

# **Fashion Discourses: The Influence of East Dress on European Fashion**

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## **Abstract:**

Generally, the term “Fashion” is used for European dresses. Fashion is a fast-moving industry in Europe that caters to consumers from the high-street towards haute couture (High Fashion) market level. The European fashion industry drives with seasonal trends which show rapid changes every two weeks. European fashion consumers are a stakeholder in the cycle of desire that is created by trendsetters of the Fashion Industry. East dress simply does not consider seasonal changes as fashion. The dress of the East resembles mainly the culture. Sustainability, heritage, cultural norms, and values, national identity is key in East dress which shows ethnic identity which enables gives exotic clothing tastes to European consumers. Practically, the East has been embraced by Europe as a visual delicacy, creating concrete issues of dress in Fashion academia. It is expected to analyze the Western interpretation of East dress by comparing dresses created by Western Fashion designers who were inspired by East dress characteristics. The research is qualitative data analysis. The reliability of data is much concerned. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Selected designers from the history of Western fashion were studied. Original dresses which were created by European fashion designers that are displayed at the world museums were observed. East dress characteristics are discussed according to Sri Lankan historical dress examples. Selected dresses of Asia, Saree, cloak, Kimono dress details, and their inspiration power are discussed. Scholarly written research papers, books, websites, fashion blogs were read and collected relevant data. It was found that the East dress has achieved a different interpretation in Europe. Actual usage has been excluded in Europe. It was noted that European designers pay more attention to asymmetric, fluid drapery effects of East dress. East dress became an art piece in Europe. It can be identified as a unique selling point of Asian dresses.

**Keywords:** East, fashion, inspiration, west

## **1. Introduction**

Eastern world characterizes various cultures or social structures, nations and philosophical systems. It comprises Asia and geographically, the countries and cultures East of Europe, the Mediterranean region and Arab world, specifically in historical contexts, and in modern times in the context of Orientalism. In art history, literature and cultural studies, Orientalism is the imitation or representation of aspects in the Eastern world. The Western world most often consists of the majority of Europe, Australasia, and the Americas. In this research it is expected to analyse how Eastern dress has been interpreted in Europe. In ancient time Asian dress, Ancient Greece, Roman dresses were made of long cloths that

draped and wrapped over the body. With the invention of the sewing machine, the Western dresses were made by attaching pieces by cutting the fabric into the shape of the body; eastern dresses remain the same. Today Eastern dresses provide inspiration for Western fashions.

The greatest exponent of the traditional philosophy of art, Ananda Coomaraswamy (1913.194) observes the difference between East and West as follows: 'Before the arrival of the Portuguese, people were not much used to readymade garments. Weaving is at once the oldest and the most important of the industrial arts. The robes are usually woven in the shape and size required for the use, and only rarely and locally cut into fitting garments, so that tailoring is a comparatively unimportant craft'. Coomaraswamy (1913) states that in Asia a dress is arranged by a large piece of cloth by knotting, pleating or folding over the body rather than tucking pins or sewing. The East is often seen as a counterpart to the Western world. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1956) cited the words of Blake, "when nations grow old, the arts grow cold, and commerce settles on every tree" It seemed that the East dress's ultimate destination is the value given by modern consumerism.

The research paper discusses Eastern dress characteristics according to Sri Lankan traditional dresses. Classic line of Saree, formation of silhouettes from one single rectangular cloth, usage of wrapping, twisting, knotting, pleating, gathering techniques, Vertical beauty is created by vertical styles lines are discussed with relevant visual explanations. Relatively to standards dress characteristics how saree dress, fluid forms, coats and pants, Oriental design motifs, symbols, colours have been used in Western fashions are examined. Selected European Fashion designers and their masterpieces which were inspired by East were selected for the research. Selected designers are French fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli (1890-1972), Spain born fashion designer Balenciaga (1895-1972), Italian Fashion designer Valentino (1932-), French fashion designer Pierre Balmain (1945-1982), French fashion designer Catherine Walker (1945-210), French fashion designer Hurbert de Givenchy (1952-), UK fashion designer Alexander McQueen (1969-2010).

## **2. Objective**

There is a difference in interpreting Eastern dress in Europe. It is expected to analyse Western interpretation of Eastern dress by comparing original dresses created by Western Fashion designers who were inspired by East dress characteristics.

## **3. Methodology**

Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Selected designers from the history of Western fashion were studied. Original dresses which are created by European fashion designers that are displayed at the world museums were observed. East dress characteristics are discussed according to Sri Lankan historical dress examples. Selected dresses of Asia, Saree, cloak, Kimono dress details and their inspiration power is discussed. Scholarly written research papers, books, web sites, fashion blogs were read and collected relevant data. Written data was compared with visual data and presented reliable factors. Studying the above elements provides a good impression of ancient draperies and sartorial taste of the period. These well established and well-practiced methods of dresses introduced new trends to the world fashion industry.

#### **4. Literature Survey**

Fashion becomes the most sought-after consumer need of today. Au, Taylor, & Newton, (2000:224) say that “consumers may be seen to be searching for their own personal identity and expression of creativity. Sociologists suggest that people view fashion as a competition between different classes, and they link social corroboration to standards of clothing. Aestheticians view the artistic elements and ideals of beauty found in fashion as a form of expression. Historians explain that changes in fashion are due to the evolutionary process”. Kjoensburg, (2006:3) says that “The consumer reconstructs the rules and codes of fashion in their social environment and culture. These rules reflect place and identity, including national identity, which in turn is often associated with nature/landscape and language”.

Fashion has direct correlation with the customers' wants and needs. Yu, Kim, Lee, & Hong, (2001: 309) explored the degree of influence was measured on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (symbolic resemblance) to 2 (modification) and 3 (replication). Various studies show that fashion designers are inspired during the design process to identify four general influential factors: the historical factor, the aesthetic factor, the cultural factor and the marketing factor. Au, Taylor, & Newton 2000:225) pointed out that “The successful designers must be in constant touch with the times. They must understand the people for whom they design, their interests, attitudes and values of dress, mode of living, and occupations' People follow the prevailing ideal of beauty when they make purchasing decisions about fashion”. Martin & Koda (1994:9) claimed that orientalism is a fabrication of the West.

Why does the East become resource intensive in Western Fashion? Ko, Eunju & Lee, Seulgi. (2011:91) suggested that “As a part of the ongoing process of globalization, people are getting broadly exposed to multi cultures. Asian cultures are gathering global focus amid two aspects. One is the exoticism, “the charm of the unfamiliar” by definition (Johns, 2007). As exoticism links closely to Orientalism, the occident-oriented world shows natural interest in oriental Asian cultures as something rare, exotic and not seen before. Yu, Kim, Lee, & Hong, (2001:320) show that “China and Japan have been the most drawn on sources of Oriental influence. Many designs analysed here reflect creative uses of Chinese and Japanese styles that are well-adapted to these new fashion designs”.

Yu, Jang, & Lee, (2011:310) show that “Japan and China have successfully transformed their cultural heritage into a cultural archetype. (kimono and qipao) Japanese fashion could draw huge global attraction mainly due to the exoticism. Their achievements resulted from “Japanese-ness,” reflected in the designs, including construction, silhouettes, shapes, prints, and fabric combinations. The inspiration obviously showed the origin of Japanese cultures from kabuki, Mt. Fuji, geisha to cherry blossom and Mrs. Butterfly of the opera. Chinese-oriented fashion traced back to the 13th century when Marco Polo brought the first marvels of China to the West.

Furthermore, international runways are putting forth collections inspired by Indian opulence. It is interesting to see a perspective of Indian inspired fashion, through the famed creativity of world-renowned international fashion designers. Kjoensburg (2006:3) says that “in connection with national identity and fashion the ethnic dress came to be important. This style has also been combined with international trends which makes it an effect of globalization”.

The culture matters more in Fashion. Ćivković, T., Ivin, D., & Makitan, V. (2015:210) say that “Considering the fact that boundaries of the East and the West world are not geographical, but rather cultural, you can realize that differences between them must be apparent in social, philosophical and art

life". Eastern costume has been influencing fashion since it has been introduced to the West world. One can't deny the influence that culture of the East had on Western, European, uncomfortable costumes to change into a form of art that we call fashion. Japanese art and costume made avant-garde fashion of the 20th century. Eastern draping techniques made a huge impression on Western dress. Eastern costume was unchanged for centuries when it comes to cut and form, but when it was placed on a human body - limitless possibilities of form emerged. The East dress is based on a large piece of cloth. Au, Taylor and Newton, (2000) claim that "the same principle that modern Eastern designers represent in their work, East has been a great influence on every revolution West population had regarding costume, tailoring and fashion trends".

West interpretation of Eastern world is the new way of seeing "beauty". Au, Taylor, & Newton, (2000:240) say that Western need is the idea of beauty. Also, the sense of aesthetics and femininity are different from the Western standard. The ideals of beauty are the influential factors that they could find in the East; for example, the Japanese designs. Japanese design ideas have become a world force, and remain so because they have introduced a completely new attitude towards clothing. Asymmetric formation is another attractive design element in East to West. This concept is the new dimension to the West and made permanent effect on creative attitudes.

In the new millennium, the fashion industry has become one of the highest value-added businesses. The advantages of cultural heritage. essential elements of the design. which is the most visible and material indicator for customers. The creativity and originality of a fashion brand's designs can be effectively derived from culture. Au, Taylor, & Newton, (2000:241) propose that "By understanding people's lifestyle, designers were able to define precisely their market segmentation in terms of their consumers' personalities, buying motives, interests, beliefs and values. Such market segmentation was defined as 'psychographic segmentation'.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

### ***5.1 Characteristics of Asian dresses***

The research found that four characteristics of Asian dresses provided inspiration to Western dress. First the original agent of inspirations is discussed below. These characteristics make clear margins between early East and West. In fact, East and West mark clear demarcations in their culture, religion and social, and as a result of this difference, the identity of Asian people differs from that of the West.

#### ***5.1.1 Classic Line of Saree***

A saree is a women's garment from Indian Subcontinent that consists of an unstitched drape varying from 6 meters in length and 47 inches in breadth that is wrapped around the waist, with one end draped over the shoulder, covering a larger portion of the women's abdomen area. Saree, the beauty is emphasized in a diagonal line which goes across the body from knees to shoulder. The line is the center of the attraction in a female body. judged over a period of time to be of the highest quality and outstanding of its kind therefore the line is called classic line.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

**Figure 1:** Ladies of Kandy, early 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Coomaraswamy, A.1959. Meadival Sinhalese Art. II plate)

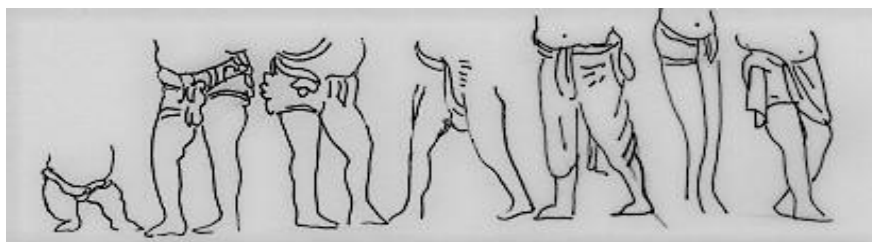
**Figure 2:** Ladies of Kandy, early 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Coomaraswamy, A.1959. Meadival Sinhalese Art. II plate)

**Figure 3:** Consumers of Saree today, shows the classic line which has been continued from generation to generation. <https://fmlk.lk/collections/sarees>

**Figure 4:** Consumers of Saree today. <https://fmlk.lk/collections/sarees>

### **5.1.2 One Single Rectangular Cloth.**

The techniques of arranging a dress from a piece of cloth is varied. Many forms and silhouettes are created from a single long cloth. Long, short and breeches styles of dresses are arranged in men's dress. Many suspended loops, folds are attached over the waist from numerous pieces of cloth. Asian fabric manipulation methods enabled to demonstrate dynamic movement of the dress by attaching many suspended folds around the body. Female long clothes are more stylish. Waist band is common in male and female clothing. The body contours were emphasized by coiling pieces of fabric over the body. The most fascinating sinuous rills of the body are made in the hip by wrapping many fabric folds. The lower garment of male consisted of many folds, frills and pleats. Those frills, pleats and folds may have been added separately to the main garment. Every piece of cloth would have been wrapped round the hip and tucked at the front abdomen. This arrangement was wonderfully able to emphasize the body postures. Folds of different proportions were rendered at the front. There were three layers of fold arranged. The short one had neat pleats. The middle one was arranged as a fan shape fold. The longest one hung to the ankle level.



**Figure 5:** seven kinds of men's lowers garments (Temple Murals of the Tivanka Temple Image House: 11<sup>th</sup> century of Sri Lanka)

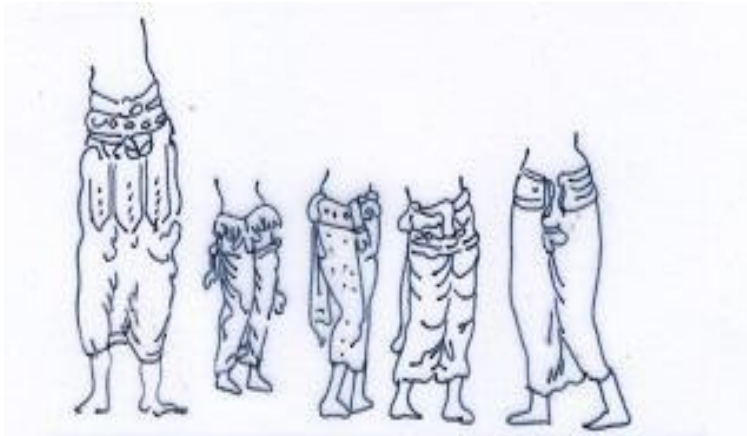


Figure 6



Figure 7

**Figure 6:** Five kinds of female's lowers garments (Temple Murals of the Tivanka Temple Image House: 11<sup>th</sup> century of Sri Lanka)

**Figure7:** A deity of *Gadaladeniya viharaya*

### 5.1.3 Combining Techniques

Wrapping, twisting, knotting, pleating, and gatherings are expert sartorial practices which have been hands-on practiced since ages. Wrapping veil the surface. In Asia cultural dress consists of wrapping the body. Knotting is the craft of a fastening made by looping a piece of string, rope, or something similar on itself and tightening it. In Asia knotting deliberately creates decorative items and patterns in dressing. Pleats add greater fullness to a shape. Twisting, pleating and gathering such fabric fabrication techniques will reduce the length of a piece of fabric, it is used to manage, as much as a disguise, a source of fullness.

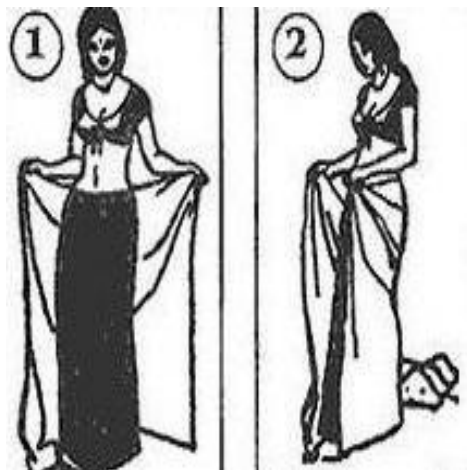


Figure 8



Figure 9

**Figure 8:** Wrapping over the body. (<https://www.looksgud.in/blog/dos-and-donts-to-wear-saree/>)

**Figure 9:** Twisted fabric (<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/green-brown-beige-color-twist-cloth-403964692>)





Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

**Figure 10:** Knot (<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/yellow-knot-266215403>)

**Figure 11:** Making pleats (<https://strandofsilk.com/indian-fashion-blog/driven-curiosity/simple-step-step-guide-draping-saree/>)

**Figure 12:** Making gathers (<https://www.looksgud.in/blog/dos-and-donts-to-wear-saree/>)

#### 5.1.4 Vertical beauty

The beauty is defined according to vertical lines which are arranged over the body. The lines are the key characteristics of defying the concept. The lines are marked by fabrics, cascading lines of necklaces, armbands and anklets, Lines of conical headdresses which stand up on the head. Lines create a vertical climax as a pyramid from toe to head, leading our eyes to the head of the wearer. The idea of beauty is contradictory with the Western ideal beauty. The idea of beauty in Asia is contradictory to the Western ideal beauty. Western dresses of the 18th century have broad hip and broad millinery which creates simply horizontal lines on the body.



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

**Figure 13:** Ladies of Sigiriya of 5<sup>th</sup> Century

**Figure 14:** Goddess Tara at British Museum

**Figure 15:** A bronze statue of king Bhuvanekabahu IV (1341-51) of the Gampola era.

(Ray, H.C. Ed. 1960. *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, from earliest time to 1505, Vol.1, Part 2, Colombo: Ceylon University Press, p. 789 and plate L, fig. (b)

**Figure 16:** *Aludeniya* door frame (early 15<sup>th</sup> Century Gampola Kingdom)

## **5.2 East Dress Inspirations to Europe**

Selected European Fashion designers and their masterpieces which were inspired by East were selected for the research. Saree dress, Fluid forms, coats and pants, Oriental design motifs, symbols, colours which made exotic impression over European consumers were examined.

### **5.2.1 Saree Dress**

Saree has been providing inspirations to European designers since ages. Selected European Fashion designers and their masterpieces which were inspired by Asian saree were selected for the research. Selected designers are French fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli (1890-1972), Spain born fashion designer Balenciaga (1895-1972), Italian Fashion designer Valentino (1932-), French fashion designer Pierre Balmain (1945-1982), French fashion designer Catherine Walker (1945-210), French fashion designer Hurbert de Givenchy (1952-), UK fashion designer Alexander McQueen (1969-2010).

The original formation of saree was the key inspiration in all selected dresses. All dresses were ready made garments and cut into pieces and sewn together. Form, silhouette of the created dress was directly taken from the saree. Classic line which is created by a long piece of cloth is the significant feature of the dress. The line is automatically created by the methodology of the wearing. The other significant feature of the saree is the long fall which is thrown over the shoulder. Selected designers have used the fold in numerous ways. Cascading effect of the fold has been incorporated in every dress. Materials are selected relatively to original saree materials. Saree border and the embellishments are key features. Saree border creates a line which plays all over the sinuous rills of the body. Colours of these saree dresses are vibrant and rich in colours.

Elsa Schiaparelli in the mid-1930s was inspired by glorified styles of other cultures. Indian and Southeast Asian styles were particularly evident in the work of Elsa Schiaparelli. *Vogue* remarked that her "saree dresses" made women look like "Hindu princesses". Orange saree dress in 1939 is an off-shoulder dress which is made of silk and chiffon. The long fold falls across the right shoulder making a knot at the center front. The line gives an elongation to the slender figure. Schiaparelli Designed an evening gown with a "*trompe l'oeil*" pleat painted by artist Jean Dunand in 1931. The front is pleated from the center abdomen, spreading out into sculptural folds at the hem. This wad of plates enabled in giving the illusion of mobility. Slender sleek lines emphasize vertical beauty.

Martin & Koda (1994:40) interpreted Schiaparelli's spiral saree. "not only was the saree considered exotic during the period, it also fed into the contemporaneous fascination with bias draping. Thus, the bias drape created by the saree's spiral path over the body used and Eastern practice in accord with a new Western interest". Pierre Balmain's saree-inspired evening gown from his Spring/Summer 1957 was made of silk. The dress was just below the knees of the wearer and it was a tight skirt. The most prominent feature of the dress is the fall which begins from the side of the skirt then goes to the left shoulder making a diagonal line over the wearer then creates a beautiful hood. The hood and the bodice part are made of one piece of cloth.

The classic line starts from the head then goes across the front body. Cristobal Balenciaga created a saree dress in 1965 for Spring/Summer which was in brocade silk, beaded and sequined embellished trimming. Indian saris are formed of a single, long piece of fabric which is wrapped around the body. This couture version, however, is built from many separate pieces. The outer layers are sewn and hooked to a boned



underdress. A mock pallu or drape falls from the back to the front. Costume designed by Givenchy in 1961 gave good inspiration for the saree. He was known as the man who took the saree to Hollywood. In a party sequence in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Audrey Hepburn wore a pale cream saree. It is in reality a bedsheet, but the draped silhouette represents the saree. The stark, graceful ensemble reinforces the fierce individuality exuded by the actor as Holly Golightly. Without any obvious references to India, this was one of the very first appearances of saree silhouettes in a major Hollywood movie.

A fuchsia and purple silk chiffon saree style dress by Catherine Walker was worn by Princess Diana in Thailand for the Royal tour in February 1988. Jackie Kennedy wearing Valentino off the -shoulder dress which was inspired by the saree that she wore for an official visit to Cambodia in 1967. Alexander McQueen's collection was spun on the ideology of the 'British royalty of the colonial times meeting Indian regality'. One of the gowns had an interesting maroon saree drape and cascading fall. The dress was made of a saree and the boarder, drapery effect has been carefully displayed. The original line of the saree has been played all over the body creating a net of horizontal and vertical lines.



**Figure 17**



**Figure 18**



**Figure 19**

**Figure 17:**Saree dress by Elsa Schiaparelli -1939 <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/412853490813320387/>

**Figure 18:** Saree dress in brocaded silk by Cristobal Balenciaga -1965 <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O350251/dress-balenciaga-cristobal/>

**Figure 19:** Pierre Balmain's Le Saree, 1948 <https://borderandfall-lens.tumblr.com/post/152238827128/the-sari-in-global-fashion>



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

**Figure 20:** Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly in the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), costumes designed by Givenchy <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/310326230558093362/>

**Figure 21:** Princess Diana wears Catherine Walker in Thailand, 1988 <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/521995413063058999/>

**Figure 22:** Saree dress by Alexander McQueen A/W 2008 <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/265501340506204573/>

### 5.2.2 Coats and Pants of Fluid forms

Fluid coats and pants were in vogue since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Poul Poiret (1879-1944), Yves Saint Laurent (1936-2008) showed enough possibilities where rigid forms can be designed in a fluid and unconstructed way that doesn't look geometric.

Paul Poiret(1879-1944) was a leading French fashion designer, who was inspired by orientalism during the early 20th century. He was interested in forms generally, not just clothing. He looked into antiques and regional dress types. Paul Poiret's designs depend on draping techniques rather than tailoring. This approach yielded soft, flowing forms that hung loosely from the body. Poret's coats were draped over the body rather than cut into geometric pieces. Lines of coat were juxtaposed against the organic curves of the body, these representations emphasize the exotic taste of orientalism. Evening coat of Silk taffeta as shown in the figure 23, cut clearly marked by the Japonism of the time, this coat initially had a round fur collar which has been lost.

The folds on the back and the hobbled effect are characteristic of the 1910s. *Mantle* is made of two rectangular panels as shown in figure 24, each forming one side of the garment, folded on the shoulders and joined on one side with a stylised bow. With a slit for the arm and a seam at the shoulder and a belt. The bow on the right side fastens to the hook on its front, and the belt at the right back of the left front

fastens to the hook inside its front. One side is put on and fastened, and then the other is put on. He promoted an “S” curve which was manipulated from a corseted silhouette to a fluid form. Poiret’s concept of garments based on straight lines and flat construction, such an emphasis on flatness and planarity. He cut along straight lines and constructed rectangles. Paul Poiret introduced free-flowing dresses, replaced tight corsets with brassieres, and added a new standard of artistic value to his fashion plates. Koda, & Bolton, (2007) introduced his oriental inspired fashion as “enigmatic silhouettes such as his iconic “lampshade” tunic and his “harem” trousers, or pantaloons”. He was inspired by exotic Eastern costumes. He continued his research about ancient Sumerian, Persian and Turkish costumes. He used simple shapes of Kimono jacket, log tunic over trousers and saree like long scarves.



**Figure 23**



**Figure 24**



**Figure 25**



**Figure 26**

**Figure 23:** Evening coat, Paul Poiret, around 1912 – 1914. Silk taffeta printed with dark purple marbled motifs on a blue ground. Lining in dark purple silk satin. <https://www.palaisgalliera.paris.fr/en/work/evening-coat-paul-poiret>

**Figure 24:** “Mantle” made of bright yellow wool and lined with black silk chiffon. Based on a deconstructed kimono. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O69324/mantle-paul-poiret/>

**Figure 25:** Harem pant, 1911 <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/a-brief-history-of-french-fashion-34032>

**Figure 26:** Afternoon dress of “T” shape, Date: ca. 1923 Culture: French Medium: silk <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/144678206756617909/>

More than 50 couture designs of Yves Saint Laurent are clearly inspired by the cultures of India, China and Japan. he visited Japan in 1963 and 1975. He went to Kyoto to learn about Japanese traditional culture and textile weaving. He told *Elle* in 1995 as follows,

*“Beijing, however, remains a dazzling memory. The China that I had so often interpreted in my designs was exactly as I had imagined it. All I need for my imagination to blend into a place or a landscape is a picture book. I don’t feel any need to go*

*there. I have already dreamt about it so much.”* <https://qz.com/quartz/1403323/yves-saint-laurents-china-fantasies-gave-the-fashion-world-its-most-daring-designs/>

The acclaimed autumn collection of 1977, *Les Chinoises*, is a central focus of the exhibition, with its red floral prints and dragon-scale motifs, silk-brocade jackets and gowns inspired by Imperial China. His very first collection offers a personal vision of the Indian Maharaja, reworking the long coats worn close to the body and embellished with a turban.”

Coat is again asymmetric in the front as did Poul poiret. Harem pants gathered at the ankle. Fabric gatherings are a key feature in these dresses. Draping or hanging over the shoulders create volume and space between the body and the silhouette. Each garment was designed to present conventional fashion thinking. Cutting and simple lines balance their construction against the body contours. Concise angles create the illusion of a realm that has been carefully controlled. He has identified their potential to function that is fully integrating clothing with their surroundings.



**Figure 27:** The silhouettes of the Saint Laurent designs echo traditional Asian styles (Credit: Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris / Sophie Carre) <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20181005-yves-saint-laurents-ultimate-obsession>



**Figure 28:** The kimono is among the traditional Japanese garments reinterpreted by Yves Saint Laurent (Credit: Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris / Sophie Carre) <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20181005-yves-saint-laurents-ultimate-obsession>



### **5.2.3 Oriental design motifs, symbols, colours.**

Oriental colours and design motifs have been key characteristics of European fashions. East inspirations are bold in their interpretation. key design elements that are unique to the East have been always re-created. Zandra Rhodes was inspired by her travels to Asia. She created collections from places she had visited. She took inspiration for her textiles and dresses from countries Africa, China, India and Thailand. She was interested in clothing around the world in different cultures and presented them in high fashion. One of the memorable creations that she made was the dress which is inspired by Indian royals. The dress is made from silk circle pattern pieces, which gives a full, bouncy effect when being worn. The colours are rich and luxurious golds and reds, colours which we associate often with royalty. This dress was inspired by one of her trips to India, and every piece of the dress is printed with her textiles design.

An array of fashions which were inspired by East were created by concurrent fashion designers. Roberto Cavalli in 2005 and Gucci for 'Cruise' 2017 created China porcelain print silk dresses. In their inspiration catalogue is full of traditional Chinese symbols and motifs such as dragon motifs, dense floral patterns in red, national animals. Valentino created a studded suede jacket with sequined monkey for the year of monkey 2016. Emilio Pucci created a dragon print silk jacket in 2016. Tom Ford designed the Chinese cheongsam with added sequins and a side draped detail for Fall/Winter 2004 ready-to-wear collection. Sequins, embroidery and such embellishing techniques are heavily used in these dresses. Embellishing is the key technique of presenting oriental design motifs and symbols.



**Figure 29**



**Figure 30**



**Figure 31**

**Figure 29:** Silk Crepe de Chine Wrap Dress 'Chinese Squares', Chinese Collection Spring/Summer, 1980, Collection of the San Diego History Center, Gift of Lucretia G. Morrow, Copyright Zandra Rhodes. <https://hollymcquillan.com/2011/03/28/yieldzandra-rhodes-chinese-squares/>

**Figure 30:** Chinese porcelain-inspired satin evening dress by Roberto Cavalli Fall 2005 ready-to-wear collection (Photo Credit: Vogue) <https://www.universityoffashion.com/blog/tag/fashion-inspired-by-china/>

**Figure 31:** Emilio Pucci dragon print silk jacket (2016) (Image Credits: Polyvore) <https://www.universityoffashion.com/blog/tag/fashion-inspired-by-china/>



## 6. Conclusion

Actual usage and the meaning of the East dress have been excluded in Europe. The meaning of the saree is bound with its usage in Asia. Saree gives the meaning when it is worn to the ankle. Asian saree has been modified according to European needs. The classic line and the methodology of dressing have always been kept to resemble the exotic sartorial taste of East. The fold of the saree has been used as a special embellishing item. It was noted that European designers pay more attention to asymmetric, fluid drapery effects. Europe has identified East's potential to function. East dresses added value, and became an art piece in Europe. East dress has been commercialized in Europe.

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