

TRADITIONAL HOME CRAFT - AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF THE FAMILY ECONOMY

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Abstract:

This article analyzes handicrafts, which are considered one of the main types of traditional economy, in particular, aspects of home crafts that differ from other traditional types, ethno-local features characteristic of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis, including types of home crafts that are widespread in the oasis, a unique division of labor in this area, raw materials of products and the process of their preparation.

Keywords: Craft, home craft, carpet weaving, felting, weaving, sewing, embroidery, raw materials, spinning.

Introduction

Folk craft occupy a special place in Uzbekistan's cultural heritage. Under the influence of natural, geographical, climatic and other factors, one can observe differences in manufacturing techniques, appearance, ornamentation and other features of traditional handicrafts even among individual ethnic groups living in the same region. The study of traditional crafts is critical for preserving cultural heritage, passing on the unique skills of ancestors to new generations, and developing artistic taste. It develops creativity, ensures economic self-sufficiency through the creation of unique products, and maintains a connection with the times by adapting ancient techniques to modern times.

Craft emerged with the beginning of human industrial activity and have gone through a long historical path of development, taking various forms: a) *home craft* - in the conditions of a subsistence economy; b) *craft to order* - in the context of the disintegration of the subsistence economy; c) *craft for the market*. The emergence of custom-made crafts, and especially crafts for the market, is associated with the emergence and development of cities as craft and trade centers. Home crafts are often called home industry (that is, the production of non-agricultural products), while crafts made to order and for the market are called cottage industry. It combines utilitarian function with artistic value, preserving cultural heritage through pottery, carpet weaving, carving, embroidery and blacksmithing. Crafts form the basis of the local economy and develop tourism.

Methods

The study of domestic crafts is a key area of ethnography, history and cultural studies. These researchers made an invaluable contribution to the study of the material culture of the peoples of Central Asia: E.M. Peshchereva, O.A. Sukhareva, K.Sh. Shaniyazov, R.G. Mukminova. S. P. Tolstov was an archaeologist and ethnographer who led extensive expeditions to study the ancient culture and crafts of Khorezm. The scientific works and ethnographic essays of these scholars are based on long-term field expeditions to regions of Uzbekistan (including the Tashkent and Fergana oases, Khiva and Bukhara) and archives.

The article was prepared using scientific research methods such as historical-cultural and comparative analysis, statistical comparison, interviews, ethnographic observation, and descriptive analysis.

Results and Discussion

Home crafts are the production of goods to meet the needs of the household whose members made them. This is the first form of craft, in which it has not yet become an independent branch of economic activity. By the end of the 19th century, some home-made handicrafts in Central Asia began to acquire a commercial character. Analysis of the collected data shows that types of household crafts are more developed among the pastoral population than among the agricultural population. One of the main reasons for this is that the main raw materials for home crafts were obtained mainly from livestock products. Pastoralists engaged in home crafts, primarily processing livestock raw materials. They made felt, carpets, clothes, shoes, leather utensils, and harnesses.

The Surkhan-Sherabad oasis was one of the regions of Uzbekistan where the first traditional handicraft culture was formed, and the development of handicrafts in the oasis led to the emergence of a number of centers and schools with unique local characteristics of cities and villages. Types of handicrafts were more often well developed in the foothills and in the upper and middle reaches of the Surkhan and Sherabad rivers. In these territories, products were produced for sale or to order. In the foothill and steppe zones of the oasis, forms of domestic handicrafts developed more [4, 91].

One of the main features of home crafts in the oasis is that only women participated in all processes, from the preparation of the main raw materials for the products to their production [12, 117]. In the oasis, such types of home crafts as carpet weaving and felt making were widely developed, the main raw materials for which were sheep wool and skins. As noted above, the process of raw material preparation, including leather processing, carding, smoothing, spinning, weaving felt (*koshma*), carpets, and wool carding, were mainly carried out by women. Sheepskin *pustaki* (*khasali pustak*) were widely used as bedding in the home [3, 93].

As in other regions, in the oasis, felt and felt carpets were used to cover yurts, floral felt carpets were used inside houses as carpets, and for household purposes they were used as bags and saddlebags. The Kyrgyz and Kazakhs also made clothes from thin felt. The felt-making process among the peoples of Central Asia was virtually identical. When making floral felts, the only

differences observed among the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz are in the decoration. In the process of making felt, the neighbors also participated together with the owners [1, 23].

In the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis, felt was divided into two types depending on the production method: ordinary flowerless and flowered. Colorless felt carpets were called *takiyanamat* or *taki namat*. In the oasis, such types of felt as "*tugdonagul*", "*takirgul*", "*tugma baka*", "*gazhakgul*", "*gultaylama*", "*kirkdonagul*", "*shohmola*", "*kirdungil*" and "*oltidungil*" were widely produced. Felt was also used to make insoles for galoshes [8,



100]. The most interesting thing is that felt production did not become a separate, independent type of craft. That is, felting was not the only and main occupation for producers, but was considered only part of the process of forced labor of women on the farm. In felting there was no clear division of labor between women. All work during the manufacturing process of the product was performed by the same person.



The ornamentation on felt carpets is characterized by simplicity, clarity, conciseness and decorativeness of the pattern, relatively large sizes, which give the carpet a monumental quality. With a small number of patterns, craftsmen create countless variations of ornamentation. Felt carpets reflect the worldview of nomadic peoples - these are mainly stylized zoomorphic motifs, among which the most prominent are the "*kuchkor shohi*" pattern - ram's horns, "*kurbakagul*" - a frog pattern, as well as various geometric figures - triangles, diamonds, meander motifs, swirl swastikas, solar signs, rosettes, floral patterns, etc.

The Kungrats possess a unique, distinctive craft and cultural tradition that has not yet been fully studied. Of particular interest is their traditional textiles, which are associated with their everyday and economic life, and the nature of their interaction with sedentary peoples, which have been largely preserved by the Kungrats living in the southern regions of Uzbekistan. The most common items in the Kungrats' everyday life are woven and felt carpets, small carpet items, embroidery, and handicrafts made of leather and wood. The cut and decoration of Kungrat clothing are distinctive. A significant portion of the applied art products was associated with the interior decoration of the nomadic dwelling of the Kungrats - the yurt - "*kora uy*". The floors of the yurts were covered with felt carpets - *kigiz*, on top of which woven carpets or carpets made from the skins of domestic animals - *pustak* were laid.

The Kungrats, like some nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, have several technical methods for making felt products [9, 63]. The first of these is rolling patterns of colored wool onto the main

felt background, for which wool dyed in different colors is laid out in a pattern on the fabric, creating a composition. The wool is then pressed down and covered with a layer of undyed wool. All of this is rolled into a roll, generously poured with hot water, compacted and rolled out using the elbows. The process is repeated several times [21, 173]. The second technique is applique, where a pattern made of painted felt or fabric is sewn onto a felt base. The third technique comes down to the so-called mosaic technique, when all the elements of one pattern are sewn together, cut out simultaneously from two pieces of felt of different colors. In this case, one of the pieces is the pattern, while the other is the background, and vice versa.

Textiles such as weaving, sewing (clothing), embroidery, mat weaving, and carpet weaving were widely developed in the oasis. In particular, carpet weaving was of great importance in the economy and lifestyle of the population. In Central Asia, there are three main types of carpet production: *carpet* (short-pile carpet), *julkhurs* (long-pile carpet) and *palas*. Carpet production in different regions was distinguished primarily by its diversity of technology and color [14, 56].



Carpet weaving, as a domestic women's craft, was widely practiced in virtually every household. Carpet weaving is particularly distinguished by its traditional appearance, diversity, and the preservation of specific local characteristics.

Carpet weaving was based on women's home production, and master carpet makers had different techniques for making unique pile and bare carpets [18, 17-20]. In the oasis, Tajik women made patterned felt carpets from wool and even wove pile products for yurts [16, 74-75]. Also, the *gajara* and *terma* carpets of the oasis are distinguished by a complex weaving method [13, 58]. At the same time, weaving of carpets such as *shol*, *patli gilam*, *arabi gilam*, and *gajari gilam* was widespread [3, 73].

The oasis weaves many pileless carpets. Such types of carpets are called "*kokma gilam*". Striking carpets are striped, of various colors, and are woven lengthwise. Then they are cut and joined together by "sewing an amulet." Numerous types of woven carpets are produced, such as *Chumchiki*, *Kor Chumchiki*, *Bibishak*, and *Shoyi Gajari*. Carpets can have up to 10 carpet stripes. The upper and lower sides of the carpet are the same. The weaving technique is complex, and the patterned carpet is called a variety of patterned carpets or pile carpets. *Takyr* carpets are woven by two or three people at the same time in shops with a wide aisle. There are such types of takyr carpets as *Kochkor mayiz*, *Imom Sultoniy*, *Terma*, *Tuya buyin*, *Tuda guan*, *Kol soldi*, *Ok enli*.

A significant portion of the oasis's carpet weaving consisted of small household items: *ishlik-khalta* and *koshik-khalta* (bags for kitchen utensils), *bugzhoma* (woven cloth for wrapping household items), *khurz hins* (saddles), *napramach* (woven chests), and *tablecloths*. The loom used for weaving carpets was called a *dukan*. This type of loom was typical of nomadic culture and was convenient for permanent migration. The reason was that this machine did not require

stationary conditions and was easy to install and assemble [5, 167]. Sheep's wool is usually used for carpet weaving, and in some cases, cotton yarn. One carpet requires up to 8-12 kilograms of raw material. According to informants, it is impossible to make a good carpet from autumn-cut wool. Because spring wool is perfect for a long and soft carpet. Autumn wool is hard and coarse and is used mainly for felting.



Napramach and *Bogzhoma* also play an important role in the artistic decoration of the oasis's population. The pattern of the *napramachs* consists of two large medallions in the form of an octagon or a rectangle on the obverse, against the background of which sharp rhombuses or X-shaped shapes are depicted, representing the *beks* of nomadic tribes and the elements of the shield. *Napramachs* are woven

chests for storing various items. Oasis carpet weaving includes *door bags*, *spoon bags*, *bogzhjoma* (woven fabric wrapping household items), *khurjun*, *dasturxon*, *digil yopqich*, or *dig-di jomar*.

Carpets made in Termez and Sherabad were popular not only in Central Asia, but also in Russia and throughout Western Europe, and sold for high prices. Some types of carpets were also presented at exhibitions in Paris and received high praise [22, 68]. High-quality carpets made in the Sherabad beylik were sold by merchants in the markets of Karshi, Kerki, and Shakhrisabz, as well as across the Amu Darya to Afghanistan and India [15, 377]. In the Sherabad beylik, in addition to the Uzbeks, Turkmens and Afghans were also engaged in carpet weaving. There are reports that the Turkmens, in addition to carpets, also wove felt (a type of *chapan*), selling up to 500 felt at the markets in the fall [11, 25].

Weaving was one of the leading crafts in the oasis, developing since ancient times, and the main source of raw materials for the industry were cotton, silk, hemp and wool obtained from agriculture and cattle breeding [12, 258]. Women spun wool and cotton, which were the main raw materials for weaving carpets, at home on a spinning wheel (*urchuk*). Some of the prepared yarn was sold to weavers in the cities, and the rest was used for their own needs. Because spinning was considered one of the main household activities of women in winter [13, 122].

In the oasis, weaving of fabrics at home has long been established; the source of raw materials necessary for weaving was procured on the farm itself. Unlike other types of crafts, wool carding and the production of woollen fabrics were not separate crafts [5, 8]. However, wool products and clothing were in great demand not only in livestock areas, but also in settled agricultural regions. In particular, they used sheep and camel wool as the main raw material for making *chapans* and other camel wool clothing. In the oasis they also made “*shawl fabric*” by passing wool from sheep’s wool through an *urchuk* [2, 110].

It should be noted that all the semi-nomadic peoples of Central Asia used practically the same method of producing wool and shaping it into thread when weaving fabric. The most important thing is that the wool was pre-washed, combed and dyed as needed. For the production of

woolen yarn, special spindles were used, and for loosening and scutching, specially prepared sticks were used [8, 112]. Hand spindles were called *urshik* by the Karakalpaks, *ik* by the Turkmens, and *iyk* by the Kyrgyz [17, 231]. In the oasis, the production of down turbans, foot wraps and felt from goat wool, as well as the sewing of sheepskin coats, was widespread.

In the oasis, textile embroidery craft, that is, hand embroidery, developed in a unique way. Also, in most cases, embroidered items were not intended for the market and were sewn mainly to meet the needs of the household and continue traditions. In the oasis, such types of embroidered items as “*kirpech*”, “*dorpech*”, “*suzana*”, “*chayshab*”, “*chorsi*”, “*romolcha*”, as well as such stitches as “*popuk*”, “*iroki*”, “*chaqmoq*” and “*yurma*” are widespread [19, 47-49]. *Kirpech* is an artistic item used to decorate a room by hanging it over clothes stacked on a shelf or on vertical wall spaces.

The fact that the population of the oasis consists of a mixture of cultures of complex ethnic groups determined the specific local features of embroidery. For example, embroidery in Shurchi, Denau and Sherabad differs significantly from embroidery in the mountainous region of Baysun. Rich plant patterns play a key role in Baysun embroidery, and although the embroidery traditions of the mountainous regions of Tajikistan are generalized, local features characteristic of the oasis are still noticeable [20, 77-80]. Distinctive features of oasis embroidery from the embroidery centers of Bukhara, Samarkand and Shakhrisabz, in addition to flowers, are embroidery of large flowers on white fabric.

The preparation of raw materials for embroidered items was carried out in a special order. Initially, wool yarn (*kalava*) was boiled in salted water. Because the yarn was primarily boiled in salt water, it was known for its strength and durability. Since the yarn was boiled mostly in salt water, its poison was removed. This is due to the fact that the work of preparing the wool was done manually, which negatively affected the hands during the work process and caused various skin diseases. After boiling the wool threads in a saucepan, they were dried. After they were well dried, they were washed again with clean water and added to the dough mixture to ensure strength, stability and durability [7, 94].

In the village of Gumatak in the Baysun district, black dye is obtained from the fruits of the *tatum* tree, yellow dye from mushrooms growing on walnut trees, and red dye from wild chamomile. The roots of oleaster, apricot, and poplar are also used as dyes, and are very suitable for producing red and brown dyes. However, the color of the dyed wool in these paints is not transparent and looks a little duller [5, 8].



Due to the fact that among the Kungrats, who were engaged in livestock breeding in the steppe, mountain and foothill regions of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis, it was common to make clothing and everyday household products from wool, such as *chapans*, *fur coats*, *various carpets*, *bags* and *khurdzhuns*, the spinning of yarn from wool was also widely developed in these regions. Researchers note the presence of many similarities in the ornaments

depicted on the carpets of the Baysun and Nurata Kungrats in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This is due to the fact that this indicates long-standing family ties between the Kungrats living in both regions [6, 27].

Conclusion

Home crafts in the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis have deep roots in the history of the region and the local population, reflecting the uniqueness, worldview, religion, lifestyle, and traditions of ethnic groups. Historically, the development of home crafts was based on the development of an economy associated with the weakness of commodity-money relations and, as a result, the independent production of virtually all household items essential to the population's way of life. Home crafts played an important role not only in the households of different peoples, but also in their economies. Today, home crafts often evolve into "new craftsmanship", combining manual labor with the production of unique ideas and images.

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