

Manufacture of Chinese Carpets.

The author, A. E. Gerasimov, begins his article with a description of the equipment used in the Chinese carpet industry, and then follows a description of the methods of dyeing the wool used for the manufacture of carpets. The practical application during thousands of years of vegetable dyes in the dyeing of various cloths has created in China a number of special methods for the preliminary preparation and cleaning of the wool necessary before vegetable dyes are applied, and also for the strengthening of the colors. In spite of the fact that aniline dyes have at the present time been introduced energetically into China the Chinese carpet industry still is loyal to the old methods of dyeing; the great majority of carpet factories in Peking, Tientsin and Mukden use vegetable dyes for coloring the wool. Only recently has the Chinese carpet industry shown a tendency to go over to the use of aniline dyes and a few large factories have begun to employ them. Nevertheless, for a number of reasons and, principally, because of lack of experience in the handling of aniline dyes, woolen carpets finished with aniline dyes are not as good, coarser and not as clean and exquisite as were the carpets made with the use of the old method of coloring the wool with vegetable dyes.

Carpets are being manufactured in many centers of greater or smaller importance in China, and, in particular, in Manchuria. Tientsin and Peking are the principal carpet manufacturing towns. In these cities some factories are equipped with modern machinery.

Within the past fifteen or sixteen years there have been great changes in the production of carpets in China both as regards the quantitative growth of factories and the production itself. During the period of the World War, because of increased demand for Chinese carpets, the number of carpet factories grew rapidly: so, for instance, in Peking there operated during the period of the war in excess of five hundred factories, in Tientsin more than six hundred and in Yinkow ten, while at the present time carpet production in Yinkow has entirely ceased, and the few remaining factories have gone over to the manufacture of felt. In Potune there were twelve factories, in Tsitsikar six, in Payansu five and in Mukden a few less than thirty. After the World War, and when Turkish carpets Persian and Teking carpets again appeared on the market production in China dropped off, and at many points as a result carpet factories were entirely closed down, while in large carpet manufacturing centers fewer factories worked with consequently smaller production.

The quantitative decrease in the number of factories and the production of carpets by no means, however, can be taken to mean that there exists a crisis in the Chinese carpet industry. The number of factories is smaller but the product is better, and as a result there has been increased demand from abroad for Chinese carpets beginning with 1920. It is true that within the past three years there has been observed decrease export of carpets from China. This is due to other reasons: markets in England and America are overstocked with carpets, on the one hand; the principal reason, however, is that within the past few years the Chinese carpet industry has begun to imitate foreign taste, and for this reason the original Oriental carpets have been exchanged for conventional, uninteresting designs which mean nothing and often are crude, thus lowering the artistic value of Chinese rugs.

Designs of Chinese Carpets.

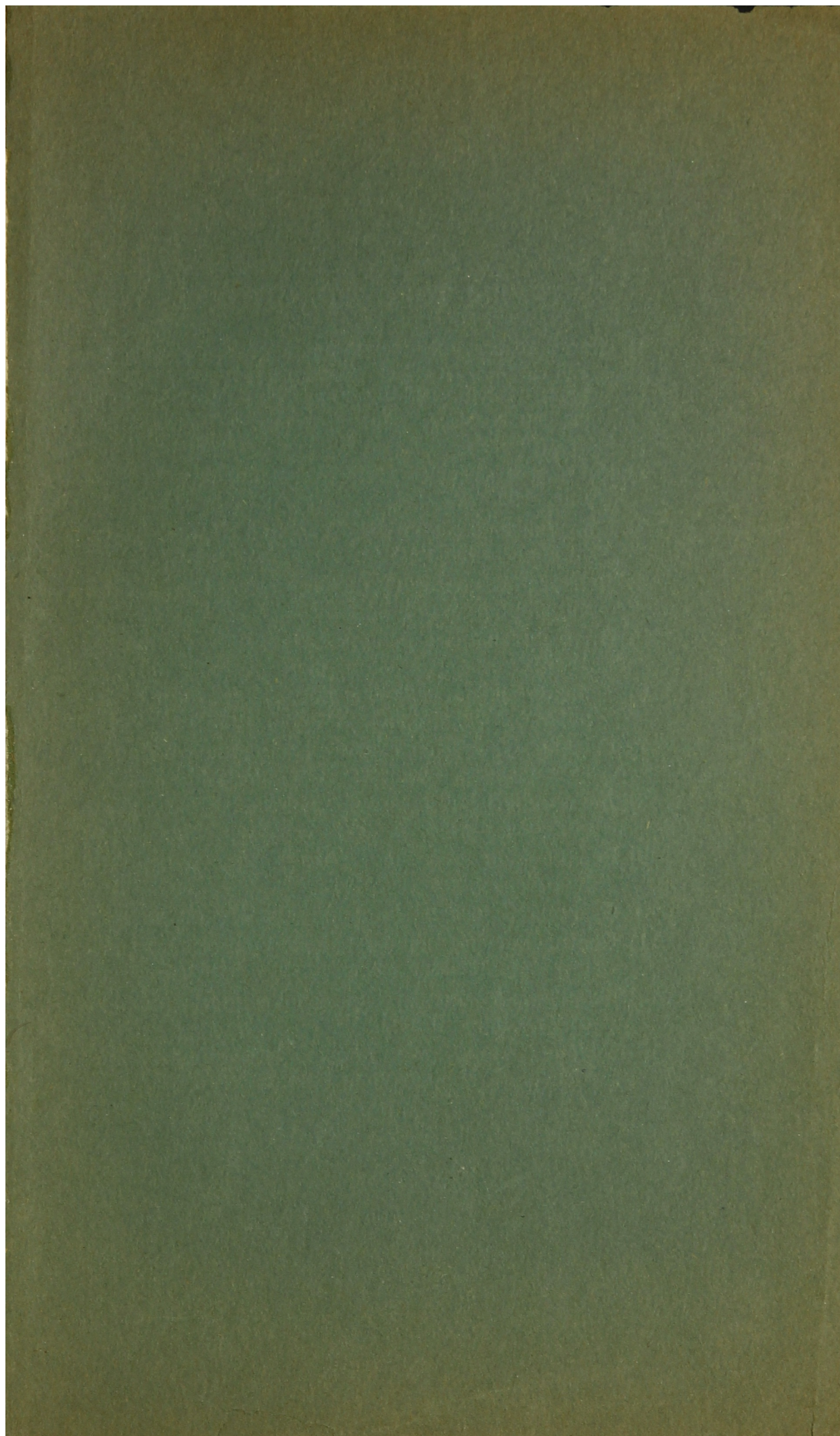
In his article analyses the origin of the designs on Chinese carpets and their symbolic meanings. The designs of Chinese carpets have their special origin. The origin of the ornamentation or designs of Chinese carpets is divided into seven categories, of which three may be called line ornamentation, derived from the symbol "Pa-hua" designating the principles of the beginning of man and woman, as also from the teaching of Buddhism. The teaching of Daoism, the classics and Buddhism have considerable influence on the next three categories of designs on Chinese woven materials, china and bronzes, and more especially on carpets. The seven categories of designs is derived from the vegetable world.

The gradation of symbolic designs is sub-divided into eight signs for each category. The joining of symbolic designs in the Chinese carpet industry has a great artistic-industrial meaning and is subject to certain rules which have been in force for many centuries. Thanks to the definite order in which the symbolic designs are spread, the ground of the Chinese carpet always represents either some historic episode in the life of the Chinese people, a poem showing the beauty of nature in non interrupted union with man, an actual epos, or a study in moral precepts.

The combination of symbolic designs on Chinese carpets may be divided into three groups: one of these concerns wishes for long life, wealth, luck, tranquility, success in business etc.: the second group refers to

faithfulness, respect, the splendour of riches, wisdom and strength, honesty, benevolence etc.: the third group refers to the protection of life, property and houses from wicked spirits, demons etc.

A review of the symbolic designs shown in the ornamentation of Chinese carpets can serve as a clear illustration of the rich folk fantasy which has found its expression in the carpet industry of China. The great value of the ornamentation of Chinese carpets from the point of view of industry and cultural life presentation has not been able to withstand the influence of the process of industrialism in China. As a result of this, the Chinese carpet industry has commenced using aniline dyes instead of pure vegetable ones. At the same time the Chinese have started making carpets for mass sale which has caused the carpet industry to go in for stylish ornamentation.



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 - 8) Ласточкины гнезда, их значение в народном обиходе и экономике Китая. Харбин, 1930 г.
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