



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION IN MATERIAL CULTURE AND HOUSEHOLD HANDICRAFT
OF KUNGIROT PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The southern territory of Uzbekistan is a kind of "ethnographic oasis", since it is here that one can observe the fusion of different cultures, economic way of life, national traditions inherent in different nations and ethnographic groups, in other words - a symbiosis of ethno-cultural traditions. In the formation of such a fusion of several predominant values of features peculiar to Kungrats, which are one of the major subethnic components of the Uzbek people. In particular, such mental features of the Uzbek people as straightforwardness, hospitality, tolerance, unity of word and deed, concreteness and laconism in behavior are intertwined with love for fervent music and dances, which is clearly manifested in the daily lifestyle and culture of the region's Kungrates. The study of this topic allows one to comprehensively analyze the many ethno-cultural manifestations inherent in the Uzbek people, the historical foundations, genesis, stages in the development of customs and rituals, and their transformation under the influence of socio-political and cultural processes. The southern territory of Uzbekistan is a kind of "ethnographic oasis", since it is here that one can observe the fusion of different cultures, economic way of life, national traditions inherent in different nations and ethnographic groups, in other words - a symbiosis of ethno-cultural traditions. In the formation of such a fusion of several predominant values of features peculiar to Kungrats, which are one of the major subethnic components of the Uzbek people. In particular, such mental features of the Uzbek people as straightforwardness, hospitality, tolerance, unity of word and deed, concreteness and laconism in behavior are intertwined with love for fervent music and dances, which is clearly manifested in the daily lifestyle and culture of the region's Kungrates. The study of this topic allows one to comprehensively analyze the many ethno-cultural manifestations inherent in the Uzbek people, the historical foundations, genesis, stages in the development of customs and rituals, and their transformation under the influence of socio-political and cultural processes.

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INTRODUCTION

The complex research shows that the traditional crafts of Kungirots of Southern Uzbekistan's regions is difficult to consider them to be belonged to only one single cultural unit. The cultural features of the neighbouring nations played an important role in the development of the culture of Kungirots in this region. The degree and power of this impact increased again in the life of Kungirots. But, it is possible to see the noticeable impact of Kungirots in the life-style and culture of the people of southern Uzbekistan. When analyzing the sources, it was revealed that among the traditional crafts

particular to Uzbek people knitting, embroidering, carpet weaving, blacksmithing, jewellery-making, engraving were well-known and famous. Among the Kungirots people living in the southern regions of Uzbekistan too the household crafts developed. In fact, the Kungirots living in Southern Uzbekistan, mainly, dealt with household crafts together with cattle breeding at the same time. This type of manufacturing was more half-natural, and mainly, served to supply their own needs and less to exchange the products not made by them. Especially, in the first half of XIX century such kind of half natural form of manufacturing was superior. In Boysun, Denov, Shakhrisabz and Karshi cities of the region, on the contrary, the craftsmen manufactured their products to sell in the markets, the money-goods relationship was quite more developed here. By tradition, Kungrat woman, giving out daughters in marriage, wove a special "kiz gilam" ("girlish carpet"), which was preserved as an inheritance. Several types

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of carpets (takyr gilam, okh enli gilam, julkhurs and others) and embroidered clothing were considered the main part of the dowry. Carpet weaving was taught by the elderly women at home and the girls had to learn spinning and weaving by a loom when they grow up. Women are continuing the tradition of carpet weaving in a way of a particular collective work. In this field wide scale works are being carried out by the Kungirost people of Boysun district. The announcement of this region as the best choice of the world nonmaterial relics in 2001 was also the reason for restoring the tradition of carpet weaving like many other forgotten crafts types¹. In the last years weaving featherless carpets and rugs is widely developing by hiring the craftsmen to work at home. Because making clothes and household things such as chakmons (men's long woollen cloak), fur coats, carpets, sacks and saddlebags from wool was tradition among the Kungirost people living and engaged in cattle breeding in the desert, mountainous and foothill regions of southern Uzbekistan, spinning thread from wool was also widely developed in these regions.

Goat, camel and sheep wool was the main raw material for making cloths. Wool beating and making cloth from wool are not separate as an individual occupation like other types of crafts.² But, the demands for woollen products and clothes were very high not only in cattle breeding but also in settled peasantry regions. In the investigated region cashmere turban, foot bindings, waistbands were made from goat wool. Making fur coat from sheep wool and chakmon from camel wool were widely traditional. As cattle breeding was the main household activity, the branches of the household crafts such as carpet weaving, rug knitting, felt pressing and making other household things were highly developed among the Kungirost people.

For example, among the Kungirost people living in Boysun, Sherobod districts in Surkhandarya, in Boykurgon, Kizilsoy, Okrabot, Jetimkuduk mountainous and foothill villages in Kashkadarya making cloth from wool in home condition was widespread in 50-70s of XX century. Because, cattle breeding was the main leading household activity of Kungirost people from the ancient times mainly sheep wool was used for carpet weaving and felt pressing³. Usually, the Kungirost people from Surkhandarya boiled the threads made from wool in the water with wheat flour in order to take their starch⁴. The Kungirost women living in Gurisak, Khujaulkan and Khujanko villages of the region boiled the woollen threads in the salty water. In Kashkadarya region too, the threads were boiled in the salty water, so they were distinctive with their strength. Therefore the thread was boiled in the salty water to get rid of its poison. Because, as the wool was prepared by hand, so it could damage the hand and caused different skin diseases. After the wool was boiled in the pot, then it was dried⁵. When it was well dried, then it was washed in the clean water again and was put into flour mixture in order to make it strong. During the process of field research it was found that when the women used the woollen thread, their hands turned red and the skin of their hands was stripped off and sometimes it caused to

different allergic diseases. That's why the thread was boiled in the salty water and got rid of its poison. Sometimes some flour was added to the water and the thread was put into the mixture and the pot was closed for 2-3 hours⁶. This process was called "Baking the thread". Then the thread was taken out of the pot and dried in the sun. When the thread was well dried, then it was washed in the clean water and was put into flour mixture in order to make it strong. The threads made in such way were called "Halimi thread", "Qoqiymomi thread"⁷. Usually, the women of the region used more such kind of threads to make prayer rugs, table-cloths and other household things at home. The colour of the products made from wool was specially paid attention too. According to this reason, the comfortable, bright dark pink, light green, red, dark red, crimson, purple colours were taken from different plants. The most popular carpets weaved by Kungirost women are "g'ajari" carpet, "qatiq" carpet and "taqir" (bald) carpet. "G'ajari" carpet is the most common in Kungirost carpet weaving⁸. Their flowers are made by long and narrow designs over the stripe lines and they glimmer colourfully. The dark red colour on a white background, yellow flower on a black background are unique solution of this nation in colouring. Dark red, green colours are separated from each other by black, white and black stripes. Harmony of such colours is traditional to g'ajari carpets. As the decorations are knitted in narrow lines, all their parts get long and narrow shape.

G'ajara (g'ajari) flowers (designs) are the followings: W shape is the chest of partridge and S shape is called gajak (curl) or quchqorak. Handasaviy (geometric) shape is called bride's eyebrows, right angled stripe is called qatiq, grille-like parts are called erganak (obstacle, the door of the yurt), the shape of lined branches is called tug'donagul, the white and black stripes are called triangular amulet, the chess-like one is called dog's trace. Besides, there are stair-like and rhombic (diamond shaped) shapes too. At the edge of the stripe ending with triangle shape there are geometric figures like "fringes, tassel"⁹. It was found that during weaving the g'ajari carpets very thin woollen threads are used, after tightly twisted the threads are put on round two stakes before painting and boiled water is poured on, a spindle is put in the middle and the wet threads are spinned. It is repeated several times and the threads are dried in rounded form. The thread will get quite thin and it provides the carpet to be beautiful. While sarala (sort) carpet is weaved with one layer of thread, the g'ajari carpet is weaved with two layers of thread on the loom. For example, if we want to make a white design on a red background, red and white threads are weaved together. Both threads are joined together and the body thread is tied in pair. And this is called "qo'shkuzuv" (joined body). If tied in "qo'shkuzuv" (joined) the designs will appear the same as if in line. After the body thread is tied and loom is placed, different designs should be made. If the red thread is on the surface and the white thread is under, according to the design of the carpet the thread is counted and the white thread is taken onto the surface and the red thread is put in instead. G'ajari carpet is weaved in this way, as it is selected this process demands great attention.

¹ See: "Spring of Boysun" materials of international scientific conference. – T.: 2002; Works of Boysun scientific expedition. Issue - 1. – T., 2003; history and tradition of Boysun. – T., 2005.

² Ismoilov H. Traditional Uzbek clothes. – T., 1978. – p. 8.

³ Field notes. Kashkadarya region, Dekhqonobod district, Kizilsoy village. 2010.

⁴ Field notes. Surkhandarya region, Boysun district, Khumkon village. 2009.

⁵ Davlatova S. National clothes of Kashkadarya: traditionalism and modernism.... – p. 94.

⁶ In other Turkic nations woollen thread was steeped into milk. See: Tomina G.N. Material in the clothes of nomadic and half nomadic nations of Central Asia... – p. 230. In Turkmens too the woollen thread was boiled in the salty wheat flour mixture.

⁷ Field notes: Surkhandarya region, Sherobod district, Taroqli village. 2009.

⁸ Field notes. Kashkadarya region, Dekhqonobod district, Kizilsoy village. 2010.

⁹ Field notes. Surkhandarya region, Sherobod district, Taroqli village. 2009.

Ethnologists, characteristic for Kungrat embroidery, are considered zoomorphic. They depicted birds and embroiderers called them "tovus nuskha" ("peacock pattern"). On some suzan in the form of medallions were embroidered in parallel images of birds, on their heads as if flowers grow. On the gold-embroidered bedspreads (on the walls, niches, openings) Boysun also embroidered paired images of birds, tulips. As a rule, they decorated the newlyweds bedroom with the wish "that the life of the young people should be beautiful as spring and they always live in pairs". Decorative embroidery in the form of strips edged the upper part of the walls. Elderly women (grandmothers) created every design in figurative meaning expressing their dreams and thoughts. When it is drought, they made designs representing the rain drops waiting for the rain. Those, whose father, brother or husband had gone to the war, made designs representing the crossed stripes and looked forward to them¹⁰. Or made curly designs resembling the ram's horn. They created designs simply resembling the plants. In these designs we can clearly see the process of step by step development of the human mind. Thus, it is not absolutely hyperbolic that the expression of wonder of the nature's beauty which was mentioned from the ancient times as the inspiration of the creator finds its reflection in the national carpets.

One of the widely spread carpet among the Kungirots people is "Oygilam" carpet. Oygilam (Moon carpet) is, mainly, a carpet hung as a decoration, there are 1 or 2 in bride's dowry. For weaving oygilam (moon carpet) white sheep wool is spun, combed and twisted, then washed in the clean boiled water and then dried, the skein is rolled up in a ball shape and then put into the pot. For weaving the surface, designed part of the carpet one ready carpet is used as a measure to copy its pattern. From the ancient times moon and stars have been reflected in oygilam carpets, and it is not a mistake to say that this is our elderly women's (grandmothers) expression of wondering the moon and stars and a kind of belief in them. Later different designs, patterns and shapes were made on the oygilam carpets and their value decreased a little. The oygilam carpets consisting of silk representing moon and stars with natural paints on the surface of the white woollen material are rare at present, they kept their ancient look a little¹¹. The most part of the home crafts of Kungirots people was household things. They are still used in daily life. These things include prayer rug, sack for bread, sack for spoons, sack for salt, saddlebag, napramach (cloth box), table-cloth, horse blanket, woollen cover and sometimes felt quilts. If we mention about the bo'g'jomas (a large square piece of material for wrapping clothes and material) made by Kungirots women, bo'g'jomas were large and square, only the visible part was designed, but it was amazing with its very beautiful and different designs (patterns). In most cases two tied designs were made on the triangle pattern. But, gradually, as the time went past, the demands for these ties almost lost and turned into a component of a design. Now they are used for wrapping the quilts and moving from one place to another place. Five plotted bo'g'jomas with such patterns are also met. Their existence among the Kungirots people shows that such type of products have a separate place in the life of Kungirots. The edge borders are surrounded by thin engraved lines, and in its turn they are surrounded by another thin engraved lines, the borders of the

engraved triangle are decorated with tassle (fringe). These bo'g'jomas were decorated with the designs (patterns) represented by the plans symbolizing peace and amity¹². In Surkhandarya cashmere turban, foot bindings, waistbands were made from goat wool. Making fur coat from sheep wool and chakmon from camel wool were widely traditional. As A. D. Grebenkin noted, in the second half of XIX century in Qipchoq, Turkmen and Nayman peoples there was a tradition of camel breeding and making cloths from camel wool¹³. This craft passed to the Uzbek do'rmons from them. Particularly, N.G. Borozna mentioned that the rich do'rmons who were engaged in camel breeding bought white chakmons (men's long woollen cloak) from Kungirots in the region¹⁴. In the region (oasis) not only men's clothes were made from camel wool, but also table-cloths and prayer rugs were made for cattle breeders. The designs of carpet weaving of Kungirots people give the evidence that they belong to the culture of cattle breeding nations. Such collections in geometric and animal-like shapes describe the fine art of Kungirots people¹⁵. Like other cattle breeder Turkic tribes in Kungirots too rich men wore "qoqma chakmon" shepherds, ordinary and middle class men wore "blue chakmon". These chakmons (men's long woollen cloak) differ from each other according to the quality of their material¹⁶. "Qoqma chakmon" was knitted from thick, strong black woollen cloth making the upper and lower parts with two plots and neat. Long, hard work was required for making this chakmon, rich people specially had it made by order. "Blue chakmon" was quite thin and neat and was made from light woollen cloth. "Kebanak"¹⁷, a type of clothing of cattle breeders worn in the cold winter months, was also made from sheep wool. Inside of the kebanak was made from felt. Furthermore, men of Kungirots, Yuz and Togchi tribes, mainly, wore "pressed chakmon" or "felt chakmon".

In Surkhan oasis pressed woollen material, pressed olacha (striped thread or woollen material) made from soft sheep wool were widespread. Making "pressed olacha" is unique, soft wool is knitted with needle in every line and the soft sheep wool cut equally with scissors will get flat look. That's why people called them "pressed olacha" or "pressed woollen material". They can be met in Qorategin and Darvoz Tajiks and northern Caucasus people such as Osetins, Kabardins, and balkars too¹⁸. Thus the people who dealt with cattle breeding in the oasis wore clothes made from camel, sheep and goat wools. In Surkhan oasis the people who dealt with cattle breeding were also engaged in peasantry at the same time, they knitted different cloths from the threads made from cotton by

¹² Nosirova Z. Spring smell in Boysun designs... – p. 8.

¹³ Grebenki A.D. Uzbeks // Russian Turkistan. – M., 1872. – pp. 82 –101, 107.

¹⁴ Borozna N.G. Material culture of the Uzbek people of Babatog and Kofirigan valley // Material culture of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. – M., 1974. – p. 110.

¹⁵ Gyul E. Kungirots carpets... – p. 10.

¹⁶ "qoqma chakmon" and "blue chakmon" made from sheep wool were also worn by Uzbek qipchoq people of Zarafshan valley and Arabian people of Kashkadarya region. See: Shaniyazov K., Ismailov Kh.I. Ethnographical essays about the material culture of the Uzbek people at the end of XIX and the beginning of XX century B. – T.: Science, 1981. – p. 45.

¹⁷ Clothes of cattle breeders "kebanak" which was made from sheep wool protecting from rain and snow was also called "choydamiya" in Kashkadarya Arabians. Ismailov Kh. Traditional clothes of the Arabians of Kashkadarya region UzSSR // Suit (costume) of the people of Central Asia. – M., 1979. – p. 230.

¹⁸ See: Tajiks of Karategin and Darvoza. – Dushanbe, 1966. issue 1. – p. 229; Kunijaeva L.Z. Material culture of applied art of Osetins. – M., 1973. – pp. 19 – 20.

¹⁰ Field notes. Kashkadarya region, Dekhqonobod district, Kizilsoy village. 2010.

¹¹ Field notes. Surkhandarya region, Sherobod district, Taroqli village. 2009.

hand machines. Among the Kungirots people of Uzbekistan the animal hides which was related to cattle breeding was well developed. Tanning the animal skins (hides), making rubber from it and producing rubber products were one of the traditional, and at the same time, the main activity of Kungirots people. A group of settled population were specially engaged in this occupation and they were called “tannery workers” among the people¹⁹. Although there were few special shoemakers in the Kungirots in the region, they made different shoes in home condition. Particularly, they made and wore the foot wears such as “Mo’kki” (a low-sided shoe made of untanned leather), “tosh-tovon”, “choriq”.

In conclusion, it should be noted that from ancient times cattle breeding was of great importance in the economic life of the population of southern Uzbekistan and developed as the main type of economic activity, characteristic of which were pasture and sedentary livestock. In the economic life of Kungirots of Uzbekistan the most important directions of livestock breeding were sheep breeding, goat breeding, horse breeding. The development of sheep breeding was associated not only with the consumption of meat and milk, but also with obtaining valuable raw materials - wool and leather. Especially valuable products were skins of sheep of the Karakul breed. During the Soviet era, the creation of an animal husbandry system based on the socialization of property and the denial of private property played a special role in the development of livestock production. This system harmed livestock, which was based on generic and related systems, the traditions of which developed over the centuries, passed down from generation to generation. A significant damage was caused to the specialization in animal husbandry among different ethnic groups and to the traditions of treating livestock as private property.

The study of the traditional crafts of Uzbek-Kungirots of Southern Uzbekistan shows that it is difficult to consider them to be belonged to a single same cultural unit. The cultural features of the neighbouring nations played an important role in the development of the culture of Kungirots in this region. The degree and power of this impact increased again in the life of Kungirots. But, it is possible to see the noticeable impact of Kungirots in the life-style and culture of the people of southern Uzbekistan. In the twentieth century there were cardinal changes in the national identity, lifestyle and economic traditions of the Kungirots of Uzbekistan. It should be noted that among the traditional handicraft industries for Kungirots of Uzbekistan, weaving, embroidery, carpet weaving, metalworking, jewelry, wood carving, etc. were very popular and well-known. In this respect, undoubtedly, cottage art in the southern region of Uzbekistan was well developed.

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¹⁹ Abdullaev U. *Inter-ethnos processes in Fergana valley*. – T.: New century generation, 2005. – p. 232.