



Ethnic Features and Transformational Processes of Kungirots' of Southern Uzbekistan

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Abstract: *This article examines the ethnic features and transformational processes of the Kungirots, one of the historically significant ethnographic groups of Southern Uzbekistan. The study analyzes their traditional social organization, cultural identity markers, systems of kinship, and ritual practices, highlighting how these elements have evolved under the influence of socio-economic modernization, migration trends, and political restructuring in the region. Special attention is given to the transformation of communal institutions, intergenerational relations, and cultural continuity mechanisms, as well as to the role of globalization and urbanization in reshaping ethnic identity. By drawing on ethnographic observations, historical sources, and comparative analyses, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic nature of the Kungirots' ethnocultural identity. This article presents the social life, ethnicity and transformational processes of the Uzbek-Kungrad in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions.*

Keywords: *Uzbek-Kungirots, Boykurgon, Kizilsoy, kungirots tribes, ethnicity, transformation processes, Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions.*

Introduction

During the long-century history the Uzbek people made valuable heritage in the field of handicrafts, they still involve all the branches of the life of Uzbek people and reflect that the outlook and national mind of the nation is so deep.

The study of the traditional crafts of Uzbek- Kungirots of Southern Uzbekistan's Kaskadarya and Surkhandarya regions shows that it 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.

Among the traditional crafts particular to Uzbek people knitting, embroidering, carpet weaving, blacksmithing, jewellery-making, engraving were well-known and famous. Among the Uzbek-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, Shahrisabz 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.

Because 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 Kungirots people.

Methodology

Moreover, they made chakmon (men's long woollen cloak), fur coat and other clothes, sacks, saddlebags, household things and also ropes and bands for yurts and cattle. For example, among the Uzbek-Kungirots people living in Boysun, Sherobod districts in Surkhandarya, in Boykurgon, Kizilsoy, Okrabort, 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 Kungirots people from the ancient times mainly sheep wool was used for carpet weaving and felt pressing.

The Kungirots women weaved carpets in a local way in summer. According to the tradition, when the girls were getting married, a special carpet - "daughter carpet" was weaved and it was kept as an inheritance. Several types of the carpet (qoqma carpet, julkhurs, etc) were the main part of the bride's trousseau like embroidery clothes.

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.

Although the tradition of carpet weaving in a family condition was forgotten a little and denounced as the leftovers of the old times during the Soviet Union, this tradition like many other national values was also restored after Uzbekistan gained its independence. 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 Kungirots 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 types. In the last years weaving featherless (not fuzzy) carpets and rugs is widely developing by hiring the craftsmen to work at home.

The machines necessary only for carpet weaving were small and comfortable to carry and install. The width of the threads strung for length and width was 40 sm.

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 Kungirots 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. 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.

In the region not only men's clothes, but also table-cloths, prayer rugs and quilts for cattle breeders were made from camel wool. In Jenov village of Kashkadarya where ethnic Arabians lived in many things were made from camel wool.

As in another regions of our Republic in the first half of XX century bands for yurts, sacks, felts, salt-sacks, saddlebags, carpets were made from sheep wool in the region.

It should be mentioned that, all the half nomadic people of Central Asia used almost the same way for preparing wool for the cloth and making threads from wool. Mainly, women were engaged in this activity at home. The wool, first of all, was washed and beaten and then painted if it was necessary. For beating the wool special stick were widely used.

The Kungirots people from Surkhandarya boiled the threads made from wool in the water with wheat flour in order to take their starch. The Kungirots 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 dried. 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.

Usually, 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 hours. 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", "Qoqiyomi thread". 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.

Among the carpets weaved by Kungirots women the most popular ones are g'ajari carpet, qatiq carpet and taqir (bald) carpet. G'ajari carpet is the most common in Kungirots carpet weaving. 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, tassle".

In 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.

If the designs of the g'ajari carpets weaved by kungiro people are paid attention, it can be clearly seen how their mental ability is high and deep. Together with the classical artistic figures, high taste, skill and talent, mental depth and cleverness find their reflection in these designs (decorations), different ancient classical designs embody geometric shapes, mathematical counts, the beauty and wonders of animal and plant world, geographical scenes, and the secrets of drawing pictures as well. Kungiro 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 them. 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.

Now let's pay attention to some other types of carpets widely spread among the kungiro people and their unique features. 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 little.

Taqir (bald) carpets can be distinguished by their large, niche shaped designs sometimes covering the whole width of the carpet. The niche is mostly surrounded by

qo'chqorak embroidery. The niches are sometimes in a simple stair shape or crenelated, and surrounded by hexagons and polygons. They are placed in the middle of the carpet in one or two or several lines.

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 amity.

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 people.

Result and Discussion

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 wool [15]. 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 region [16]. 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.

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 woolen cloak) differ from each other according to the quality of their material ("qoqma chakmon" and "blue chakmon" made from sheep wool were also worn by Uzbek qipchoq "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.) [17]. "Qoqma chakmon" was knitted from thick, strong black woolen 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 woolen cloth. "Kebenak" (Clothes of cattle breeders "kebanak" which was made from sheep wool protecting from rain and snow was also called

"choydamiya" in Kashkadarya Arabians.)[18], a type of clothing of cattle breeders worn in the cold winter months, was also made from sheep wool. Inside of the kebenak was made from felt. Furthermore, men of Kungiro, Yuz and Togchi tribes, mainly, wore "pressed chakmon" or "felt chakmon".

In Surkhan oasis pressed woolen material, pressed olacha (striped thread or woolen 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 woolen material". They can be met in Qorategin and Darvoz Tajiks and northern Caucasus people such as Osetins, Kabardins, and balkars too [19]. 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 hand machines.

Among the Uzbek-kungiro people tanning 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 Kungiro people. A group of settled population were specially engaged in this occupation and they were called "tannery workers" among the people.

Although there were few special shoe-makers 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".

Conclusion

As a conclusion it should be noted that the study of the traditional crafts of Uzbek-Kungirots of Southern Uzbekistan shows that it is difficult 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.

Among the branches of traditional crafts particular to Uzbek people knitting, embroidering, carpet weaving, blacksmithing, jewellery-making, engraving were well-known and famous. Among the Uzbek-Kungiro people living in the southern regions of Uzbekistan the household crafts quite developed..

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