
THE MAKING OF TIENTSIN AND OTHER CARPETS

Combining practical utility with historical interest the magnificent publication, "Chinese Carpets and Rugs," by Adolf Hackmack, seems destined not only to find a wide reading public but also to greatly stimulate the growing trade of Tientsin in one of North China's principal products. The book, which will shortly be placed on sale by its publishers, La Librairie Francaise, is printed on thick art paper, 12 by eight and a half inches, contains 63 illustrations and a map, including 26 coloured plates, and 40 pages of large and clearly printed text describing the development designs, colours and weaving of Chinese carpets. The text is translated from the original by Miss L. Arnold.

The arrangement of the book, the lucid presentation of its contents, the clarity of its symbolism and the beauty of its illustrations make it invaluable to all who have any interest in carpets, whether they be merchants, students or private individuals. The merchant, of course, has his own information gathered in the routine of business, but in this book he will find his scattered information presented in concise and accurate form. The student will find valuable information on the history, origins and development of carpets, while the private individual, who in a sense represents the ultimate consumer, will discover the decorative values and symbolical significance of an article with which he furnishes his home.

After tracing origins of the industry, from its early introduction to Northern China from Central Asia; through Tibet and Kansu, with references to their use as prayer-rugs, saddle-clothes and divan covers, the reader is told how the Emperor Kang Hsi (1662-1722) fostered the industry by inviting artists to Peking to enrich designs for Porcelain, Weaving and Carpet Industries. His grandson, the famous Ch'ien Lung, continued this patronage, by placing large orders with native weavers, beside purchasing the best obtainable from foreign countries. "Most of the carpets in the Peking Palaces," says the author, "date from his reign and even to-day they are magnificent examples" of the art.

"Owing to the increasing export trade," continues the author, "the production of carpets has increased continuously in volume during recent years, especially during the years of the Great War, when American carpet traders, hitherto accustomed to drawing their supplies from Persia, turned their attention to China. Tientsin has now become the chief export centre for the Chinese carpet. Some 500 large and small factories now make carpets there. In 1913 the value of the export trade was about Tls. 133,000 as against Tls. 420,000 in 1919, Tls. 444,000 in 1920, Tls. 612,000 in 1911, Tls. 2,532,000 in 1922 and Tls. 3,795,000 in 1923."

Dealing with designs, the reader is taken through a very interesting chapter of geometrical, Taoistic, Buddhistic, miscellaneous and ancient Chinese traditional designs. This section, allied as its subject matter is to other forms of native art, is a vast study in itself. The author tells of the meaning and application of Dragon patterns, the Thunder Line, Cloud, Water, Fire and Lightning, Mountains. "Yin and Yang," the Eight Trigrams of Divination, the Sceptre, the Eight Genii, Pheonix, Bat, Lion and a host of other significant designs. "The Chinese," the author says, "have a marked preference for symbols and employ them extensively. They consist of two kinds,

either of such objects as by their very nature give the sense required, as for instance, a coin to express wealth; or of sound rebuses in which the similar sound renders the sense that is to be conveyed, such as Ch'ing, the hanging musical stone of jade for Ch'ing which means blessing."

In connexion with the distribution of this book an advance prospectus has been mailed at great expense to all parts of the world. The name of every known dealer or merchant interested at all in this sort of article has been obtained from directories of many cities all over Europe, the United States, South Africa, South America, Australia, India and other countries. This propaganda in itself is bound to have its contributory effect upon the trade of Chinese Carpets, and should do much to stimulate the exports to higher figures.

The book, which will be on sale before the end of May, will be sold at \$12.50 a copy, at which price a large part of the first edition has already been booked up.

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