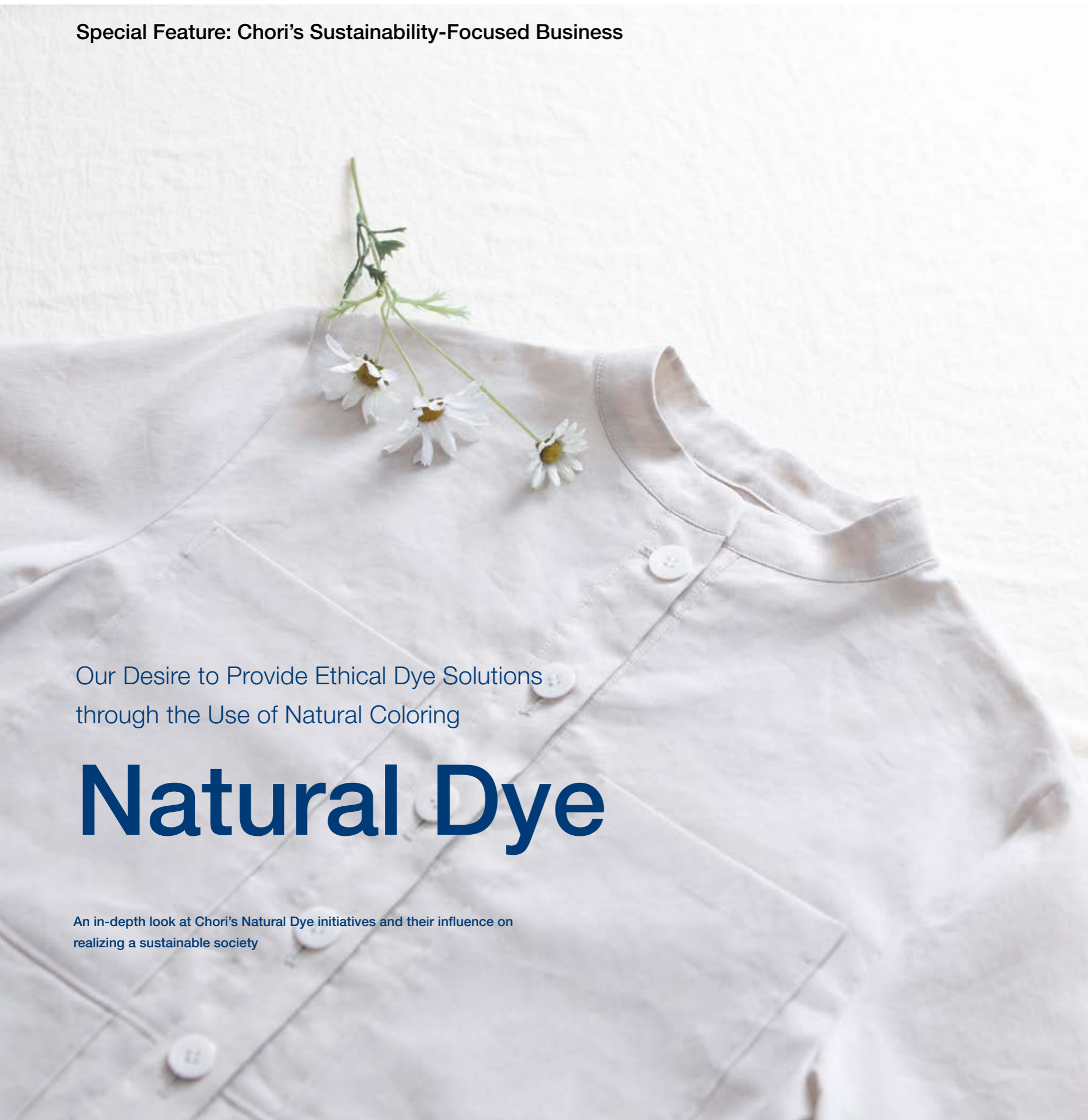


Special Feature: Chori's Sustainability-Focused Business



Our Desire to Provide Ethical Dye Solutions through the Use of Natural Coloring

Natural Dye

An in-depth look at Chori's Natural Dye initiatives and their influence on realizing a sustainable society



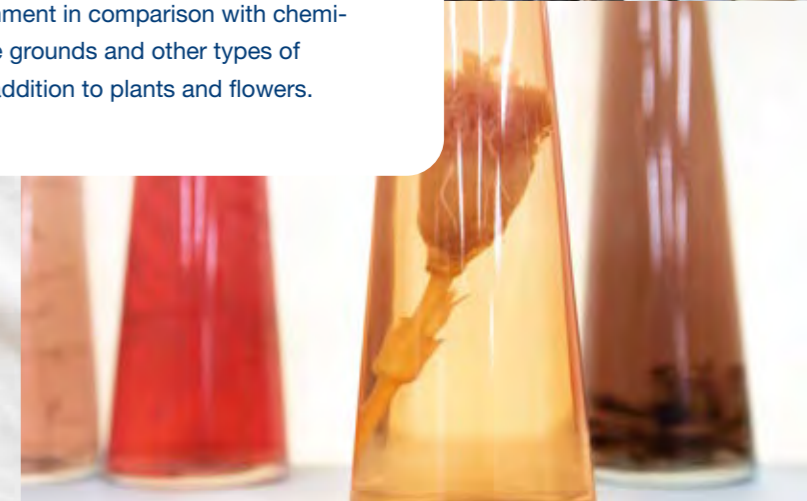
Tatsuya Maekawa
Manager, Apparel Department
Technical Material & Garments Business Department



Natural Dye

In contrast with ordinary dyes, which utilize chemical dyes, plant dyes, as the name implies, are natural colorants derived from plants and other resources. While plant dyes have existed for years, there have been concerns over their sensitivity to sweat and sunlight as well as discoloring and fading when washed. Natural Dye is a line of environment-friendly apparel that overcomes such concerns. For over 15 years, Chori has been teaming up with CIHON TEC CO., LTD., a company specializing in plant dyes, to promote the development of its Natural Dye business.

In recent years, Natural Dye has gained exposure as an environment-friendly line of apparel that not only poses a limited impact on the environment in comparison with chemical dyes but also uses coffee grounds and other types of food residue as coloring, in addition to plants and flowers.





01

Origin and Distinctive Features of Natural Dye

When Natural Dye originated over 15 years ago, the term “sustainability” itself was not widely used. However, this plant-dye project was launched as Chori foresaw the need for environmental considerations in the years that followed.

Plant dyes are more sensitive to sunlight and more prone to fading and discoloration than chemical dyes, which is why there were issues regarding their mass production in the past. With Natural Dye, however, we were able to achieve a certain level of fastness despite its use of natural coloring derived from plants and other resources. While it was difficult to dye fibers with natural coloring at first, we used a special proprietary developed paste, which firmly absorbed the natural coloring. By applying this uniquely developed dyeing method, natural coloring can be used to dye not only natural fibers but also synthetic fibers.

02

Our Respect for People and the Environment

Chemical dyeing processes are often associated with concerns over environmental contamination due to the artificial substances contained in its wastewater. Conversely, with Natural Dye an extremely low amount of residue dye remains in the wastewater as the constituents of plants that generate the coloring are firmly absorbed onto the fiber. Accordingly, there is very little concern over the issue of water or soil contamination. Moreover, because plants come with a range of medicinal benefits, it is believed that Natural Dye products come with the same benefits due to the use of such plants as coloring. For instance, products utilizing roses as coloring are said to be effective for relaxation, better sleep, and improving skin texture.

Natural Dye is also gaining prominence from a local-production-for-local-consumption point of view, as it enables the use of vegetable waste and other foods that contribute to food loss as coloring. The local-production-for-local-consumption aspect stems from Natural Dye's recycling-based process of utilizing the waste produced on local soil, such as the lees of a region's well-known Japanese sake or lees of locally produced wines, as coloring and converting it into clothing.

Meanwhile, concerns have arisen over the accumulated waste of flowers that were intended to be used as decorations in the various events canceled due to COVID-19. However, at Chori we have always contributed to the reduction of

such waste through the use of wilted flowers as coloring for Natural Dye. Because Natural Dye does not entail the purchase of any additional products or the use of plantations, it also contributes to the reduction of environmental impact.



While chemical dyes are absorbed evenly onto fabrics due to the minuteness of their particles, the particles of plant-derived natural coloring offer even greater benefits. Natural Dye fabrics diffuse sunlight while exposing the richness of colors even on plain fabrics. In other words, Natural Dye can realize colors that cannot be attained by means of chemical dyes.

The vast array of colors that can be realized is another unique feature of Natural Dye. The research facility of our business partner houses roughly 2,300 varieties of raw materials used for coloring, and each plant consists of roughly 200 types of colors. What may appear to be green at first glance is actually a complex mixture of multiple colors. This is the reason why Natural Dye can realize warm and complex colors and patterns. Additionally, Natural Dye can also be made with ore and a variety of other substances.

03

Natural Dye Earning Widespread Recognition

While Natural Dye has been a part of our business for over 15 years, it seems as though its demand has grown only over the last three or four years. Consideration for the global environment and sustainability have become an important topic in every industry, and the textile industry is no exception.

Chori's Natural Dye line of apparel has been adopted by MARUI GROUP CO., LTD.



as a part of its line of ethical fashion that contributes to the betterment of society and the global environment. The textile industry undergoes a production cycle in which products for the respective season are designed and manufactured over a period of six months, and this holds true for Natural Dye as well.

While demand for Natural Dye continues to rise, the factories we utilize for its production are limited to those based in Japan. This stems from the fact that, ever since the creation of Natural Dye, Chori has

embraced its commitment to always make use of Japanese technology, which is highly respected around the world, and contribute to the growth of industries in Japan. As a result of our limited production capacity and manpower, our lead time to production in response to the recent growth in demand has been increasing. However, stated differently, this is a testament to the solid demand and reputation we have built over the years for Natural Dye.

04

Our Direction Going Forward

In addition to Japan, Natural Dye is gaining widespread recognition in Europe and the United States, regions with a high level of sustainability awareness. Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chori showcased Natural Dye around three times at an exhibition held in Italy. Our exhibit included Natural Dye products created through a collaborative effort with a company in Niigata Prefecture, an area of Japan known for the production of sweaters, and products made of fiber used in *washi* (Japanese paper). In these ways, Japan's one-of-a-kind technologies and the uniqueness of Japanese products are stirring up great interest overseas.

At Chori, we handle such natural fibers as MILLENNIUM ORGANIC™, an ultra-white cotton cultivated in Uzbekistan, and MEDITERRANEAN GIZA™, and we are currently undertaking efforts to combine them with our

environment-friendly Natural Dye dyeing technology. Along with the rich colors they generate, these natural fibers are highly attuned to Natural Dye's concept of environment-friendliness. As we move forward, we will look to continue to fuse our Natural Dye technology with products that adhere closely to its concept.

Furthermore, Natural Dye is not a scheme designed to expand sales but rather a business that we are undertaking despite our limited production capacity and human resources. For that reason, our goal is not to expand this business for the sake of profit but to develop it into something that helps improve the global environment and which contributes to the growth of industries in Japan. We hope we can work together with customers who resonate with this philosophy going forward.

In the manner that more and more products nowadays are tailored to the

physical characteristics of each individual, such as with made-to-measure and custom-ordered suits, I believe we are now in an age when quality takes precedence over quantity. Therefore, I believe the concept of Natural Dye will be highly embraced and its differentiated products will likely play a prominent role in the years ahead. For Chori, the fact that it engages in such a meaningful business has extraordinary significance. We hope you look forward with great anticipation to our Natural Dye initiatives over the coming years.

