



THE ACTIVITIES OF CRAFTSMEN OF THE SURKHAN OASIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPLIED ART

Mamarajabov Gayrat Abdulkhakimovich

*Termez State University Acting Associate Professor of the Department of World
History, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Historical Sciences*

[*mamarajabovg@tersu.uz*](mailto:mamarajabovg@tersu.uz)

Abstract: *This article analyzes the applied arts of the Surkhan oasis, particularly the traditions of craftsmanship, based on historical sources. The place of handicraft activity in the cultural life of the oasis population, its ethnographic features, and the current state are highlighted with a deep scientific approach.*

Keywords: *Surkhan Oasis, applied arts, crafts, history, ethnography, folk crafts,*

The Surkhan Oasis is located in the south of Uzbekistan and is one of the regions distinguished by its ancient historical monuments, archaeological sites, and rich cultural heritage. This oasis has long been inhabited by people engaged in various crafts. The population's attention to applied arts, in particular pottery, blacksmithing, wood carving, weaving, and embroidery, is closely connected with changes in their cultural worldview, aesthetic views, and social life.

Works of applied art are intended for visual perception, feeling, and comprehension. Works and objects of applied art serve to beautify and aesthetically enrich the material environment of a person, and at the same time, with their appearance, structure, and features, they influence the mental state and mood of a person, and decorated objects are valued not only for their use in life but also for their artistic value. Therefore, demonstrating the beauty and refinement of raw



materials, as well as the skill and variety of processing methods, are active tools that enhance aesthetic impact in applied arts.

The most developed types of applied decorative art, such as engraving, ganch carving, stone and bone carving, engraving, knife making, felt making, jewelry making, embroidery, gold embroidery, carpet weaving, felt making, basket making, have their unique execution technologies, true national names, their specific terms, schools, styles specific to these arts, and the services of masters who have gained fame in these fields have become world-renowned[1].

Among the types of crafts formed in the oasis, the following stand out:

Ceramic products of the Surkhan oasis are not only useful, but also very aesthetically rich, and their artistic decorations contain traditional floral and geometric patterns. The potters of Termez and Sherabad are mentioned separately in historical sources.

In jewelry art, local masters made decorative items - rings, jewelry, and kitchen utensils - from gold, silver, copper, and bronze materials. In these objects, a high level of folk ornamentation and artistic taste is evident.

Textile crafts were developed among local women, and national patterns embroidered on cotton or silk fabrics reflected the cultural characteristics of each region.

Gates, columns, and other household items were decorated with carving. Ahangarlik was associated with the manufacture of weapons, household tools, and building materials.

Through applied arts and crafts, the people preserved their historical memory, aesthetic concepts, customs, and traditions. In this process, the creative



skills of artisans and their transmission from generation to generation as a family heritage served as an important factor. Every craftsman enriched the knowledge and skills acquired from his mentor not only in practice, but also ideologically.

The formation and development of crafts in the Surkhan oasis directly influenced the everyday life of the people. Therefore, handicraft products are considered not only as consumer goods, but also as an important part of the national heritage, a cultural symbol. Even today, Surkhan crafts are developing in harmony with modern requirements while preserving its values. This demonstrates the continuity of applied art and its role in preserving national identity[2].

Gold embroidery is also one of the ancient types of crafts, in which patterns are embroidered on fabric with gold threads. Currently, gold embroidered items are mainly considered stage costumes, worn by adults and children on holidays and sewn for gifts. The word "zardo'zlik" comes from the Persian "zar - tilla," "do'zi - tikmoq," meaning to embroider flowers or patterns with gold threads. The art of engraving is an interesting, unique branch of artistic metalworking. Copper objects are widely used in everyday life as examples of art[3].

Among the folk applied decorative arts of Uzbekistan, bone carving, like other art forms, is developing rapidly. Bone carving is one of the youngest forms of applied art in Uzbekistan. Bone carving is highly developed in India, Yakutia, Africa, China, and the countries of the East in general. Bone carving is a very ancient art, as evidenced by the findings of various archaeological excavations (for example, artifacts and figurines with carved and depicted images of bones). In Central Asia, bone carving was mainly used in knife making. They were made from ordinary bones (horns of cattle, goats). Bone carving entered Uzbekistan in 1959. Bone carving utilizes drills, saws, files, and specialized mechanical tools.[4, p. 112]



The technology of bone carving consists of the following. The type and part of the bone corresponding to the necessary material are selected. Excess bone fragments are sawed off. The unevenness is leveled with a file. A flower is drawn on the bone with a pencil, a pattern is created along this line, and it is polished with a gemstone. At the end of the work, the finished product is thoroughly wiped with chalk and alcohol.

Today, when we talk about the conditions created for artisans in our region, the activities of the regional Union of Artisans come to mind. Today, many reforms are being carried out in the activities of this association. That is, according to the information of this association, today activities are organized in 34 types of crafts, and the work carried out in them is quite significant. As with all district branches of the association, important work has been carried out in the activities of the Jarkurgan district branch. Currently, 337 artisans are members of the district branch. The number of apprentices learning crafts from artisans has reached 624 [5, 3-b].

In particular, during the consistent reforms carried out by the district association, the activities of such areas of handicrafts as "mebel production," "production of national costumes," "production of metal products," "production of folk crafts made of wood" are being intensively developed. In this regard, important work is being carried out to organize the activities of artisans, provide them with preferential loans, and further support their activities.

A number of artisans have made an invaluable contribution to the development of craftsmanship, such as Khadicha Rakhimberdiyeva, who restored carpet weaving, rags, and striped rugs; Maftuna Azizova, who wove a 25-meter carpet from camel wool; Nilifar Juraeva, who won a prize at the 2019 Kokand Crafts Festival in the direction of national embroidery; and Nazokat Sabirova, who entered the national catalog of craftsmanship with a 25-meter and 5-meter



patchwork, who works in the field of national dress; and the only basket weaver in Surkhandarya, master craftsman Boymurod.

One of the most widespread types of national crafts in Surkhandarya is pottery, and the great contribution to the development of the pottery industry belongs to the family of Umar Kulol, which has existed for 7 dynasties. Umar the potter was originally from Kashkadarya and moved to Surkhandarya. National embroidery is a widespread craft in Boysun. In honor of the I International Festival of Bakhshi Art, which will be held in Surkhandarya in 2019, Baysun artisans, led by Nilufar Juraeva, embroidered the world's largest suzani. This artwork, created by 20 skilled artisans with refined taste and high skill, measures 25 meters in length, 6 meters in width, and weighs 60 kilograms. This suzani, skillfully embroidered by skilled embroiderers, was created over six months. 16 kilograms of silk of various bright colors, reflecting the oasis, were used to create an example of embroidery, which is a product of tireless work[6].

Suzanis, embodying national customs, values, and ancient traditions of Surkhandarya, are a rich cultural heritage of our people. Preserving and passing on to future generations the direction of embroidery, which is considered one of the types of folk applied and decorative art, should be the common task of everyone.

A carpet workshop was also organized in the "Taroqli" mahalla of the Sherabad district. 35 women were employed in this workshop, and a carpet weaving training course was organized. In the workshop, various carpets were woven from silk, cotton, and wool, which were sold in Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey, as well as in local markets[7].

In recent years, important work has been carried out to develop national crafts. Small-scale manufacturing industries, including handicrafts, can play an important role in the equal development of the economies of developed and



developing countries. 90-95% of the world's industrial products are manufactured in small workshops with at least 100 people. For example, Japan, located at the peak of economic development, considered 84% of its industry as small and medium-sized. In countries such as India and China, national crafts have mechanized products in terms of quality and quantity, and are the main source of foreign income. These countries are focusing on developing national crafts to strengthen their economies.

The exhibitions "Tashabbus," "Yosh ijodkorlar," "Usta-shogird," "Qo'li guldird o'zbek ayoli," "Xalq iste'mol tovarlari ko'rgazma-savdosi," "Respublika yosh kulollar ko'rgazmasi," "Bazar-Art," and "Asrlar sadosi" played a significant role in the development of Uzbek folk applied art[8].

Today, one of the main issues is increasing the population's interest in handicrafts. In this process, of course, one of the important issues is the mutual cooperation of the craftsmen's association with the general public and the further strengthening of their interaction[9]. In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the issues of free sale and demonstration of handicraft products in the markets, and the widespread dissemination of advertising and announcements in this area. In addition, one of the important tasks is the stimulation of the most active craftsmen and the further enhancement of their capabilities.

In conclusion, the formation of craft traditions in the Surkhan oasis is connected with the natural environment, historical experience, and cultural needs of the people, which gave rise to rich examples of applied and artistic art. Craftsmanship, as an integral part of local culture, plays an important role in preserving national identity, folk memory, and traditions. Today, these traditions live in modern forms and are widely used in the fields of tourism, design, and education.



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