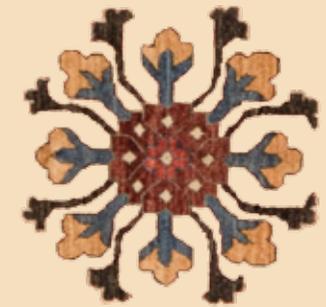




# The Incredible Art of Oriental Rug Making



## The handmade Oriental rug is not simply

a work of art, but a journey in time and space to an ancient realm of beauty and mystical charm. No other art form bridges so many centuries, spans so many cultures, and captivates so many people as that of the Oriental rug. Iran, India, China, Pakistan, Turkey, Nepal, Afghanistan, Rumania, Russia and Armenia are the countries from whose talented artisans come these truly exquisite creations. From the famous Pazyrk carpet, discovered in a 2,500 year-old Siberian burial site, to the most contemporary utilizing modern designs, these woven treasures represent centuries of the most exquisite artistry and meticulous craftsmanship. Remarkably, the method of creations has remained relatively unchanged for over two millennia.

## The process begins by shearing only the

finest sheep's wool, then washed free of lanolin. It is then "carded", to straighten the fibers, then spun. Next it is dyed in giant boiling vats as many as twenty times by master dyers, then hung to dry. Indeed, each part in the process is considered an art in itself.

## Rug designs are inspired by the world

surrounding the artisans, both contemporary and historic. Gardens, mountains, forests, shrines, hunting grounds and animals all play a part in the rugmaker's vision. Many contemporary images may also be found. It is not unusual to see a war scene, a Mondrian, Miro, Kandinsky or a re-introduction of a famous design period such as Art Deco, Nouveau, Aubusson, Savonnerie or Arts & Crafts.

## In villages and cities, each design is

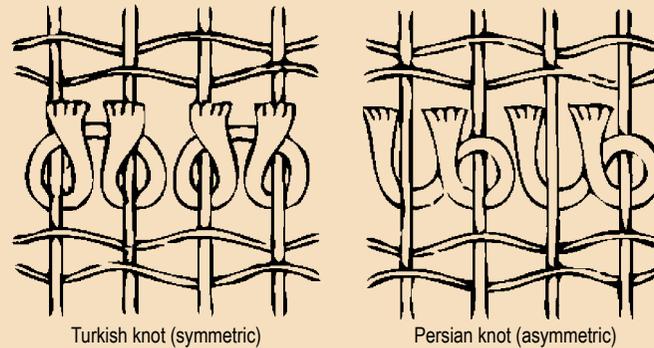
methodically reproduced to scale on a paper graph called a "cartoon" from which the weavers construct the rug, one knot at a time.

## Nomads, on the other hand, do not use

cartoons. Their remarkable designs are woven from memory and passed down generation to generation.

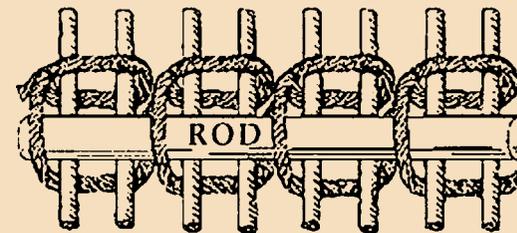
## The weaver then begins a painstaking job

that will take months, if not years, to complete. Using their design as a constant reference, the weaver builds the rug from thousands, often times millions of individually tied knots made with the help of a loom.



Turkish knot (symmetric)

Persian knot (asymmetric)



Tibetan knot (with rod)



Forming an incredible art!

## The loom has remained largely unchanged

over the centuries. The most primitive forms are the nomadic or horizontal designed with easy portability in mind. Village and city rug-making utilize the vertical loom, consisting of two vertical beams, comprising the rug's width, called the "warp" threads.

## The warp threads, which usually are made

of cotton or wool yarns, are tightly stretched along the length of the loom. In a pile rug, pieces of differently colored woolen yarn are nimbly "knotted" around each pair of warp threads. As each row of knots is completed, weft threads are inserted across the width of the loom and a new row is begun. The weft and the warp thereby make up the hidden foundation of the rug and the knots create the pile and the pattern. Typically there are three types of knots – the Persian, the Turkish, and the Tibetan.

## An average weaver can tie between ten

and fourteen thousand of knots in a day, amounting to roughly one or two inches of woven carpet as several weavers working together. Two weavers can complete an 8'x10' carpet of 250 knot-per-square-inch in approximately five to six months.

## After several rows of knots have been tied,

a metal comb is used to beat and compress the knots. Weaving threads produce an irregular pile, which is then trimmed evenly with scissors. After the long and arduous work of the weaving is completed, the rug is cut from the loom. The extra threads remain unknotted and form the fringe. A flat-weave or kilim is tied to secure the knots at both ends. The rug is thoroughly washed, dried and then sheared one last time to even out the pile. It is now ready to ship to customers worldwide. Yet, in the end, few people have a true appreciation of the meticulous, labor-intensive process that has gone into making their own unique work of art.

## This information should serve to stimulate

your appreciation of this truly incredible art form and encourage you to further explore its vast treasures. In doing so, you surely will soon discover that beneath the beauty, elegance, craftsmanship and artistry, the Oriental rug is an experience, a journey to another time and place, a captivating feast for the senses that lasts a lifetime and beyond.