

Carpet weaving

Karnataka, date unknown

Photographer unknown

The weaving of carpets is an age-old tradition in Tibet, a skill which is now carried on by Tibetans in exile. Tibetan carpets are woven using their own distinctive knotting technique, known as the Senna Loop, which is unknown elsewhere in the world. And these carpets are not used as decorative floor coverings as in the west, but to sit and sleep on in monasteries and private homes, or to be used as meditation seats and saddle rugs.

These girls are working on a loom in a settlement in Karnataka. In 1960, the Indian government gave a sizeable piece of land (c.13,000 acres) for the relocation of Tibetans in Southern India. At that time it was jungle, which was then gradually felled and cleared by the Tibetans, to create agricultural land for crops and to build settlements. Most of these settlements have looms, as the weaving of carpets is a major source of income.