafts Council. Incidentally, very little reporting of the event and of the WCC assembly at Hangzhou, China was carried out.
- The Hindu carried an article on Usha's election (www.hindu.com/2009/01/01/stories/2009010159931300.htm)
- WCC Europe carried the proceedings of the world Assembly (www.wcc-europe.org)
- The World Crafts Council does not have much of a site to speak of. Even the CCI site has not been updated as far as the Hangzhou assembly. Perhaps the new WCC President should look into the design and content of both websites as part of her agenda.
- A simple organisation such as Saathi in Bastar (www.saathi.info) has a current and vibrant webpage.
- A search for craft in design schools in India threw up (www.designinindia.net) which gives a comprehensive listing of design schools in the country besides a list of the prominent NGOs working in the craft sector.

ACTIVITIES

THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

- Crafts Bazaar 2008: A veritable feast of quality handcrafts was spread at Valluvar Kottam at the Crafts Bazaar 2008 sponsored by the DC(H). One hundred and fifty stalls beckoned with the best of the country's craft products ranging from metal craft, jewellery, terracotta and reed craft to products fashioned out of sholapith, grass, paper and so on.
- Award of Excellence Jury meet: September saw a four member International jury assembled in Chennai to choose the winners of Unesco's 'Award of Excellence'. A dazzling spread of crafts was displayed drawn from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Srilanka, Maldives and Bhutan.
- Textile and Jewellery Show: Held in September the Textile show lived up to its expectation drawing large festive crowds. The cognoscenti of Chennai chose from the best of Benarasis, Chanderis, Kotas, Tangails, Bandhunis, Uppadas as well as



VIP visitor Ms. Kanimozhi at Crafts Bazaar

activities by the presenting a selection of 20 of the best of India's craft traditions

georgettes, tussars and silks embellished with superb craftwork. Some of the country's best known mastercraftsmen and designers presented their creations at the fundraising show.

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas: At the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held at the Chennai Trade Centre from 7th – 9th January '09, CCI showcased its

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH

- CCI has opened a Kamala Shop at Hyderabad aimed at the discerning buyer. Its elegance has begun to attract buyers in large numbers. The Stoneware Exhibition and the write-ups it got in the papers boosted sales a little more. The products that had been developed at various CCI workshops had a remarkable range and variety.
- As a sequel to Akruthi Vastra this year the Committee decided to attempt Akruthi Shristi. The focus for the Shristi venture was craft based. Nearly 80 craftspersons participated including those sponsored by Craftmark and Tillonia. The public response was very good. Many lessons were learnt from this exhibition, chief among them being the attention to quality and design to suit the urban contemporary buyer. Also that most craftspersons and weavers wanted intervention in the form of design inputs and upgradation of tools.
- CCAP is proud that three members have received awarded the UNESCO Award of Excellence 2008 in Banjara needlecraft, silver filigree and ikat.
- Many years of hard work have finally culminated in CCAP being chosen as the implementing agency for the Interated Handloom Development Scheme, Of Puttapaka Handloom Cluster, the first time an NGO has been give the opportunity to implement this scheme. This is a 3 year programme during which CCAP will be working with 300 weavers.

DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

- Second Chamba Rumal Workshop 2008: The workshop was held in Delhi in August at the office premises. Six embroiderers and one artist traveled to Delhi for this workshop. This was in continuation of an interface between the DCC and the Centre

at Chamba. Rohini Arora, who is the co-ordinator for this project, had worked out many new layouts. New fabrics like Chanderi tissue and tussar were experimented with. Special attention was paid to trims and tassels on the rumals since a range of small coverlets was being developed as a cheaper option for sale.

- Sarees 2008: This annual fund raising programme was held on 7th, 8th and 9th Oct 2008 at the Aga Khan Hall. This year, the Sutrakar Samman was given to Shri Niranjan Kumar Poddar of Berojgar Mahila Kalyan Sanstha. This remarkable organization has given over 300 women and 30 weavers skills, means of earning and empowerment. The beautiful weaves have added a whole new dimension to tussar sarees and dupattas.

Programmes at Kamala Shop:

- Patram: An Exhibition of tableware was held at the Kamala shop in July. Harkishan, a master-potter from Uttamnagar, had done a special range of glazed terracotta tableware. The shop team of Neelam Sehgal, Purnima Rai, Manju Nirula, Shivani Modi and Abha Gupta had worked hard at the development of new products and designs. The collection was beautifully done and DCC hopes that it will be an ongoing project with the evolution of new designs.
- Stitched Narratives: This was a very special Exhibition of large embroidered hangings made by women "Sujani" artisans of Bihar and conceived and designed by Archana Kumari, a 4th year degree student at NIFT, New Delhi. Archana comes from Muzzaffarpur in Bihar and hers has indeed been a memorable life's journey. Archana's travel and life experiences and many dreams are encapsulated in these remarkable works. The embroidery has been done by a team of women from Archana's village. The hangings were specially commissioned by Kamala Shop. Also on display were a special collection of narrative embroideries from Birbhum, West Bengal and Kutch. This interesting exhibition was held at Kamala in Sept. 2008.
- Diwali Gift Collection: Specially packaged diyas of stone and metal and Madhubani painted boxes were developed as Diwali gift and had a good sale during the festive season

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

- The Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Viswakarma Award (2007) presentation ceremony was held at the Raj Bhavan, Bangalore, on the 27th of August 2008. His Excellency the Governor of Karnataka Sri. Rameswar Thakur presented the award to Shri. Nagesh Acharya, Sculptor, instructor at the Artisan Training Centre, Jogaradoddi, Bidadi Taluk, Bangalore Rural Dist. The other three National Awardees felicitated were: Smt. Hema Shekar for batik and tie and dye, Smt. Susheela Devi for Mysore traditional painting and Smt. Sudha Venkatesh for Ganjifa art.

- At the World Elder's Day function organised by the Ashvasan Foundation on the 1st of October 2008, Smt. Chennamma, a seventy year old craftsperson from Shabalu village of Karnataka, specializing in the weaving of elephant grass mats was given financial assistance by the Crafts Council of Karnataka.
- 'Kamalini' the Crafts outlet of the Crafts Council of Karnataka held several individual handcrafted textile exhibitions to encourage small entrepreneurs from various states between June and October 2008.
- CCK's flagship event 'Vastrabharana' 2008 was held from 1st to 6th October showcasing handcrafted textiles, jewellery and accessories. This was the sixteenth year of the event. It was well received by connoisseurs of crafts and general public alike. Volume II of the Temple series translated into Kannada by Dr. Chudamani Nandagopal was released on the 18th of October 2008. This event was sponsored by the Kannada and Culture Department of the Government of Karnataka. The Temple series, a set of three volumes in Kannada has been greatly appreciated by the people of Karnataka.

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TRIPURA

- The sales centre, "Ramyani" run by the CCT is functioning well.
- The Hony. President, CCI visited Tripura from 27th August to 31st August 2008 in connection with the proposed North East Craft Festival to be held in Dilli Haat, New Delhi from 29th January to 7th February 2009. The CCT took her to the residences of many crafts artisans in the remote villages of the State to have a direct experience of their activities. CCT also organized a meeting of the selected craftspersons with the President.
- Sri Sujan Roy, the Office Secretary, CCT participated in the workshop-cum-awareness building programme held on 18th June at Agartala for the growth of MSEs and creation of self employment in this sector. The programme was organized by the North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization Ltd., Guwahati.
- The new Self-Help Group is proposed to be organized by the CCT shortly and preparations are in progress.

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

- CCTN started off with craft classes being held in schools from October. Initially, CCTN have begun with "Collage Art" to stimulate the creativity within minds of the children. Three schools have been covered out of which one school is for the hearing impaired. CCTN plans to introduce more native crafts like palmyrah craft and "janoor" in the coming months.
- During September '08 CCTN was approached by the Indian Chamber of Commerce



Toranams crafted by Coimbatore craftspersons

involved in this craft has risen to the demands of Coimbatore designers during the wedding season with beautifully crafted thoranams and floral decoration.

and Industry, Coimbatore chapter to introduce to the public some form of craft demonstrations at their annual Chamber Show. On September 27th CCTN had organized garland making and olai craft demonstrations at the show which were very popular.

- CCTN's efforts with palmyrah craft is proving to be very successful. The single family in Uuthukuli that is

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL



Kamala shop at Kolkata

demonstrated his own techniques of turning the wheel in the opposite direction. However, it was felt that though the workshop was informative, it was not very detailed. Bidhan Tudu who attended the bamboo workshop also felt that the use of Indian bamboo in the demonstration would have been more appropriate. Chandoni Basu who took part in the paper workshop was very impressed with Japanese paper making since no chemical or artificial colouring agents are used and even the adhesive is derived from the humble 'bhindi'. She also felt that a detailed discussion was called for on the way this paper can be actually used.

- Weavers Studio organised workshops for 3 days at different venues. CCWB had sent Bidhan Tudu for the bamboo workshop, Arun Pal and Pradip Roy for ceramics and Chandoni Basu for the paper workshops. The workshops were very interesting and the other participants were mostly professionals. In the ceramics workshop a Japanese trainer

CCI Calendar of Events:

Events	Dates	Venue
Natural Dye Exhibition	15 th – 21 st February 2009	MAC Charities, Abirami Chidambaram Community Hall, Chennai
Vishwakarma Exhibition	25 th February – 3 rd March 2009	Apparao Galleries, Chennai
Textile & Jewellery Show	13 th & 14 th March 2009	Hotel Sheraton Chola, Chennai

AFFILIATED STATE COUNCILS

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH

H.No. 6-3-713, G-7, Emerald,
Amurtha Hills,
Punjagutta
HYDERABAD – 500 082
Tel: 040-23418462 / 55971721
E-mail: craftscouncilofap@rediffmail.com
craftsofap@yahoo.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ASSAM

1/1 Penn Road,
Alipore,
KOLKATA – 700 027
Tel: 033 – 24799536 / 22485229
Fax: 033 – 22485228
E-mail: nandini_dutta@hotmail.com

DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

116-A/1, First Floor,
Shahpur Jat, Nr. SBI bank,
NEW DELHI – 110049
Tel: 011 – 65020896
E-mail: delhcraft@gmail.com
E-mail: cci.dlh@gmail.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF HARYANA

1857, Sector – 16,
Faridabad,
HARYANA
Tel: 01886-26831135 / 093126-43275
E-mail: ganpatipapers@yahoo.co.in

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF NAGALAND

Central Apartment, Nagarjan Junction,
P. Box No. 492.
DIMAPUR-797 112
NAGALAND
Tel: 03862-226443, 231333, 240568
Mob: 094360-02520

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA 'BHOOMA', No.37, 17th Cross,

Malleswaram
BANGALORE - 560 055
Tel: 080 – 23347299
Fax: 080 – 23347370
E.mail: cck@dataone.in

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

8, New Damu Nagar,
Near Kidney Centre,
Puliakulum Road,
COIMBATORE – 641 037
Tel: 0422 – 6580368
Fax: 0422 – 4350856 / 2231374
E.mail: starnetcbe@yahoo.com
E.mail: cbe.popular@gmail.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TRIPURA

Handloom Marketing Complex,
1st Floor (West End),
Sankuntala Road,
AGARTALA – 799 001
Tel: 0381-235 2680 / 251 8142
Mob: 094361-30313 / 98633-24971 /
098631-89210
E.mail: craftscouncil_tripura@yahoo.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF UTTAR PRADESH

Arif Ashiana, 1st Floor
Neebu Bagh Chowk,
LUCKNOW – 226 003
Tel: (0522) – 2268141/
Fax: (0522) – 2251957
E.mail: craftcouncilup@hotmail.com
E.mail: jayashreedhesi@hotmail.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL

C/o Artisana

13, Chowringhee Terrace

Behind Kolkata Club,

Off Gokhale Road

KOLKATA - 700 020

Tel: 91-33-24661360 / 24661357

Fax: 91-33- 4663801/ Mob: 98310-09845

E-mail: ccwb@vsnl.net

MEMBERSHIP

The Crafts Council of India membership is open to all persons above 18 years of age residing in India. CCI members not residing in Chennai are required to become a member of the local council where it exists. If not, they have to become members of the Council as and when one is formed in that State.

THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA, GF Temple Trees, 37, Venkatanarayana Road, T.Nagar, Chennai – 600 017.

Website: www.craftscouncilindia.org