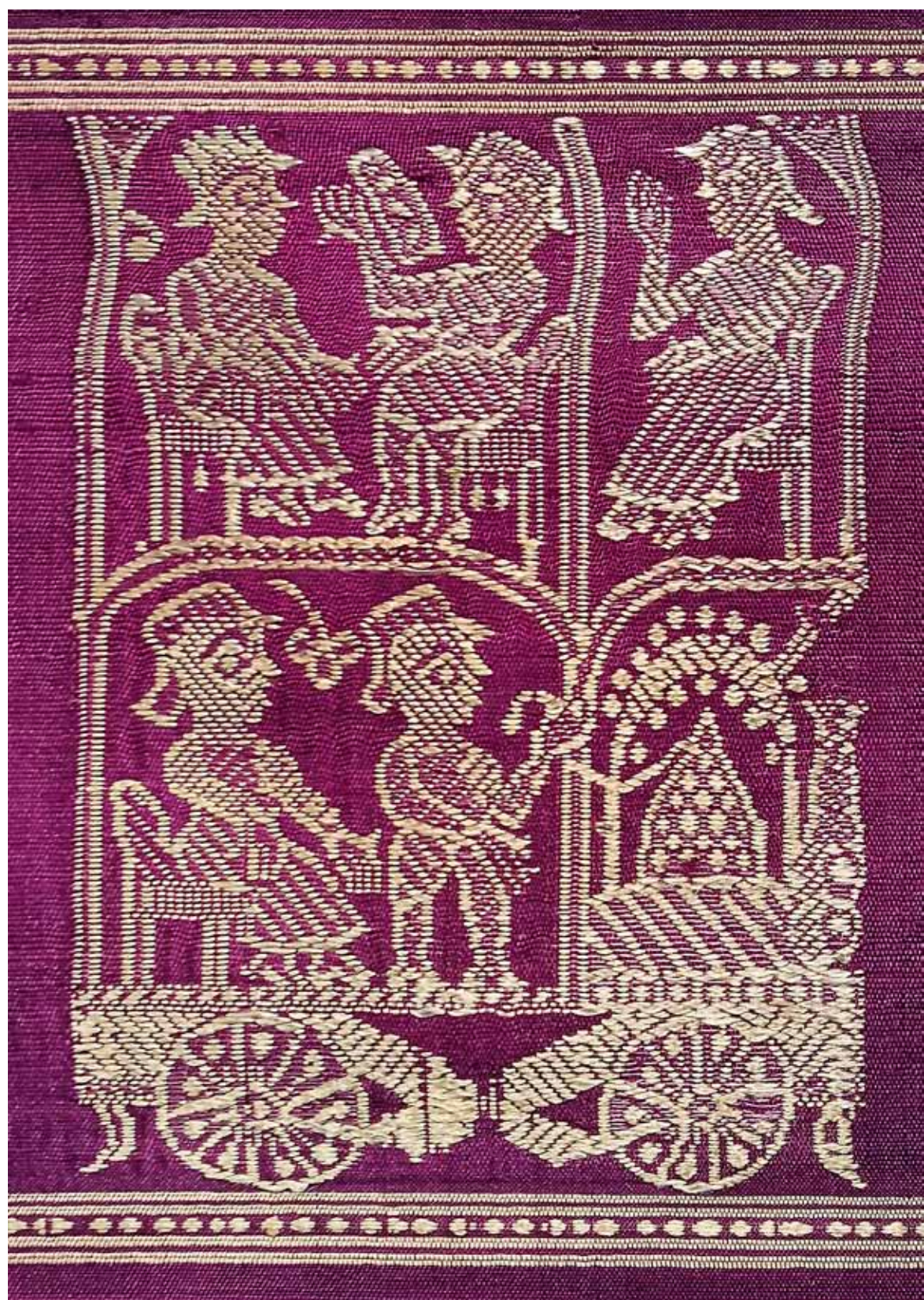




THE WOVEN ART
OF BALUCHAR



Presents

THE WOVEN ART OF BALUCHAR

AN EXHIBITION OF MUSEUM QUALITY BALUCHARI SAREE
FROM THE COLLECTION OF SIDDHARTHA TAGORE

A show dedicated to JASLEEN DHAMIJA
for her contribution to the history of textiles and costumes



18 August - 18 September, 2021

Art Konsult

#1, Basement, Hauz Khas Village,
New Delhi-110016

www.artkonsult.com

THE WOVEN ART OF BALUCHAR

Dating back Nearly two hundred years, Nawab of Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan, brought Baluchar art from Dhaka (Bangladesh) to a small village named Baluchar on the banks of the river Bhagirathi in Murshidabad (West Bengal). Baluchari derives its name from 'balu' (meaning sand) and 'char' (or riverbank). Baluchari weaving had themes that revolved around the lives of the nawabs and featured women smoking hookahs, nawabs driving horse carriages. The romantic notions of Indian culture adopted by Europeans and the effect of the Indian elite mirroring foreign practices as a part of their lifestyle came to be documented in various art forms. These stark changes became important themes in growing formalized artistic practices of the company school, kalighat painting, common themes transcended the realm of art, craft, and architecture and it was from within this artistic pool that themes and motifs of the Baluchar textiles were drawn from.

The Baluchar art was patronized in Baluchar until the continually changing courses of the Bhagirathi river meant that villagers had to keep uprooting themselves and move along with the river. Eventually, a flooding of the Bhagirathi forced the trade to shift from Murshidabad to Bishnupur (in the Bankura district of West Bengal) in the nineteenth century. The trade then flourished for a while under the Malla dynasty there, until the British felt threatened by their inability to replicate this artisanship in the mills of England and forced financial sanctions that squeezed the poor weavers out of their craft and brought it to the verge of shutting down.

Baluchar textiles were made from the finest locally cultivated mulberry silk of which the saris were the most versatile. The threads were dyed in natural colours and woven on traditional draw looms locally known as jalas, a mechanism developed and borrowed from Persia following the arrival of Islamic immigrants to the subcontinent. The rich creamy base of the threads absorbed color easily with the deep maroons, reds, chocolate, oranges, and purples being the favorite hues.

Baluchar saris were essentially divided into three sections based on motifs. These were the end piece or pallu; the zamin or field of the sari, the borders framing the sari, and one border between the zamin and the pallu. By analyzing the motifs on different sections of the sari, the distinct division of designs can be segmented into figurative, floral, and faunal as well as geometric or decorative. A single sari often contained a combination of these elements.

The pictorial representations found on the pallu or end piece of the sari, supplemented by a variety of motifs, gave it a unique identity. Often termed 'figured fabrics', the pictorial representations were a commentary on the changing socio-cultural developments in society while maintaining their value as a unique art form.

Moreover, competition with European mill products as well as the active hostility of the English to the Indian textile industry pushed this art further to its decline. The reason for the decline of Baluchars in Murshidabad in the early 20th century is often attributed to the passing of Dubraj Das, and the revival of baluchari weaving in the mid 20th century was brought about by the artist Subho Tagore, the first Director of the Regional Design Centre in Calcutta of the All India Handicrafts Board, who helped develop the technique of jacquard weaving that greatly simplified the process and reduced the time it took to weave a saree. This new era of baluchari weaving featured motifs from epics and religious texts

(Vaishnava Imagery) and is continued to this day by the weavers of Bishnupur. The intricately carved terracotta temples of Bishnupur provide ample inspiration for the weavers who reproduce whole epics on the pallu of the sari. The ground colors range from sober beige to resplendent blues and reds with contrast borders, all on fine mulberry silk. While the present-day Baluchari may not be as grand as its ancestor, it still has a unique appeal, making the wearer stand out in a crowd.

This exhibition is dedicated to JASLEEN DHAMIJA for her contribution to the history of textiles and costumes, she has written many books on Textiles especially on Baluchari and she is the only authoritative of Balucharee saree. In this exhibition, we are showcasing the Museum quality and rare collection of Baluchar saree from the Murshidabad and some are from the Varanasi and Gujrat which are collected by the Siddhartha Tagore, Director of Art Konsult Gallery, and Curated by Puneet Kaushik & Rema Kumar, Co-curated by Gaurav Kumar

- **Gaurav Kumar**

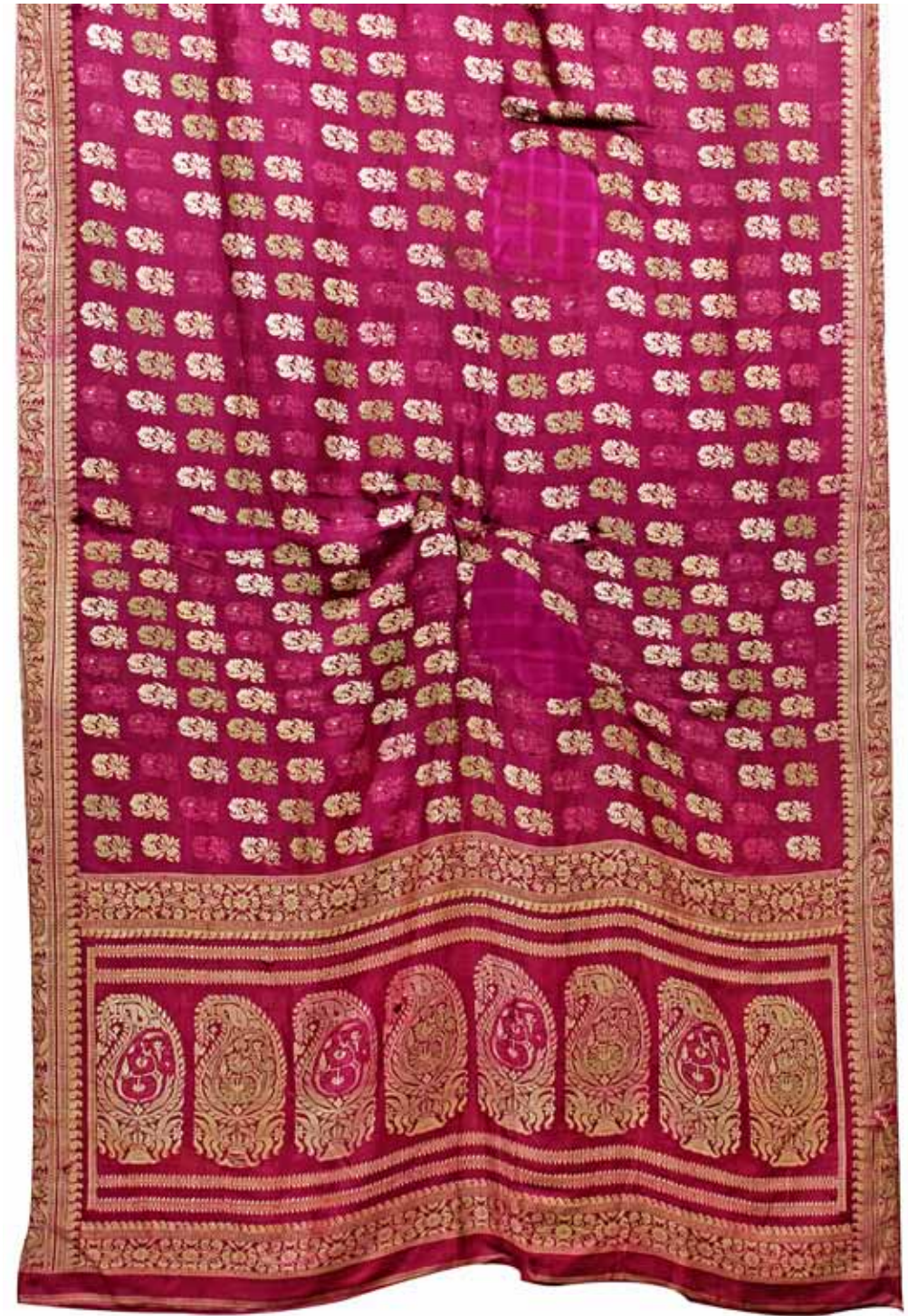
New Delhi, 2021





Baluchar-Nambali (Detail), Hare Rama Hare Krishna

*Baluchar-Nambali
Hare Rama Hare Krishna
19th century,
Murshidabad, West Bengal
470 x 136 cm.*



*Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven
floral kalka motif at the end of the
pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
409 x 110 cm.*



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral
kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
428 x 107 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral
kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
426 x 106 cm.



Baluchar Saree

Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu in the center area followed by a warrior on the horse depicting on left and right side and Dancing figures in the border line.

Murshidabad, West Bengal

550 x 122 cm.



Baluchar Saree

Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif.

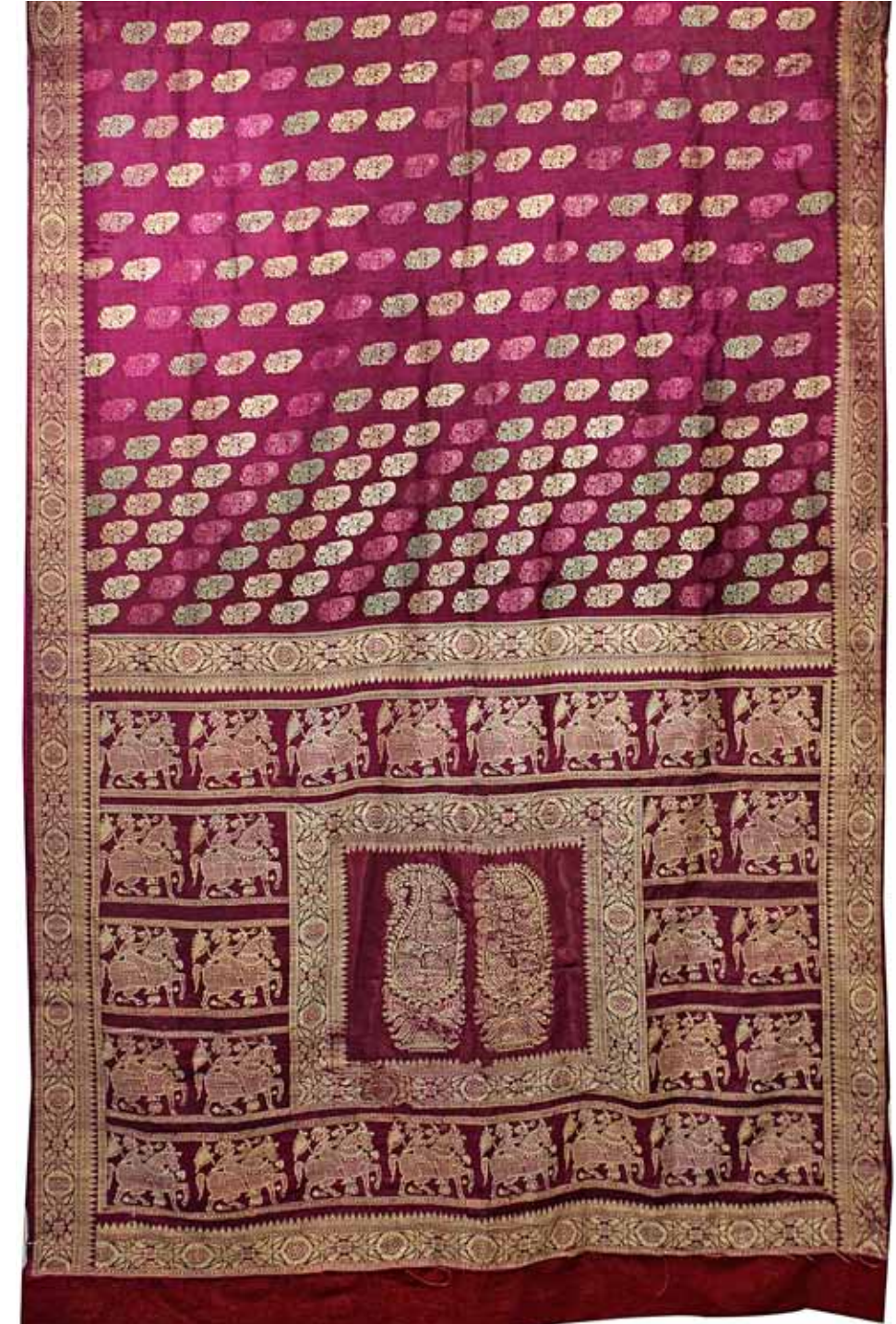
On the pallu the prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated women placed within architectural frames enjoying the essence of flowers.

Murshidabad, West Bengal

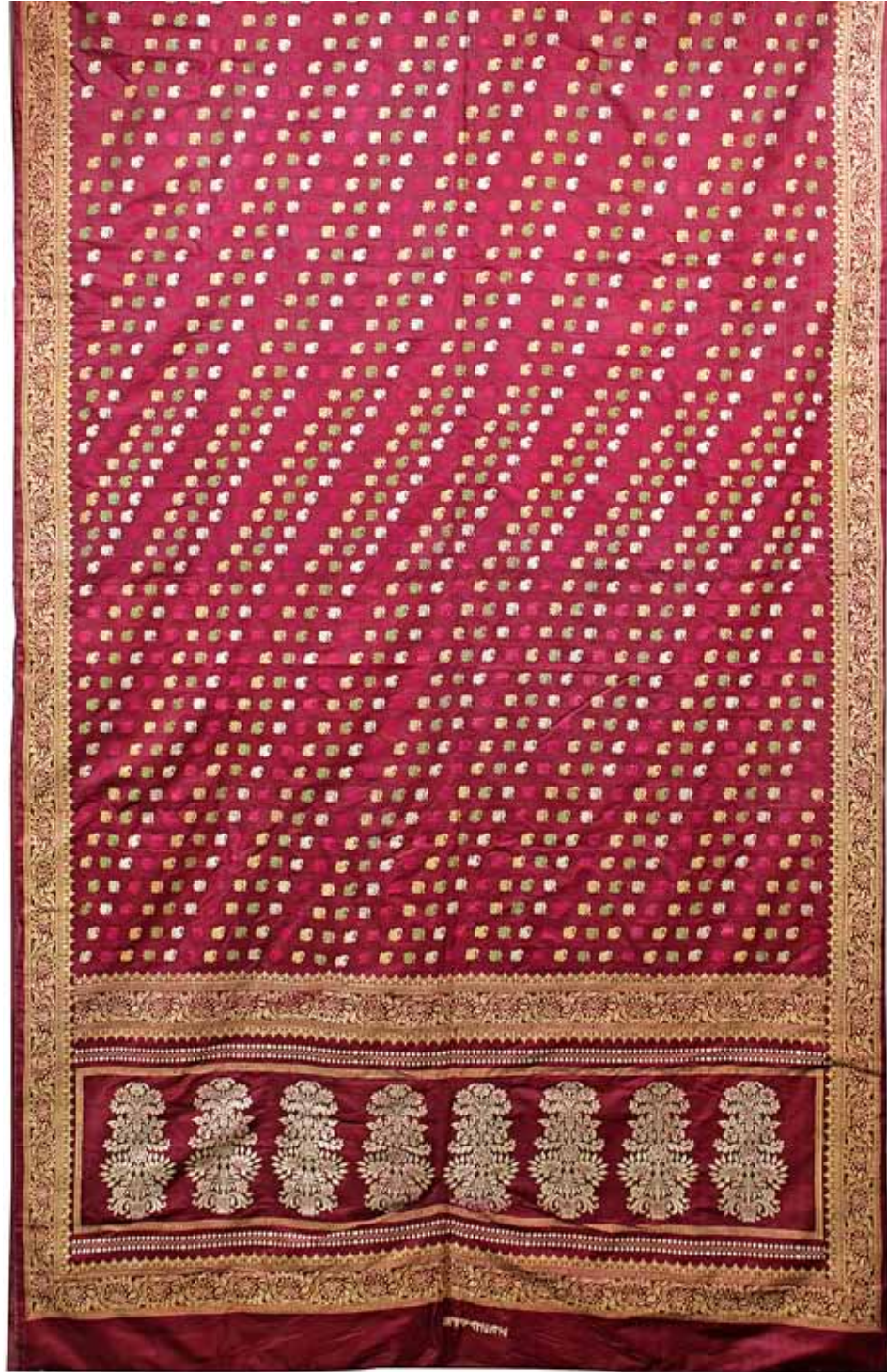
239 x 104 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka
motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
366 x 112 cm.



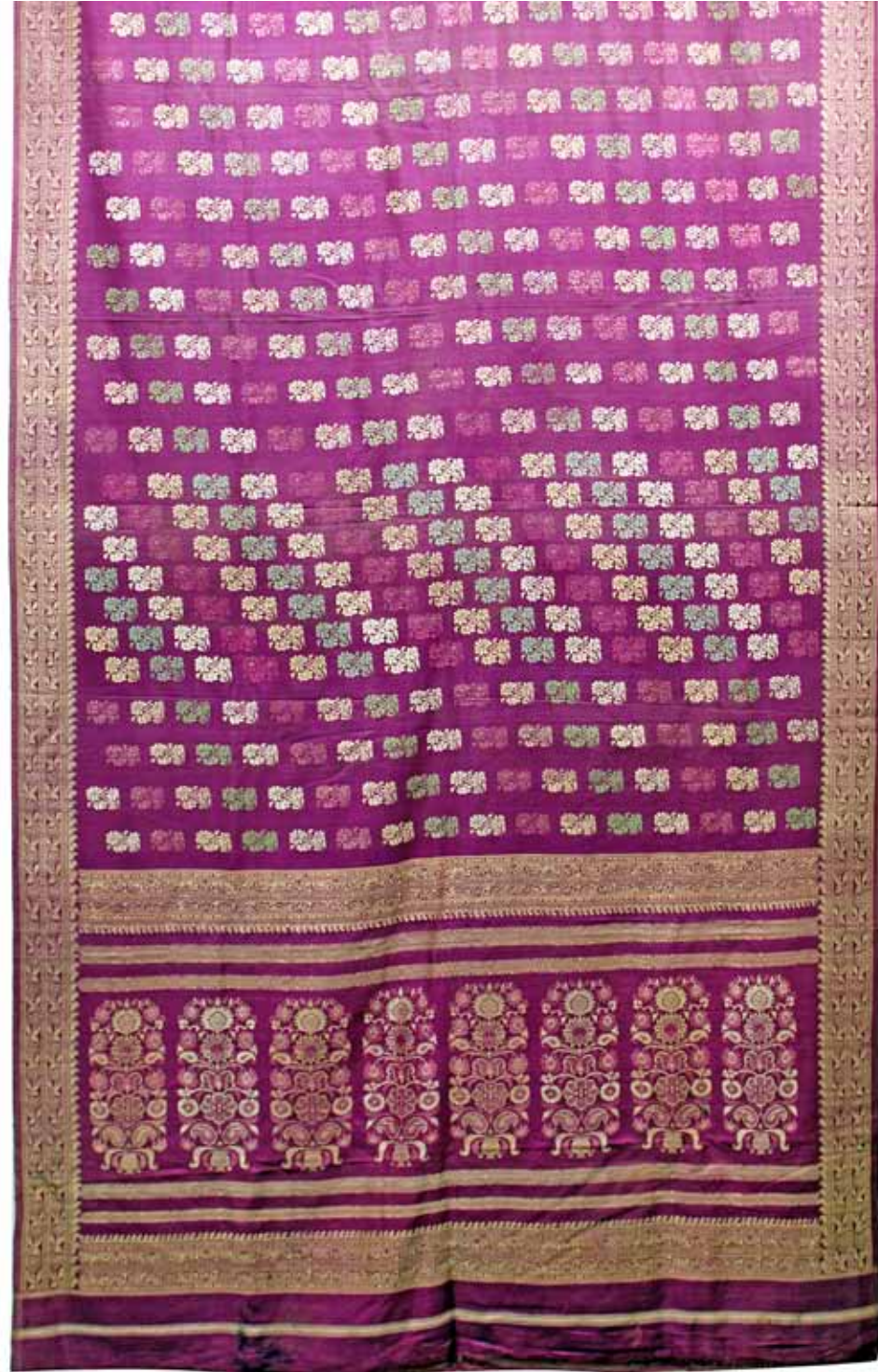
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end
of the pallu and showing a man with the flag on the horse.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
300 x 110 cm.



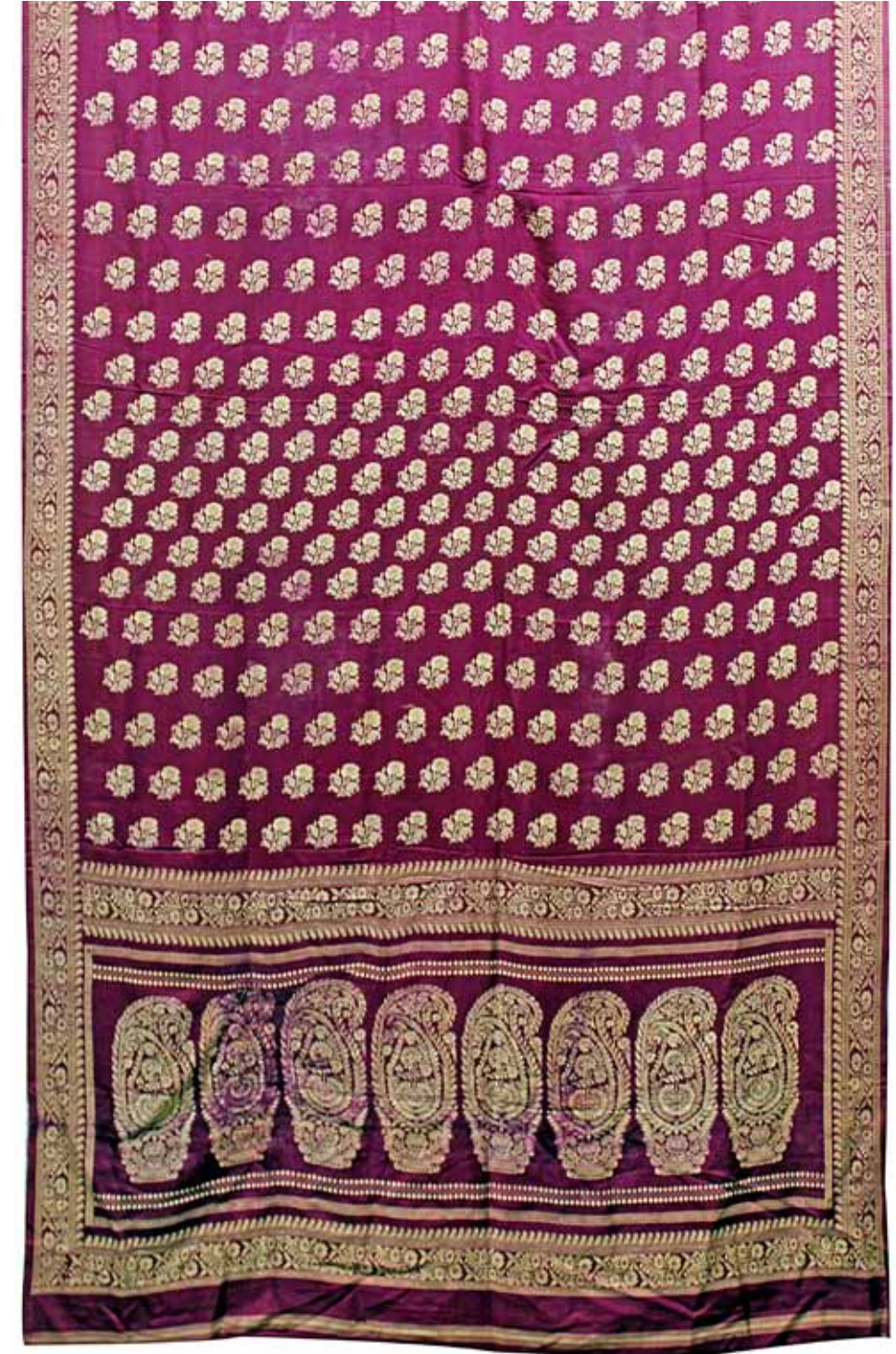
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu,
Signed by Shri Goshno Karikor.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
401x112 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral
kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
322 x 109 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
442 x 112 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
445 x 110 cm.



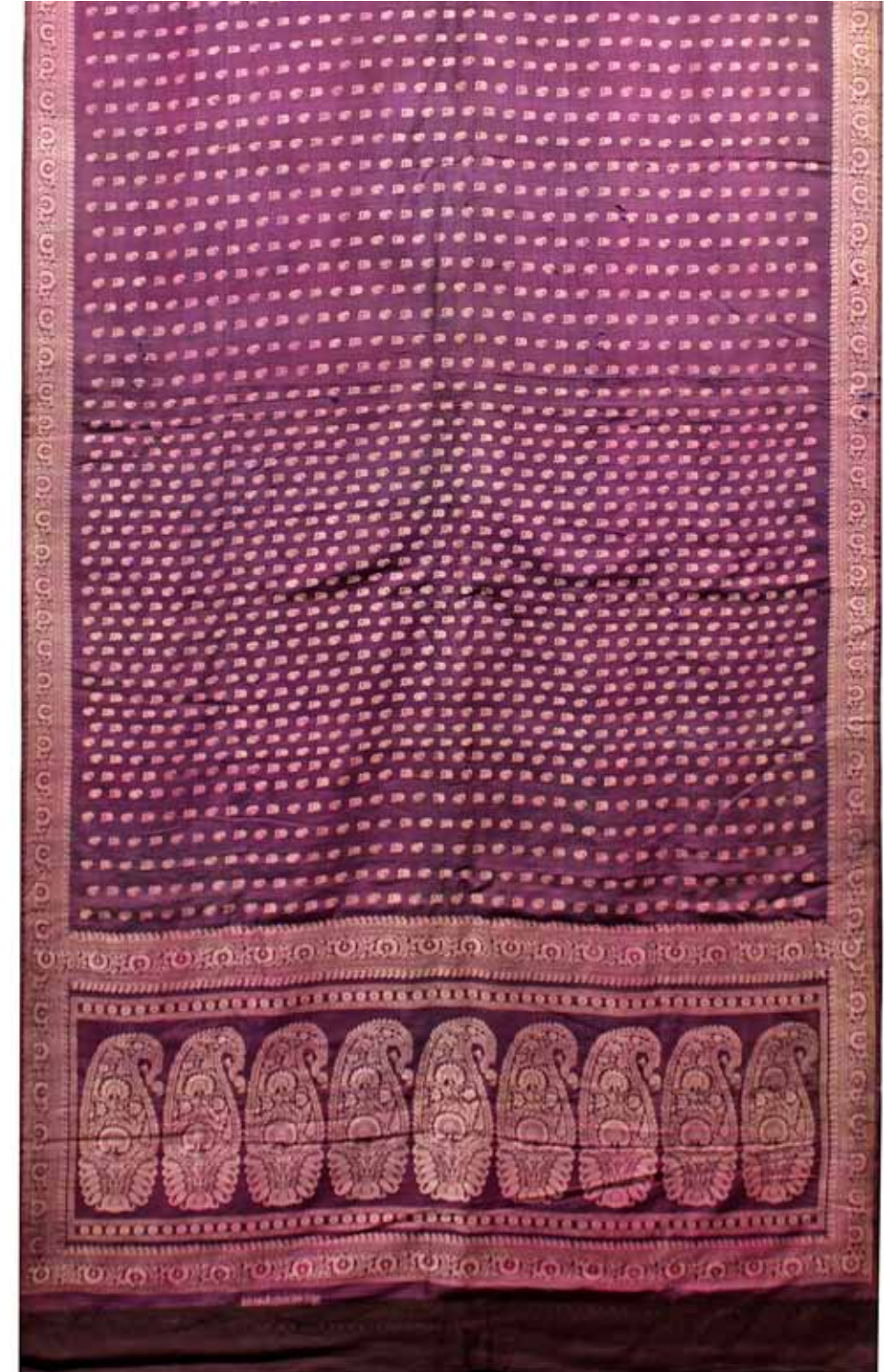
Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated European Men & women placed within architectural frames
Murshidabad, West Bengal
352 x 114 cm.



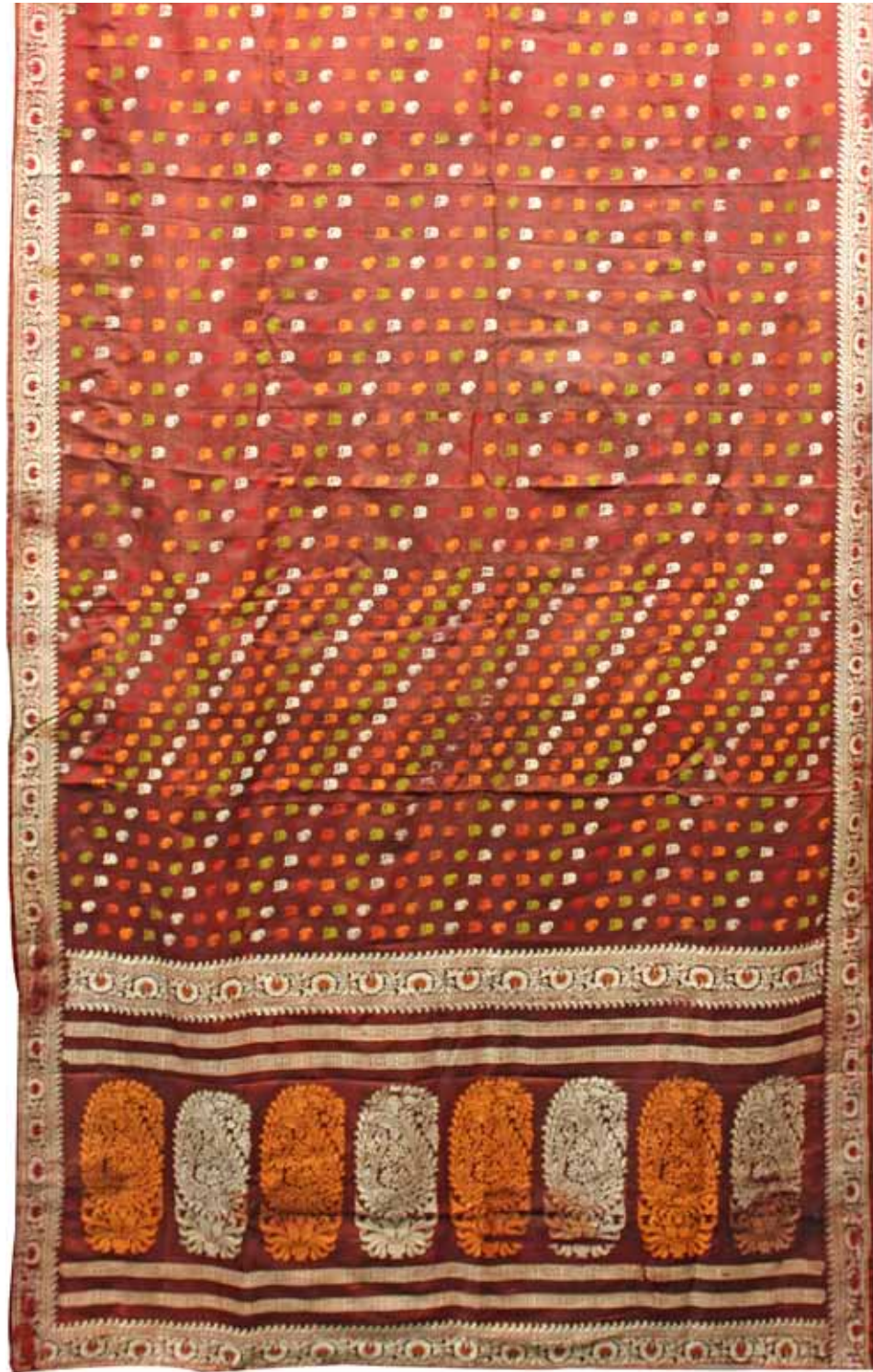
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
426 x 120 cm.



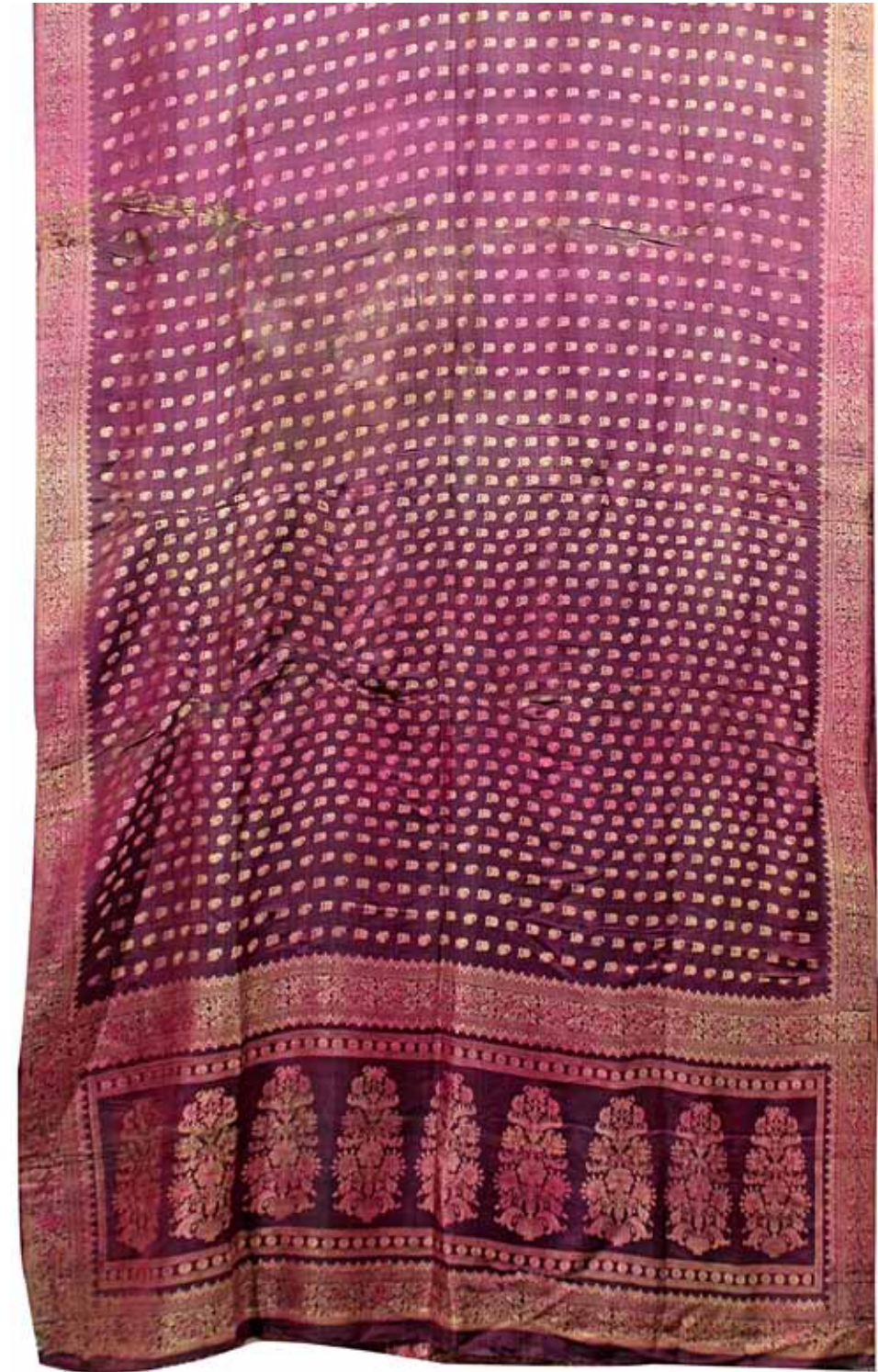
Baluchar Saree
On the end of pallu showing scenes from the epic Ramayana
depicting the Sita haran by Ravana
Bishnupur, West Bengal
452 x 120 cm



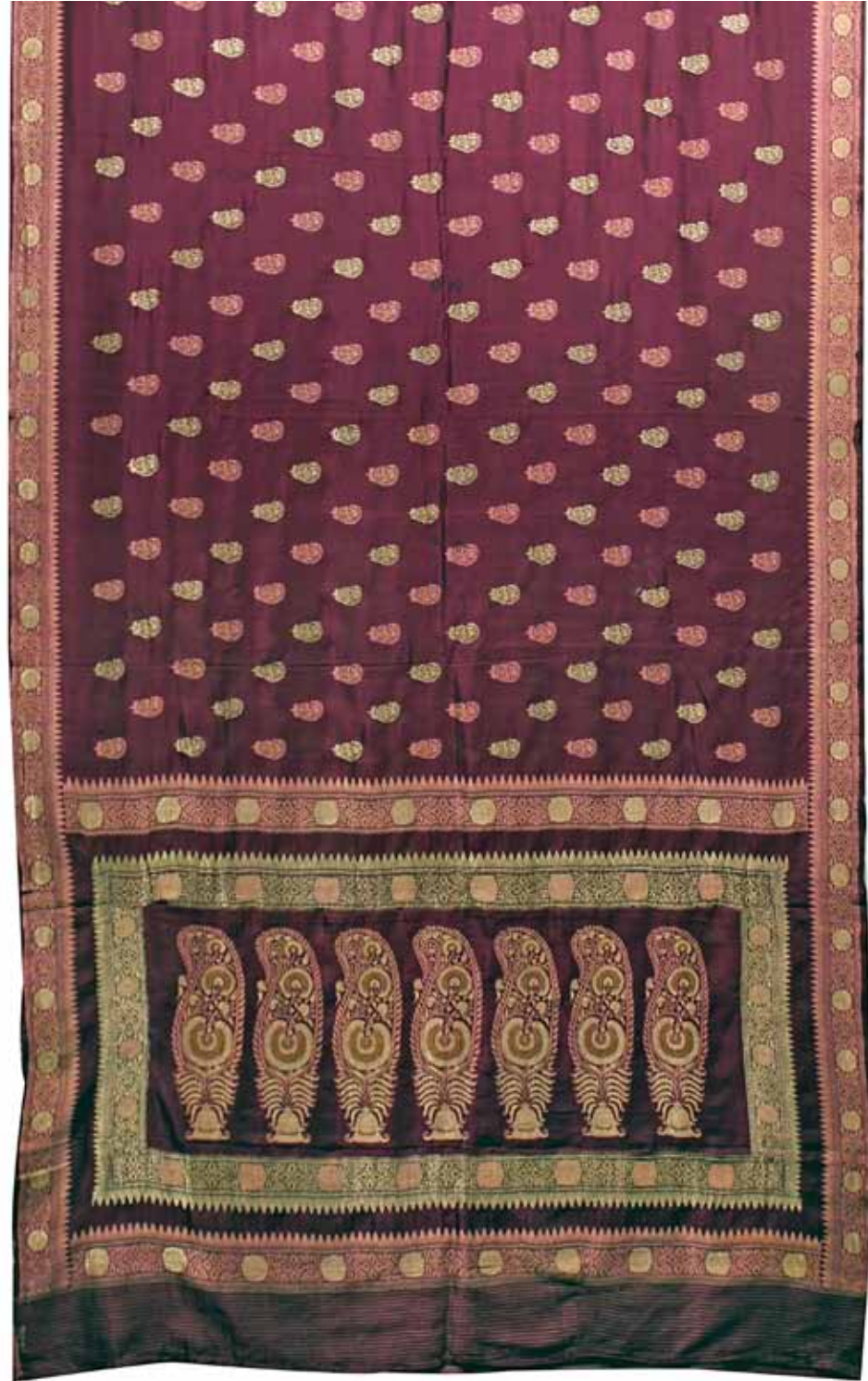
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka
motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
Signed: Sri Dubaraj Das Mirpur, 456 x 114 cm.



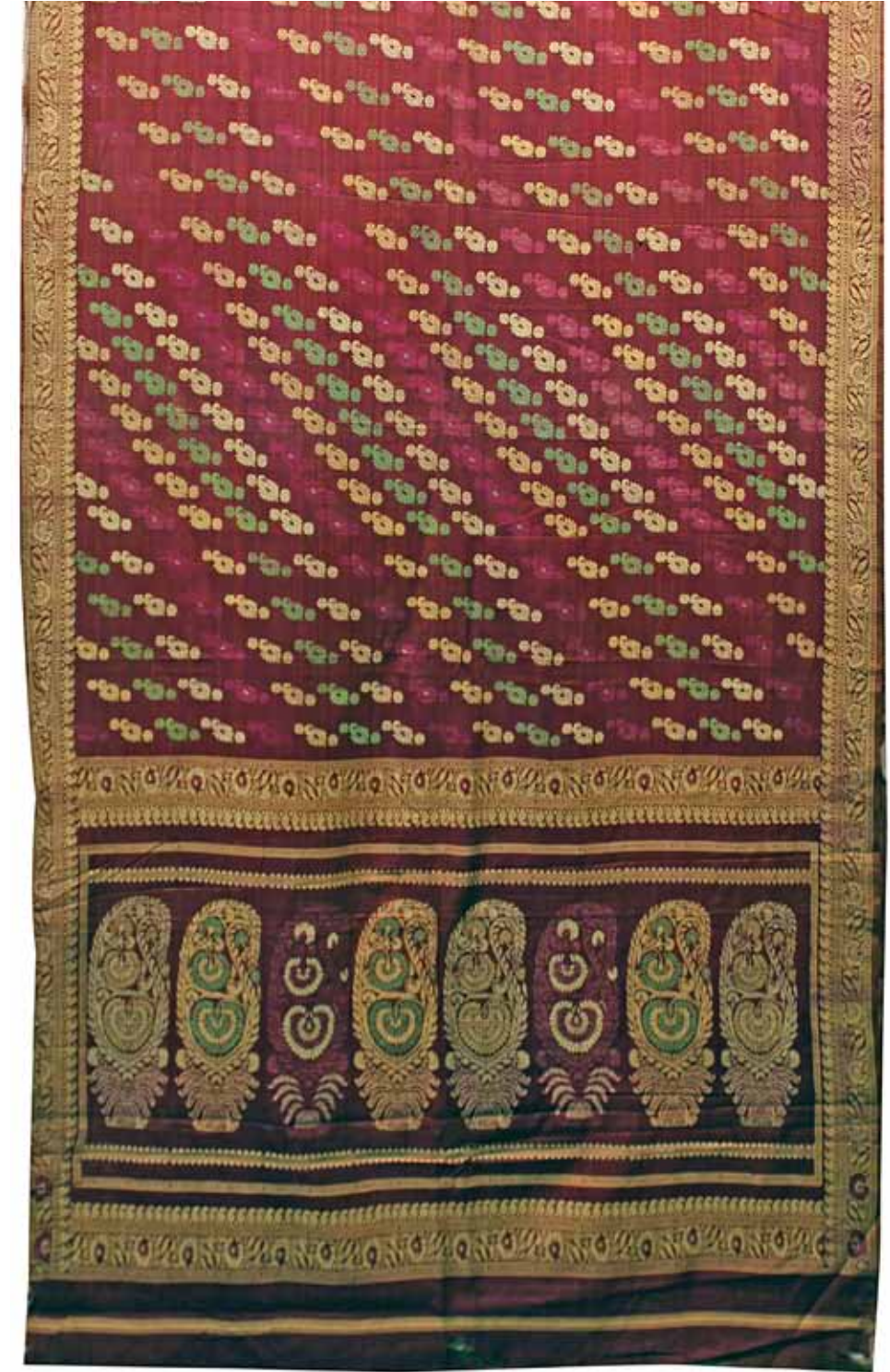
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end
of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
580 x 112 cm.



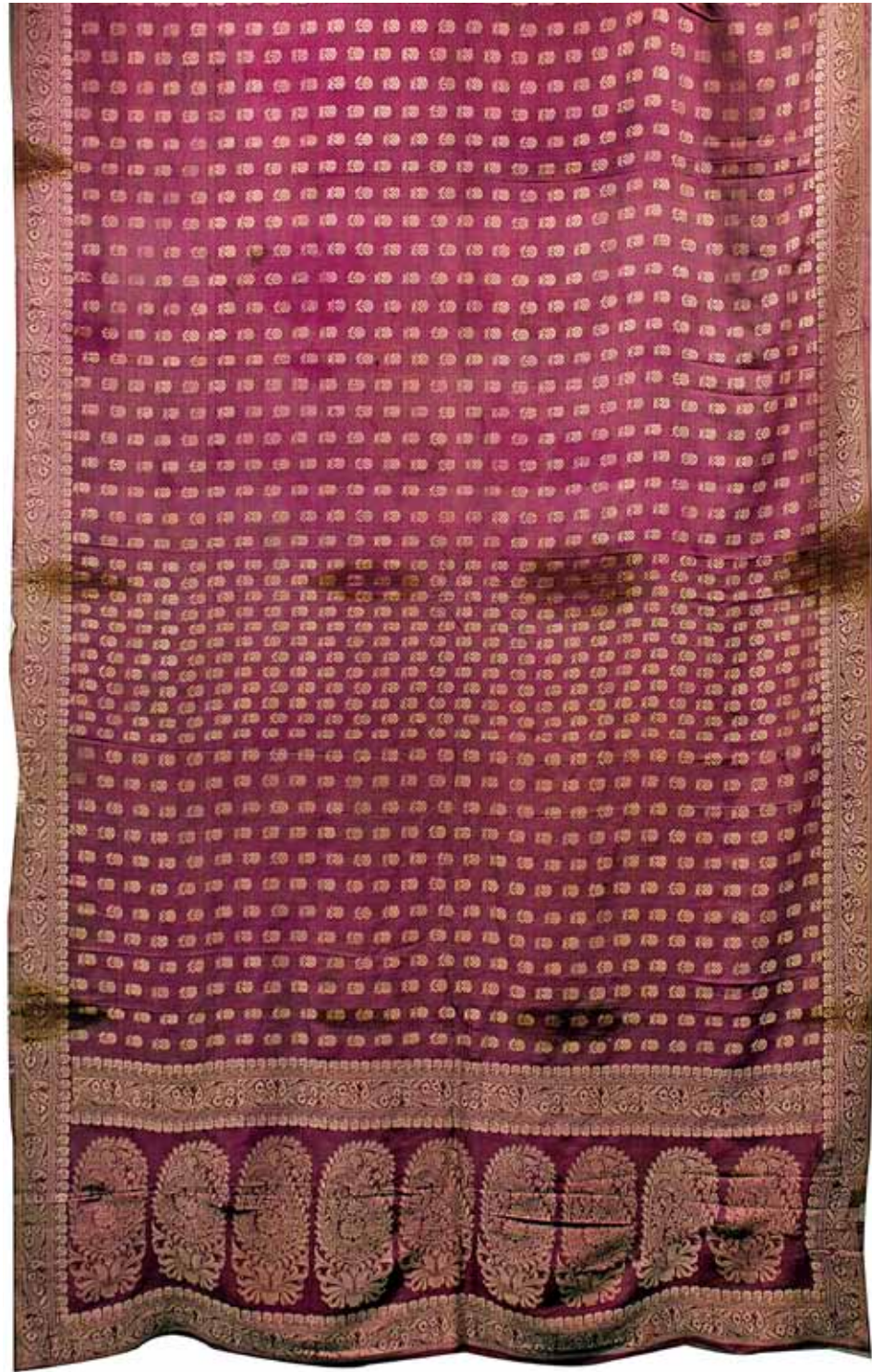
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka
motif at the end of the pallu,
Signed by Shri Dubaraj Das from Mirpur
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 440 x 115 cm.



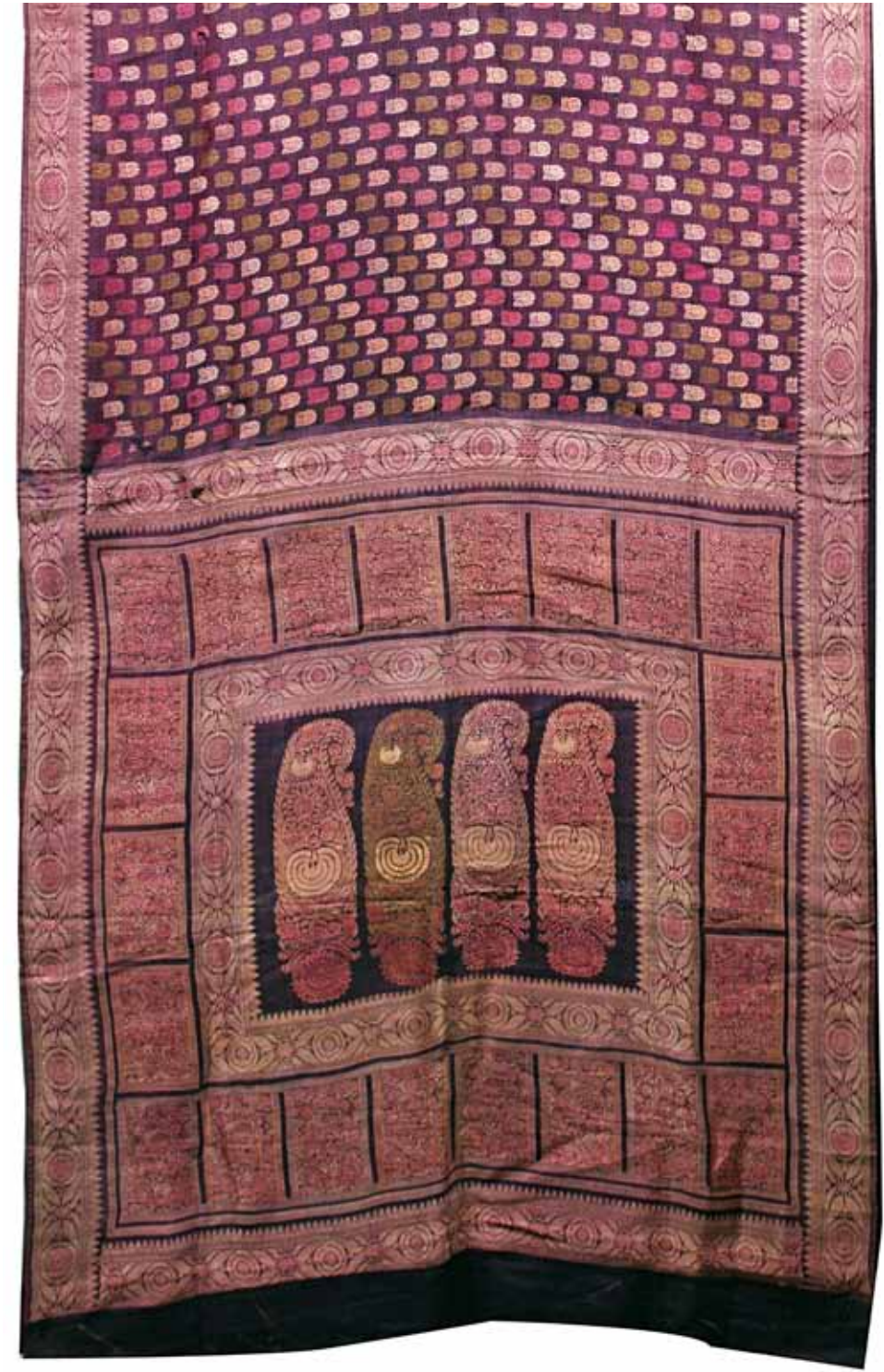
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end
of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
494 x 117 cm.



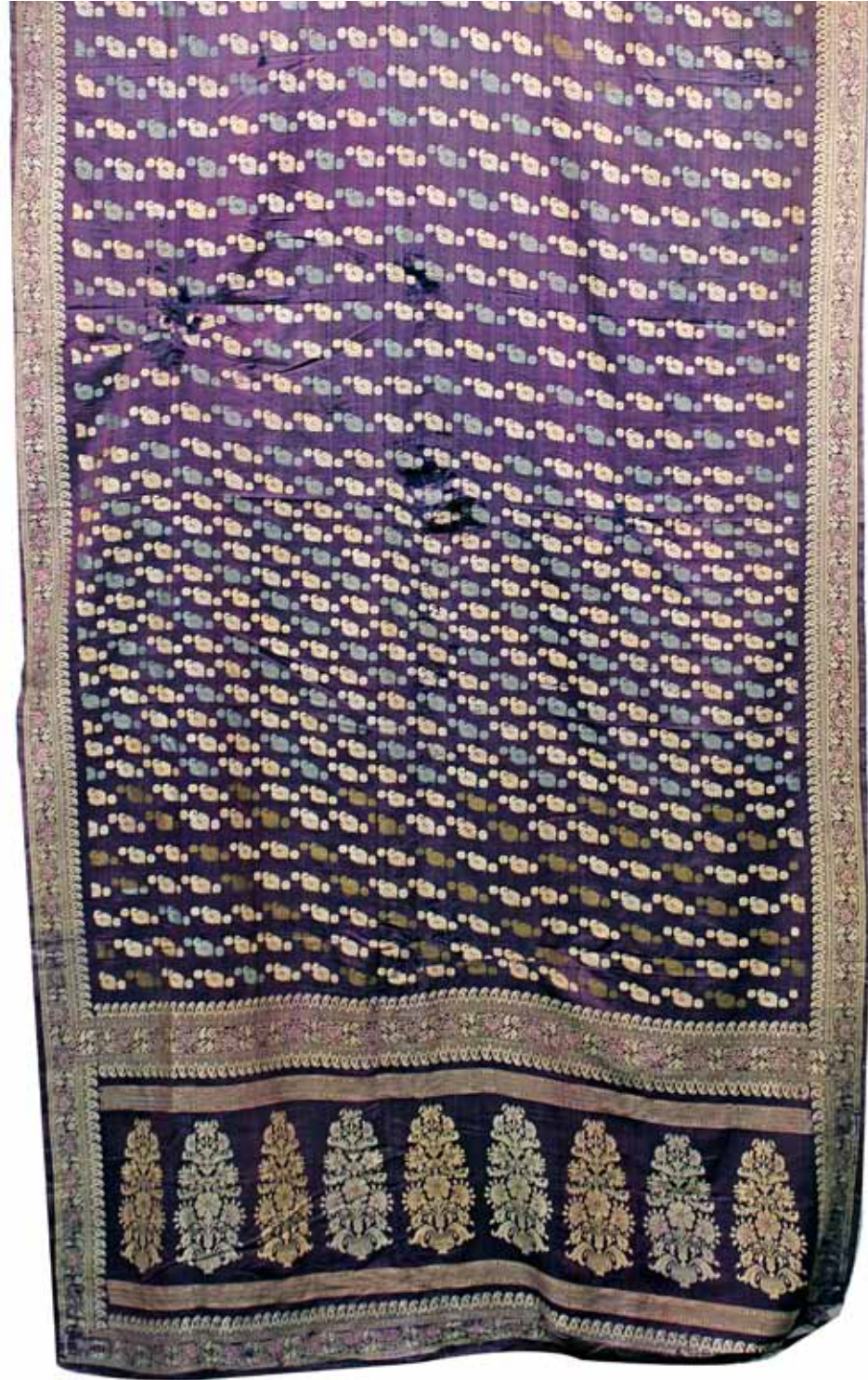
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka
motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
439 x 108 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
389 x 106 cm.



Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
437 x 110 cm.



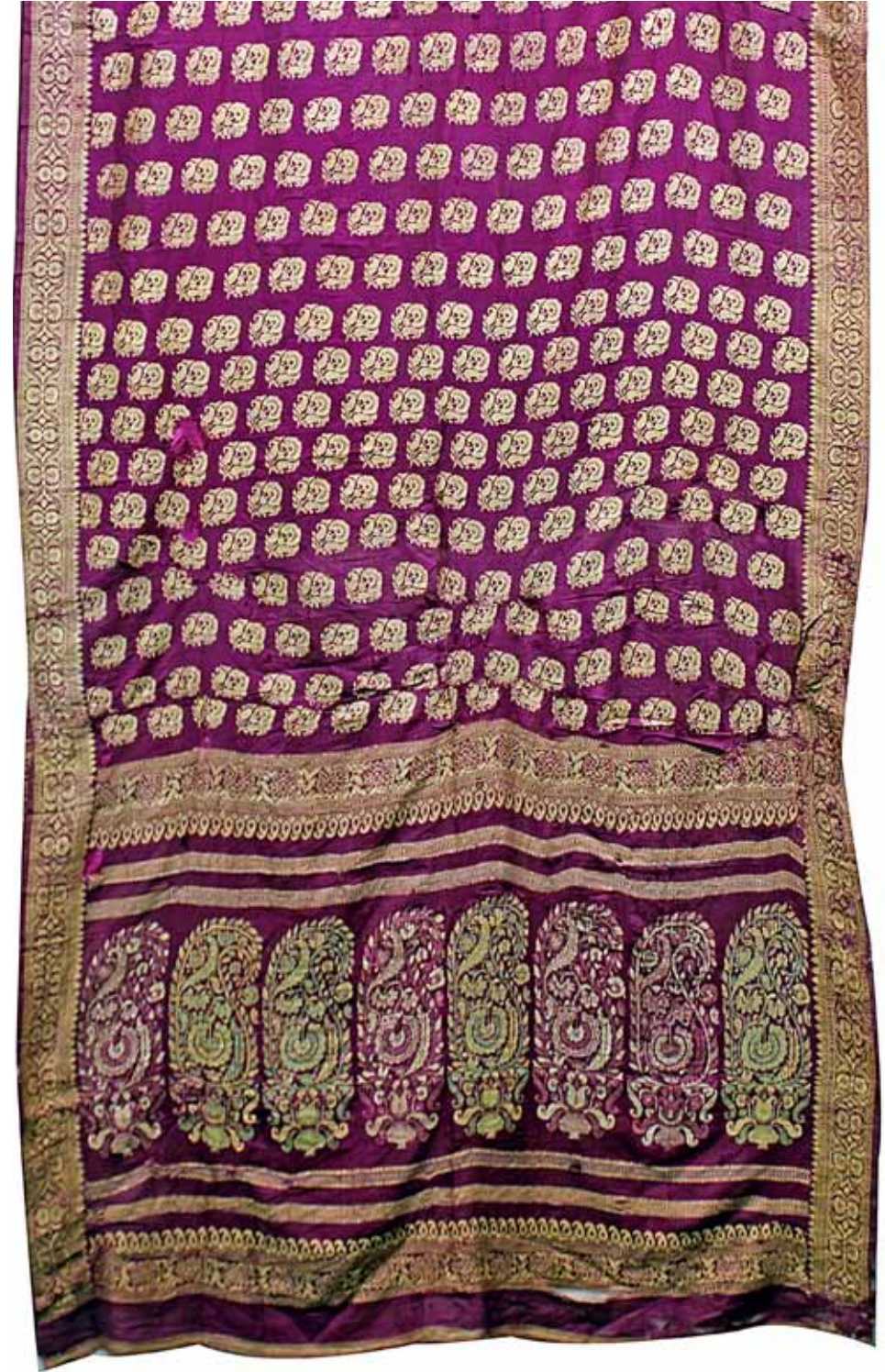
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
449 x 116 cm.



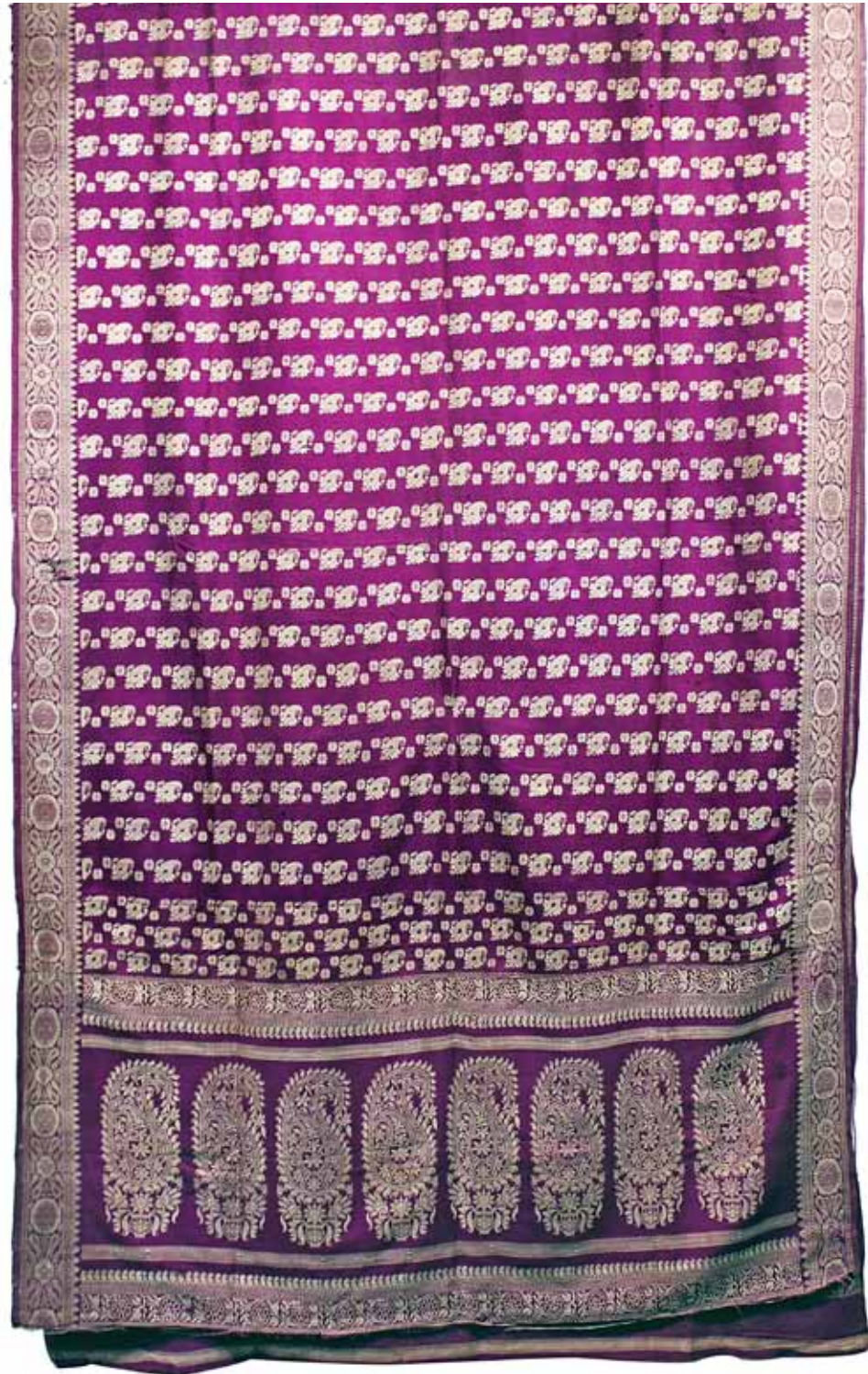
Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing Kalka in
the centre and a European man with a hat
riding on a horse.
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 429x109 cm.



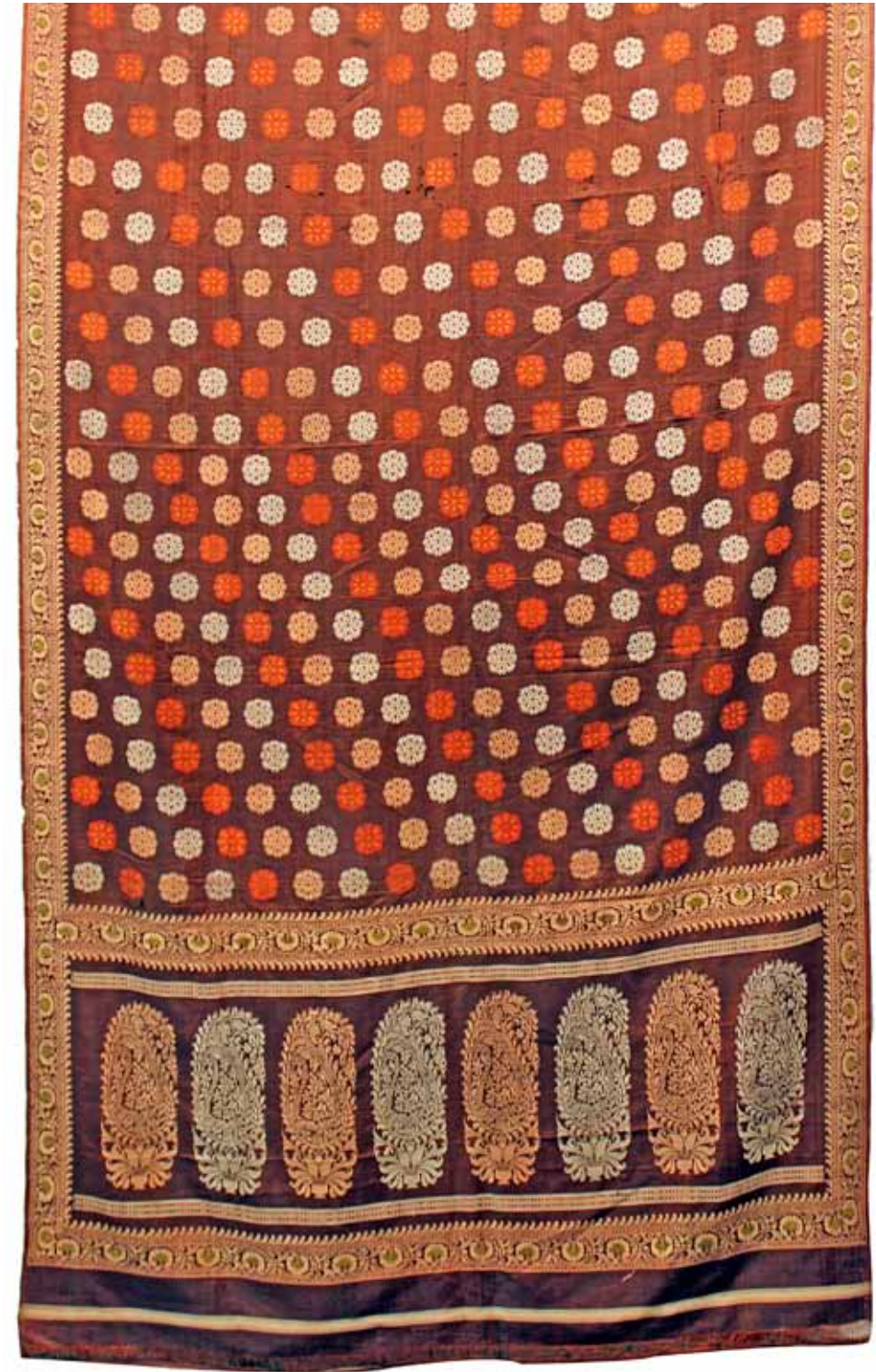
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
402 x 114 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
394 x 102 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
373 x 111 cm.



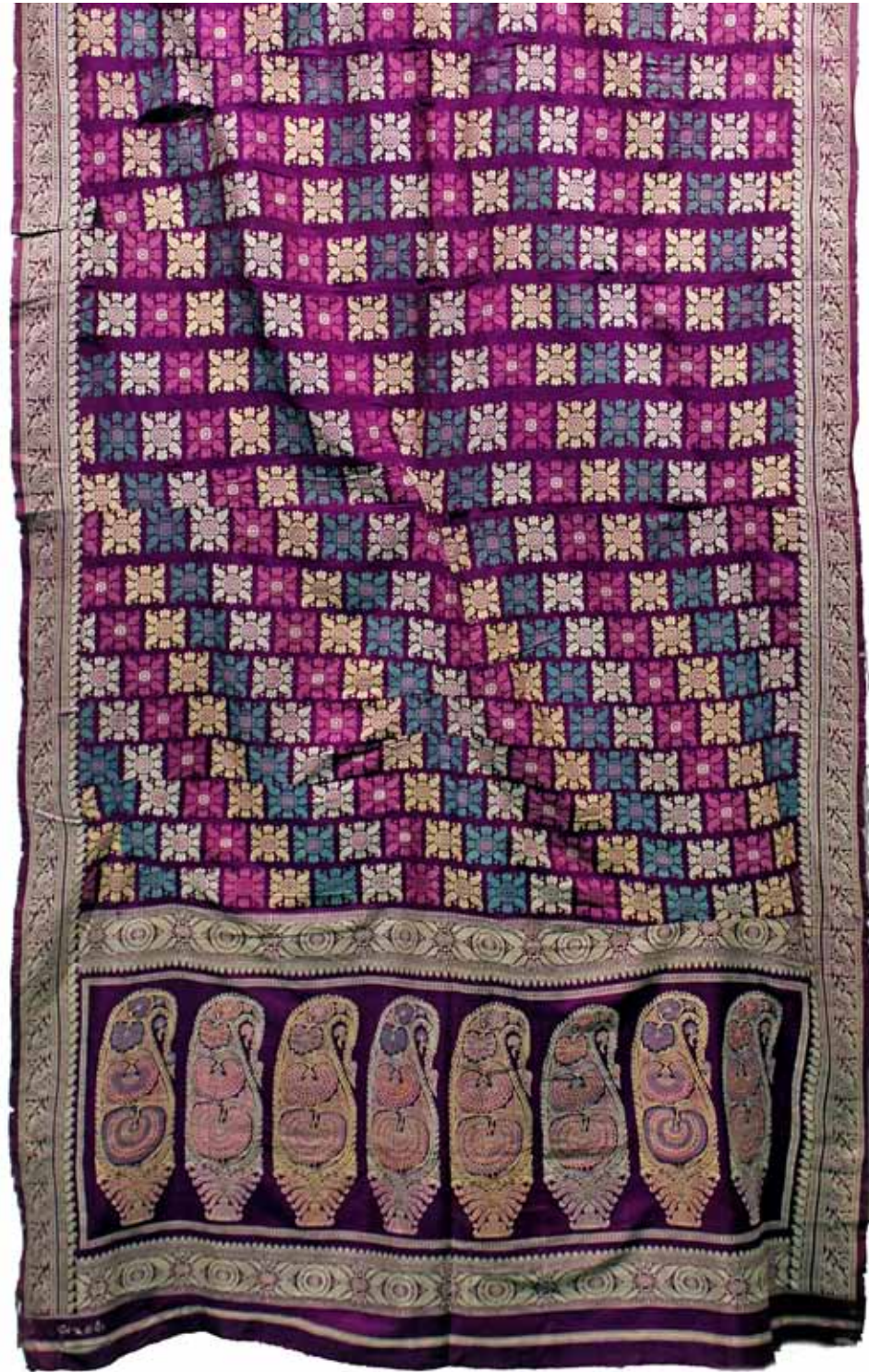
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral
kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
464 x 117 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
429 x 109 cm.



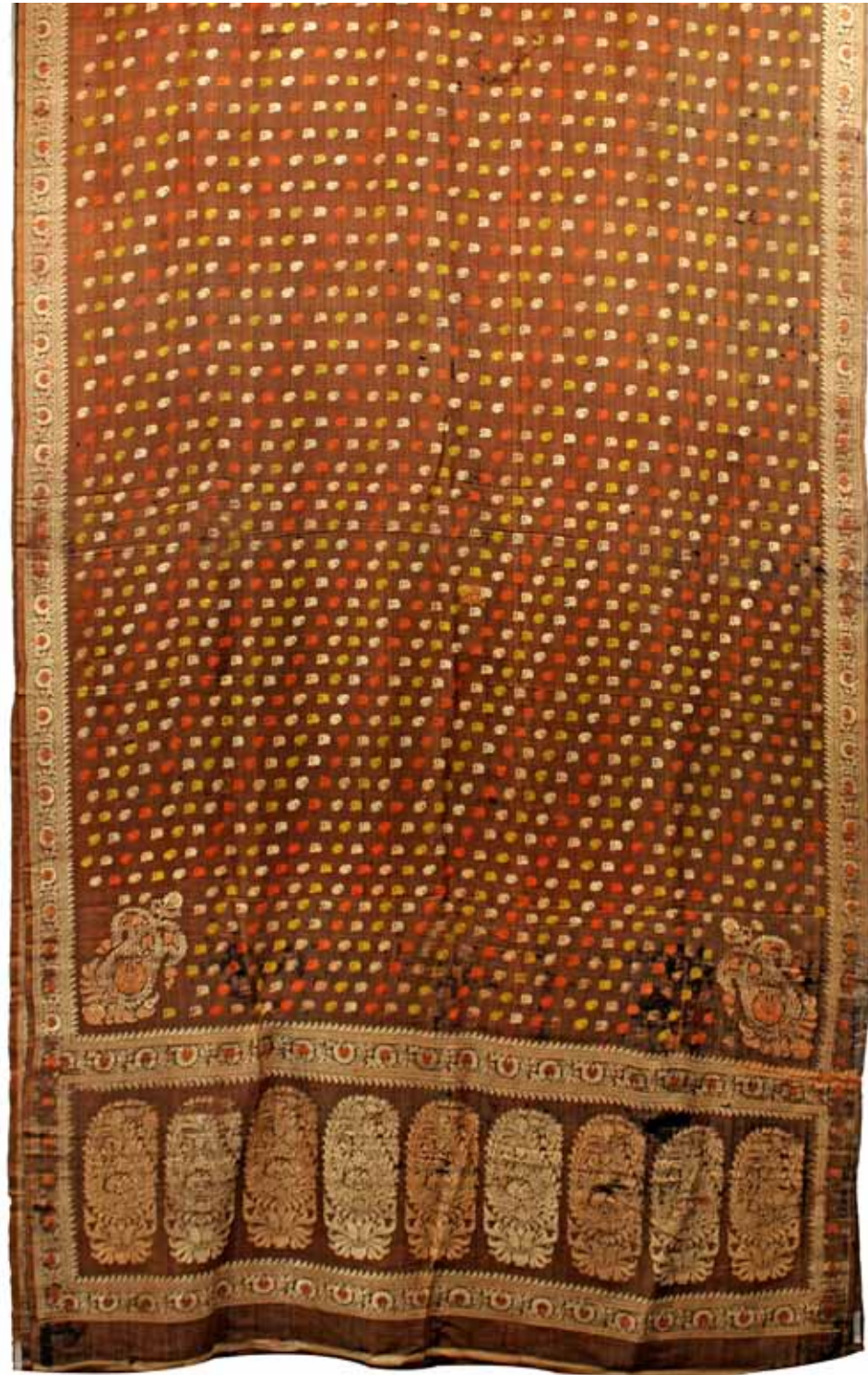
Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs show kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural carriage frames.
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 386 x 109 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
423 x 111 cm



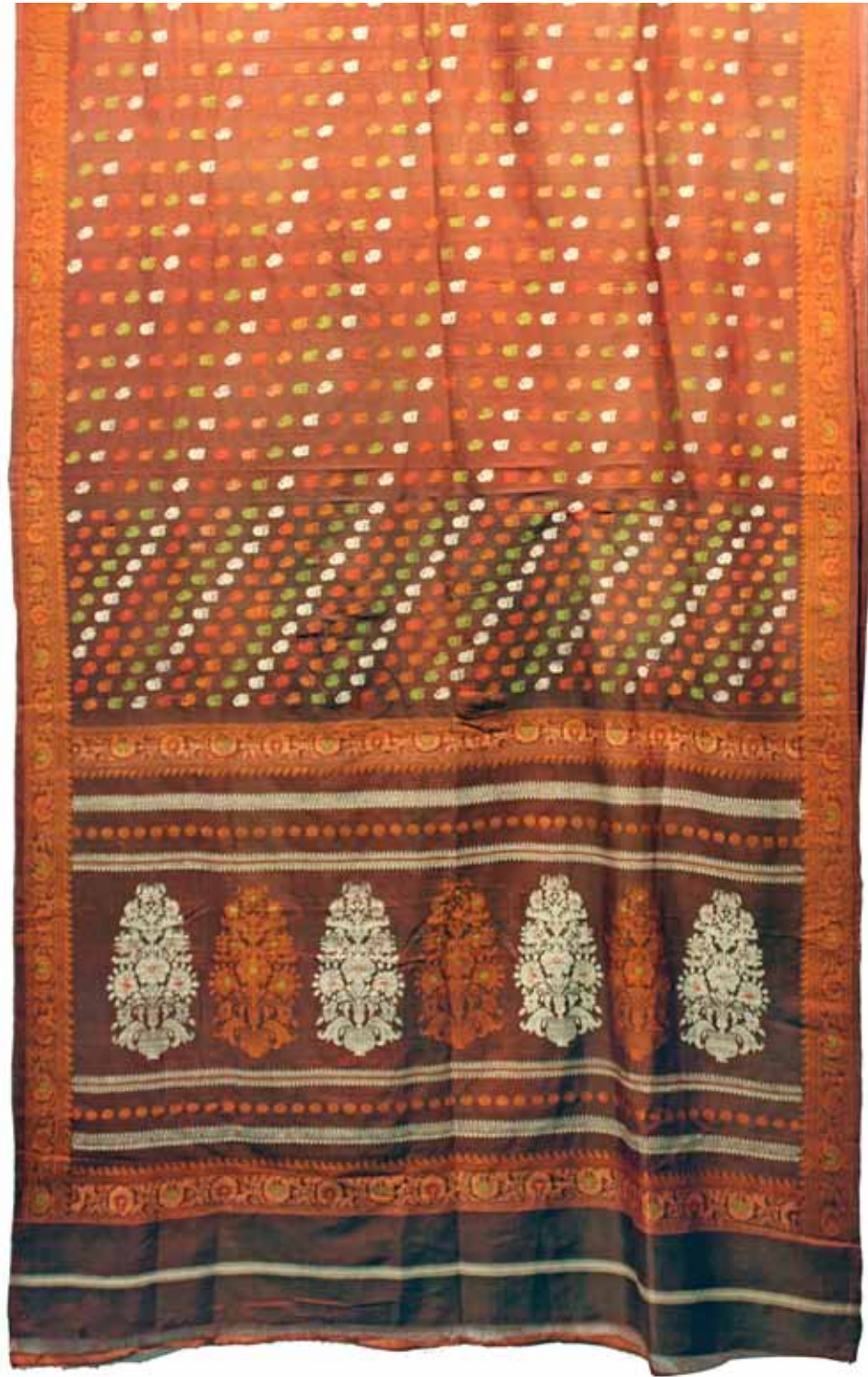
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
440 x 102 cm.



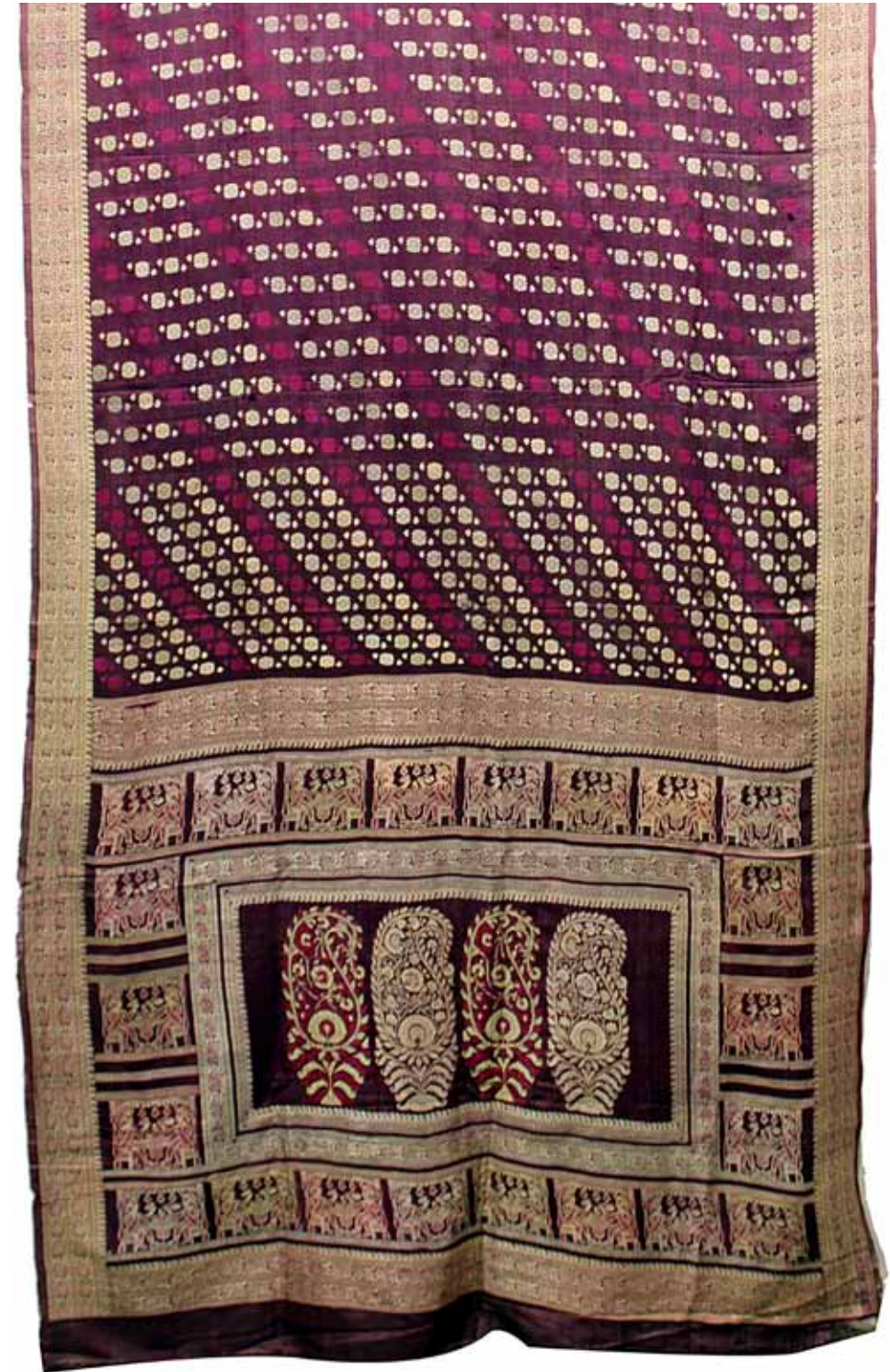
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
449 x 117 cm.



Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated women placed within architectural frames
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 156 x 111 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
430 x 111 cm.



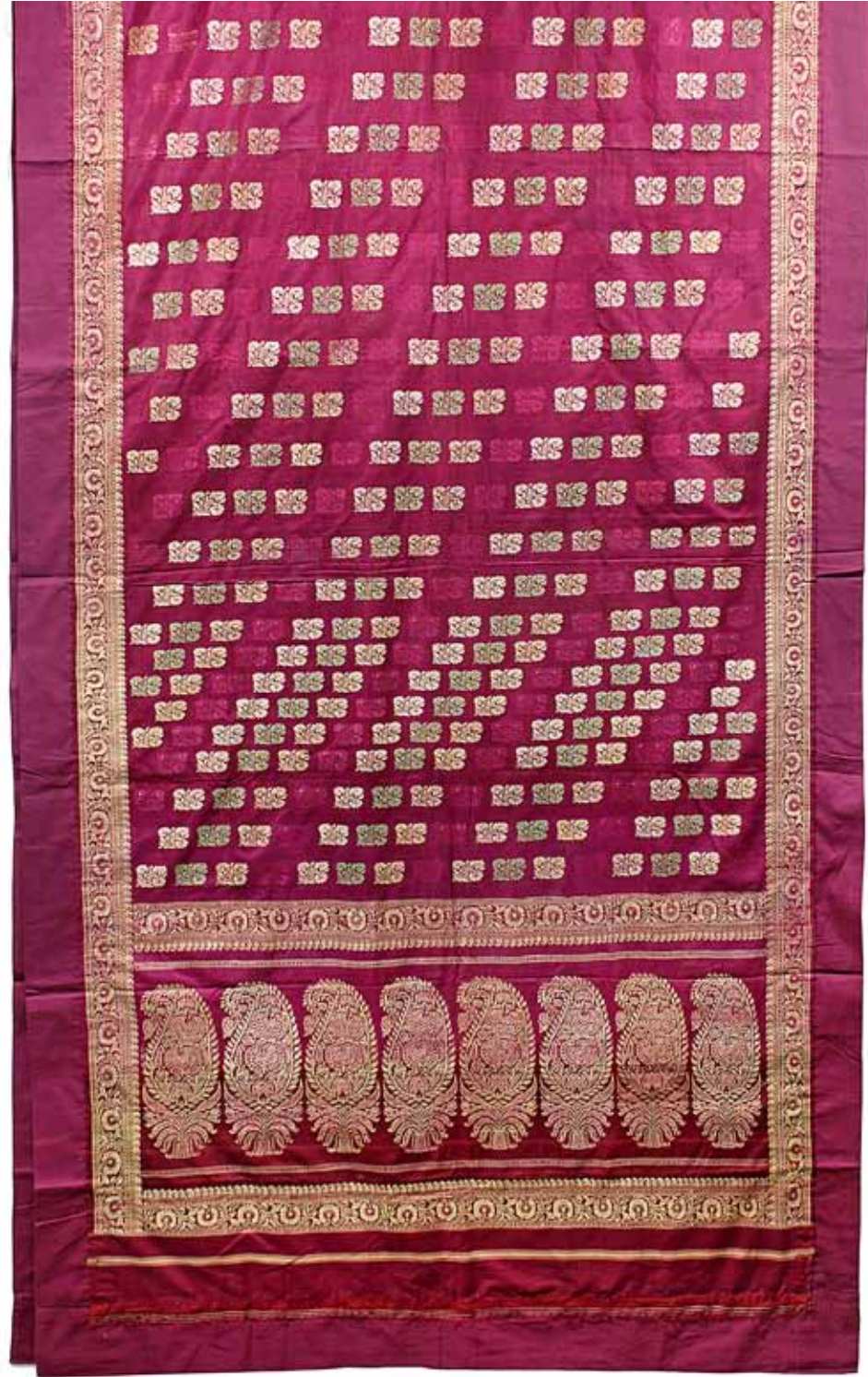
Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the
centre and seated Men & women placed within
architectural frames enjoying the essence of flowers.
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 388 x 108 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
506 x 108 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
426 x 107 cm.



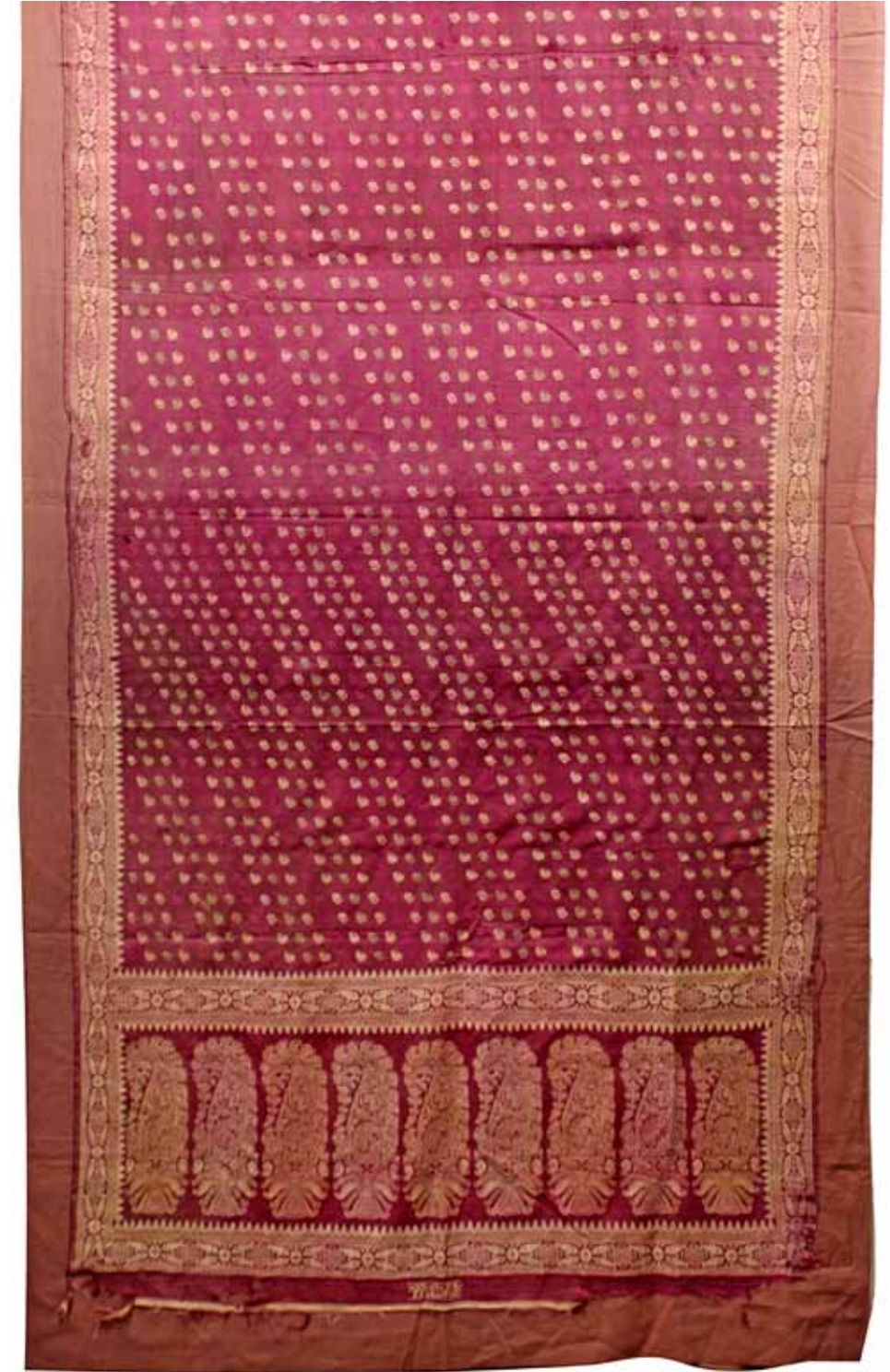
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
442 x 110 cm.



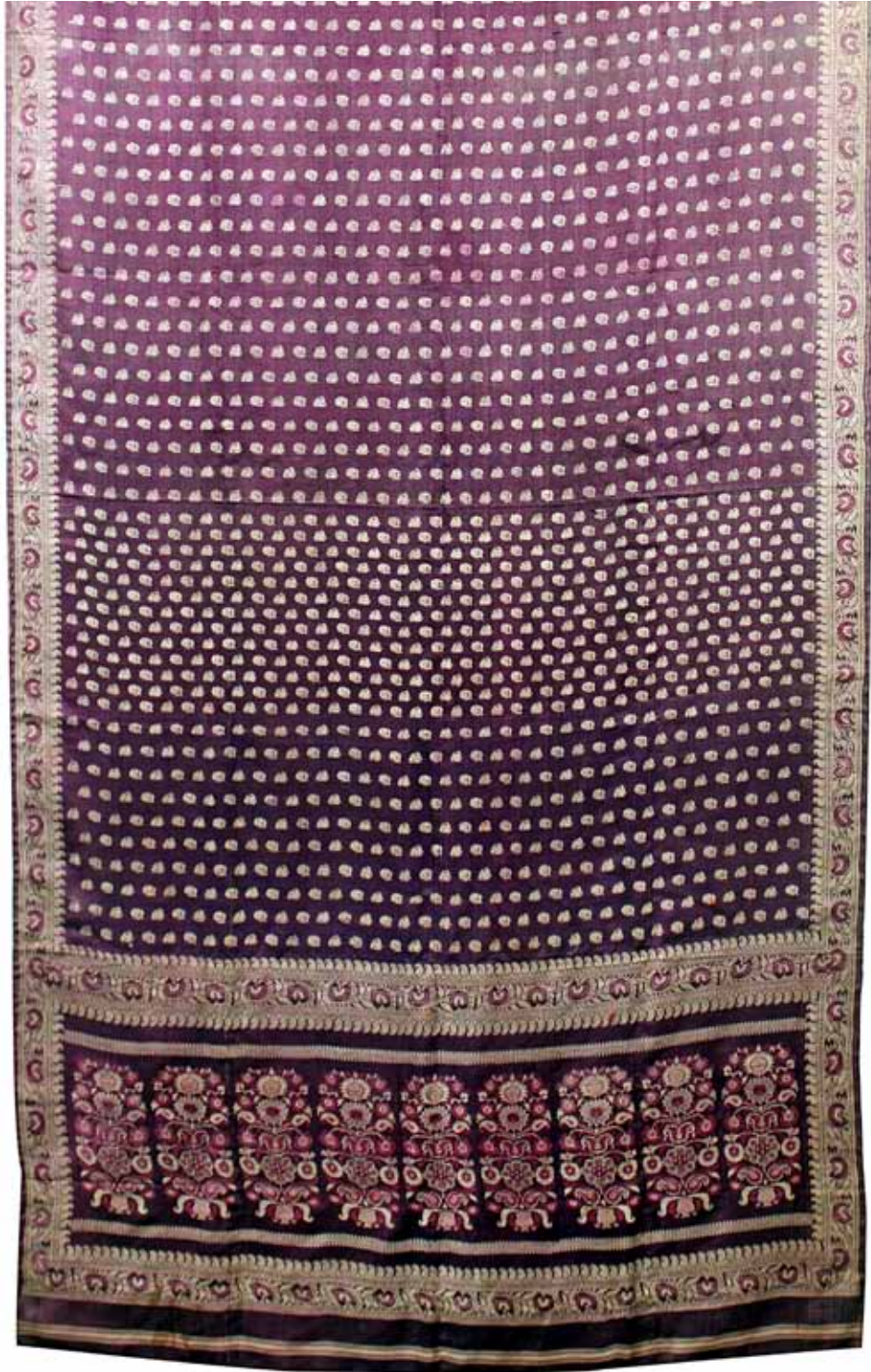
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
448 x 108 cm.



Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing Kalka in the centre
and a man riding on a horse.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
391 x 119 cm.



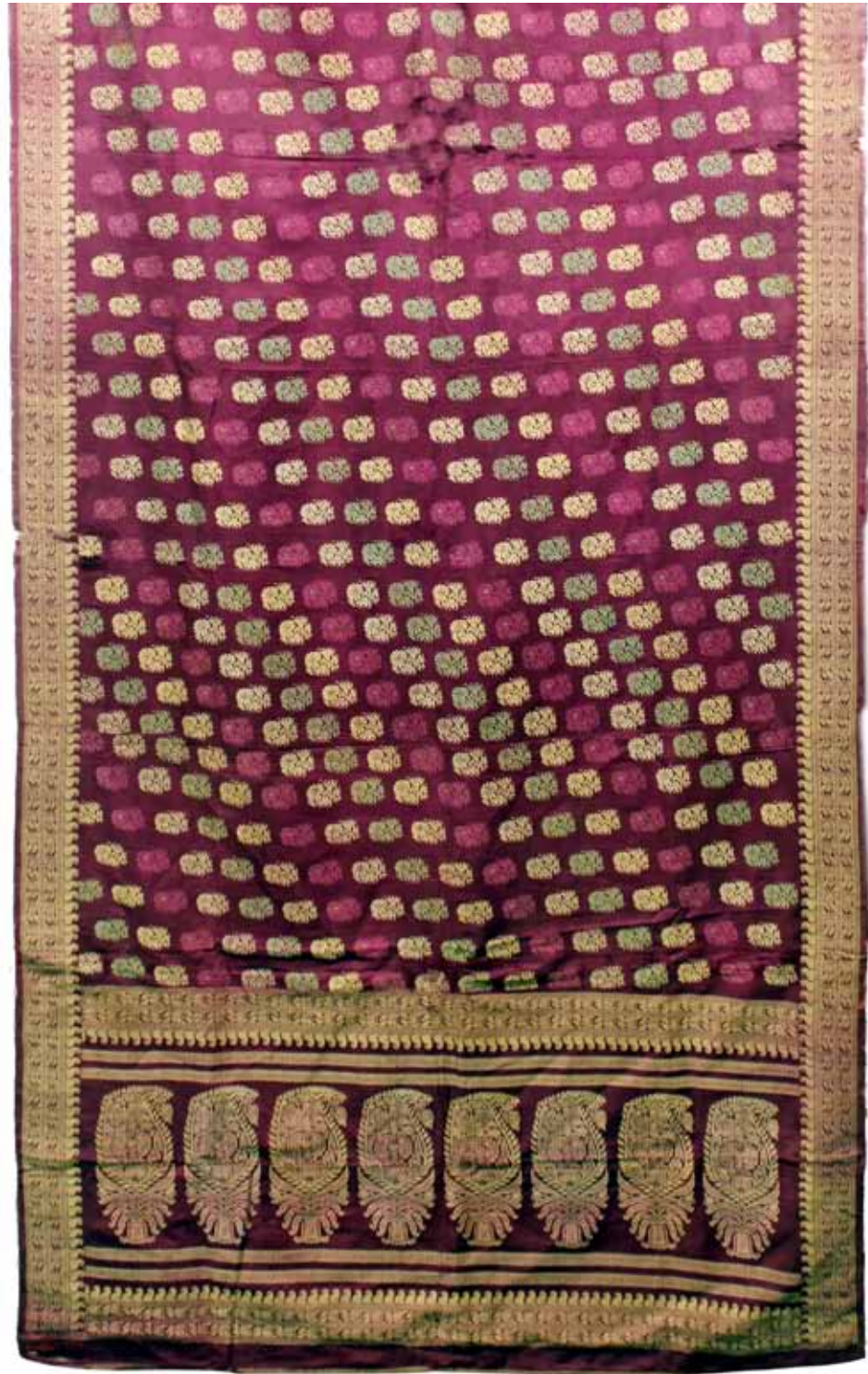
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral Kalka motif
at the end of the pallu. Signed by Shri Jageshwarkor
Para from Natenugram.
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 454x114 cm.



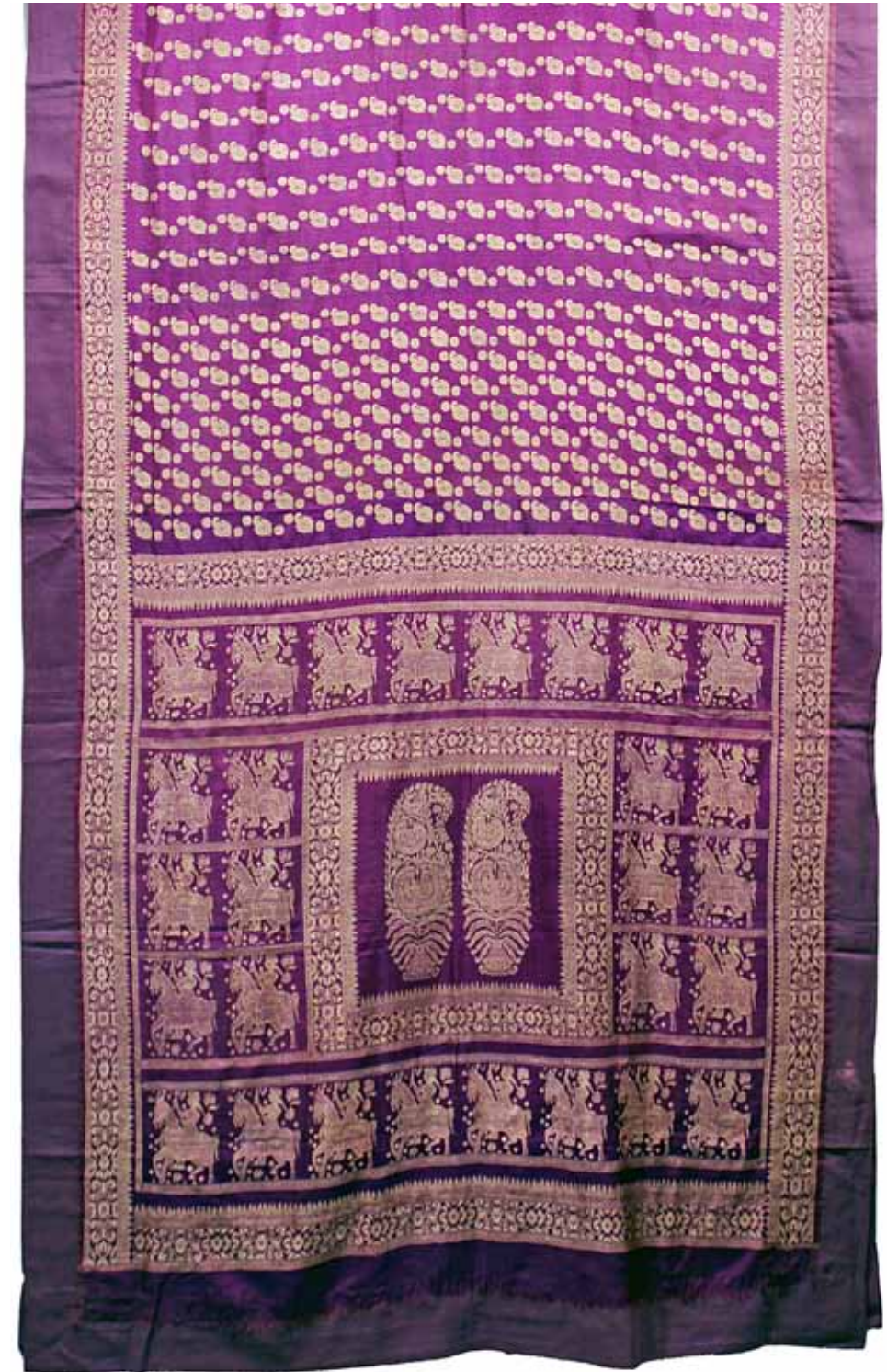
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
438 x 111 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif
at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
452 x 115 cm.



Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at
the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
403 x 110 cm.



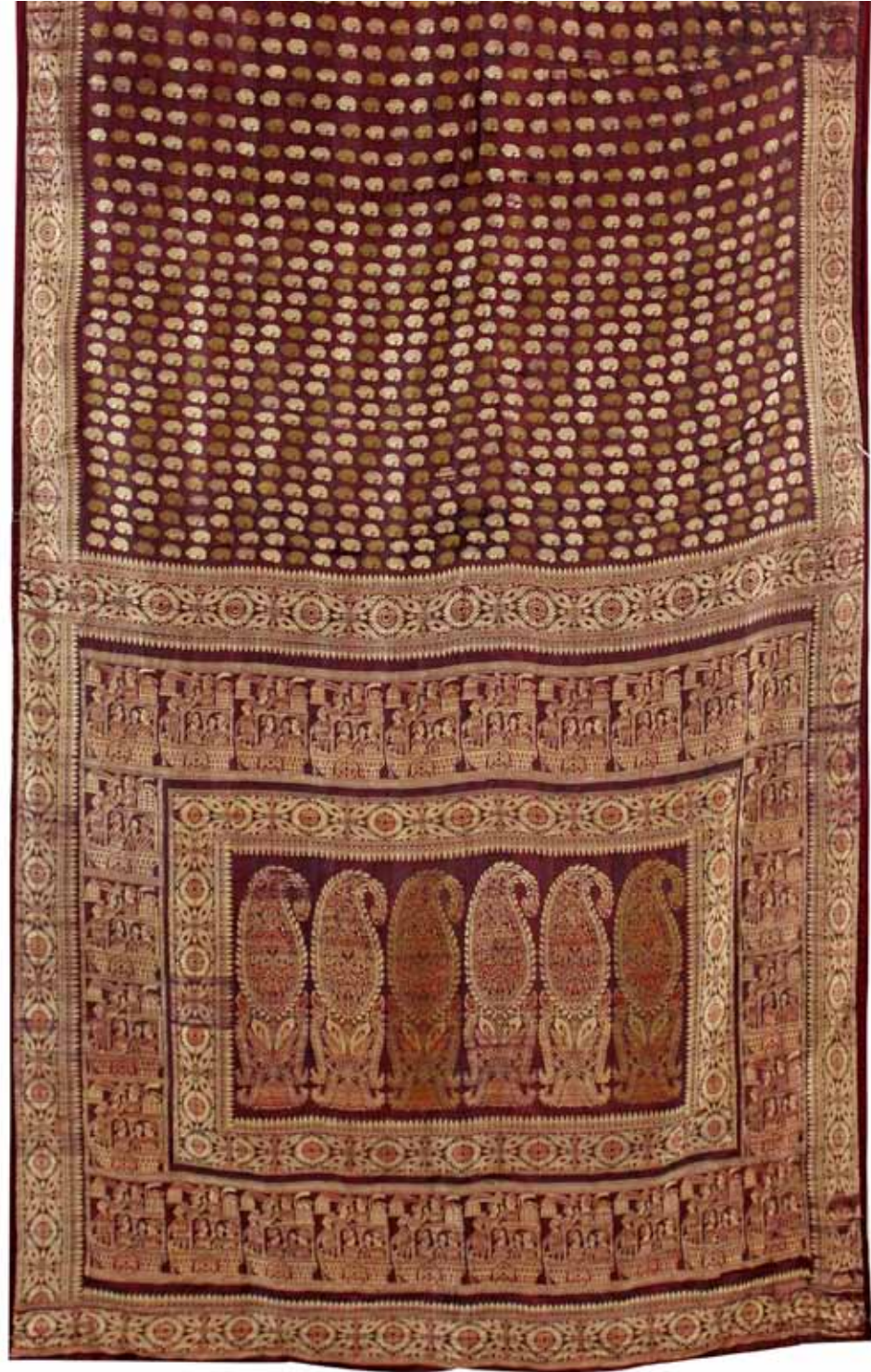
Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre
and seated woman on horse holding a sword.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
440 x 116 cm.



Baluchar Saree
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural frames enjoying the essence of flowers.
Murshidabad, West Bengal, 432 x 111 cm.



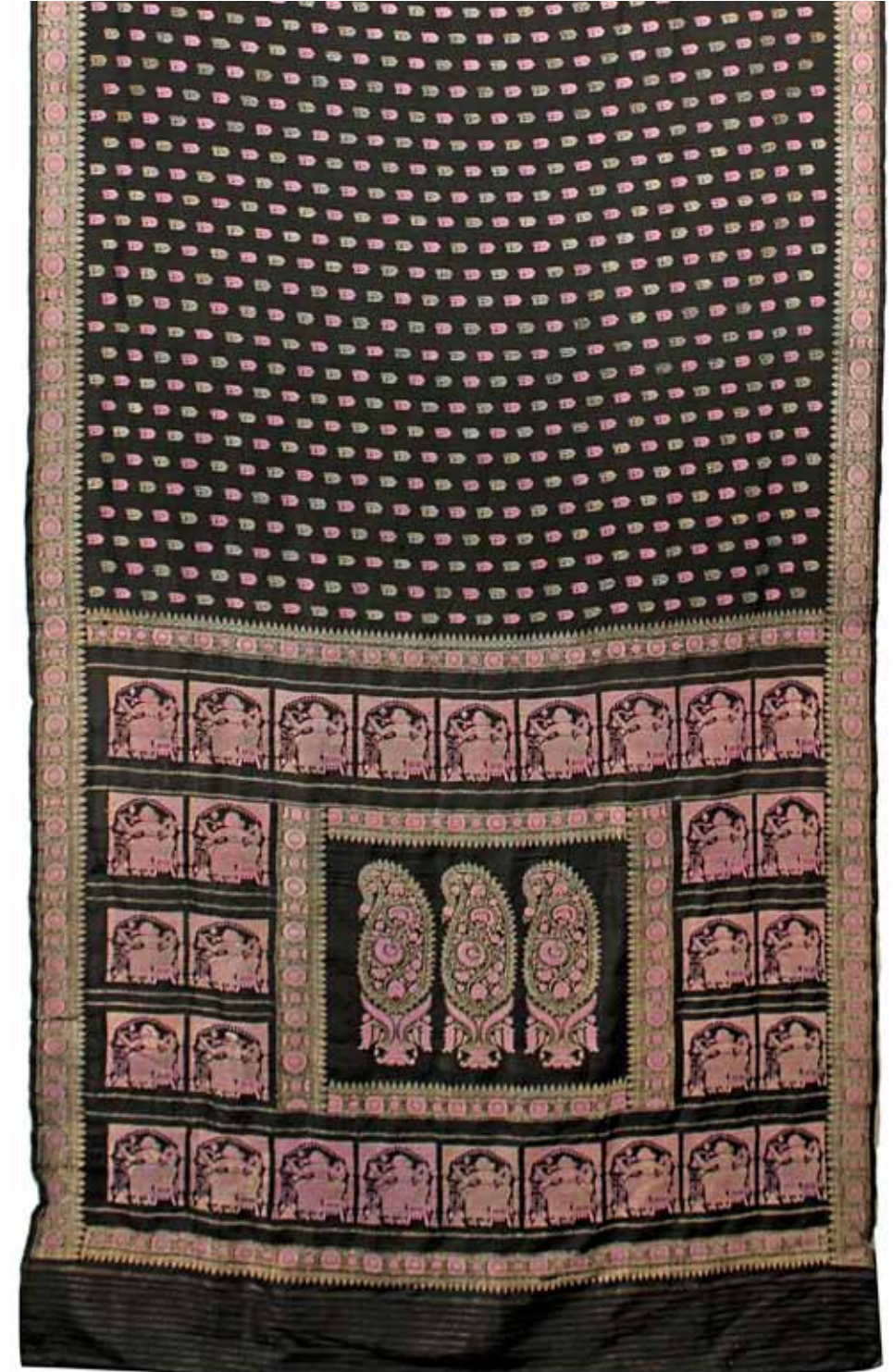
Baluchar Saree
Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.
Murshidabad, West Bengal
344 x 109 cm.



Baluchar Saree

The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural frames enjoying the ride on carriage.

Murshidabad, West Bengal, 460 x 107 cm.



Baluchar Saree

The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated women are placed within the architectural frame.

Murshidabad, West Bengal, 344 x 109 cm.



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