



# Oriental Rugs of the Silk Route: Culture, Process, and Selection

*John Gregorian*

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The Silk Route was an ancient caravan route that began at the Golden Horn in present-day Istanbul and extended through the Caucasus, Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia to China and its seaports. It was through this caravan route, perhaps as long ago as the fourth century a.d. that goods of European manufacturers were introduced to remote villages and settlements. Here they were traded for indigenous exotic items such as silk, spices, and the subject of this luxurious and authoritative volume-oriental rugs. "Oriental Rugs of the Silk Route," by John B. Gregorian, president of one of the oldest and largest oriental rug institutions in North America, provides an illustrated tour of the modern-day oriental rug-making centers of the Silk Route. A compelling text and stunning color photography complemented by vintage black-and-white images transport you to Middle Eastern villages and cities, revealing the rug-making culture and process there. From colorfully dressed peasants tending sheep, carding wool, and boiling natural dyes in Turkey and India's remote rug-weaving villages and trading centers to the sophisticated showrooms and the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul, as well as mosques, temples, restaurants, and homes where beautiful rugs are on display, this visually rich and authoritative volume travels behind the scenes of the mysterious, exotic cultures famous for this centuries-old art form. Chapters cover the history and lore of the Silk Route and the famous weaving centers of India and Turkey, relating stories of the weavers, dyers, and merchants; superstitions; religious symbolism, and Middle Eastern aesthetics. Also included is a wealth of rug examples and information on the rugsthemselfs, such as rug types, dyes, symbology, weaving techniques, and knots. There is also professional advice for rug buyers: an assessment of the rug-making industry today; a complete guide to evaluating and purchasing a rug; a discussion of buying and trading customs; and helpful tips on negotiating abroad as well as on decorating with oriental rugs throughout the home. A glossary provides definitions of oriental rug terminology, while an appendix rounds out the book with a complete discussion of cleaning and repair. At once a unique journey to the world's finest oriental rug-making centers and an authoritative reference, "Oriental Rugs of the Silk Route" is captivating, informative reading for beginning and knowledgeable rug enthusiasts and travelers alike.

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