



EMBROIDERY ART OF UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the features of Uzbek embroidery, its schools. The role of embroidery in household life, the types of embroidery patterns, the technique of sewing it, and the stitches are studied.

KEY WORDS: *ethnography, ethnographic collections, museum, object, museum collection, embroidery, art of embroidery, uzbek embroidery, suzane, ornament.*

Embroidery is a profession of embroidering; it is considered one of the ancient areas of applied art. The appearance of embroidery is associated with the appearance of skin joints and stitches. Over time passed from stone to bone awls, from it to metal awls. In addition, weaving, fabric weaving, dyeing and other related activities are also considered. The development of embroidery is preserved in the cultural monuments of Ancient Asia, Europe and America.

Uzbek national embroidery is one of the most ancient types of Applied Art. The art of embroidery attracts people with its hard work, colorful charm of threads and beautiful patterns. Artistic embroidery has a long history. This is also evidenced by archaeological findings and written sources. In Uzbek embroidery is rich in floral, geometric, floral patterns, while in Kazakh and Kyrgyz embroidery there are more elements reminiscent of animals, horns and hooves. Embroidery is one of the main decorations of the Uzbek apartment. Especially during the holidays, weddings and ceremonies, they give a special beauty to the Uzbek household.

The peoples of Central Asia decorated the rooms with colorful embroidery. Embroidery spread on the pillow-blankets in the takhmons – niches, on sandals, cradles. Depending on the use of embroidery, they are called joynamaz – prayer rug, zardevor, kirpech, choyshab, bughjoma or bughja. Joynamaz, as it is known, was used for prayer, the kirpech was caught on the shelf in which the clothes were put on, ruidjo was covered on bedding in the niche, bughja was used as choyshab to wrap the clothes. Small embroideries are hanged on room items. Large embroideries were called suzane (meaning “sewn with a needle in hand”) in many

places. The more little embroideries are called nimsuzane in Bukhara, in Nurata.

Our ancestors used embroidery since ancient times. In many places it was customary for the bride to have several embroideries – suzane, nimsuzane, ruidjo, joynamaz, sandalposh in her dowry. The embroideries were handy for the seasonable decoration. The beautiful embroideries are hung on the wall of the room at holidays, weddings, even family celebrations. The embroideries are also covered on the women’s coffin in mourning ceremony.¹

Ancient suzannies have not been preserved to our day, but we can see the picture of suzane in the wall paintings of our ancient architecture. In particular, we see the suzane is hang on the mural painting in one of the rooms of the Panjakent palace dating back BC. Eight circle turundj are placed in two vertical lines in suzane. The basis of the patterns of suzane was as white fabric as in the XIXth century. This fact alone proves that suzane, embroidery was existed in Central Asia from ancient times.

From ancient times there were special artists who painted drawings on embroidery. They were called “qalamkash”, “chizmakash”. The embroideries were made on “white karbos” and on yellow fabric by the end of the XIX century. Since the late XXth century, embroidery has been woven into purple, blue, brown silk and white colored fabrics. In addition to silk threads for embroidery, light red woolen threads were used.²

¹ NOZILOV D.A. *From the history of design of Central Asia*. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, pp. 96-97.

² NOZILOV D.A. *From the history of design of Central Asia*. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, pp. 96-97.



The profession of embroidery has been one of the ancient spheres of applied art. Archaeological findings indicate that embroidery exists in almost all nations, developed in connection with the climate, natural conditions, the culture, art, types of professions of each nation.

Naksh (pattern) from Arabic, means image, flower. In the art of embroidery, each country has its own unique pattern of embroidery that uses the most. The Uzbek embroidery is rich in floral, geometric and flower patterns, while Russian embroidery features geometric, floral shapes, flowers, birds, and fruits, while Kazakh and Kyrgyz embroidery often features the elements resembling animals, horns and hooves.

Color plays the main and important role in embroidery. The color of the embroidery is chosen from its background, that is, from the basis. The coarse calico will never be as white as milk. Its slightly grey, yellow tinge is somewhat suitable for the formation of an inseparable coloration. If there is a background, then the embroidery thread of the same color is chosen. Sometimes, the background also helps to make the ornament stand out, along with silks.

In Central Asia, embroidery was so widespread that every woman in the family should know how to sew embroidery. Therefore, each family prepared for itself kirpech, suzane, dorpech, oynakhalta, choykhalta and others. The type of decorative items is very diverse, for example: suzane, kirpech, choyshab, oynakhalta, choykhalta, zardevor, palyak, gulkurpa, dorpech, bughjoma, parda, belbogh, takyapush, duppi, kuylak, dastrumol, khamyon, joynamaz, sumka, nimcha, makhsi kovush, khaltacha and others were decorated with artistic taste.³

Embroidery is the sewing of flowers on the machine on various fabrics with different colors of silk, mulina, gold thread with a needle, hook awl. Embroidery is sewn on various clothes, household items. In embroidery, fabric, leather, cardboard, linen, wool, silk, artificial threads, gold threads, thin wire, tapes made of raw leather, beads, necklaces, metal pieces, precious natural and artificial stones, beads made of glass and other materials are used. The embroidery has its own set of tools, which perform a specific operation. The needles, awls with and without hooks, brooch, thimble, scissors and rims are used in embroidery.⁴

The rim is made mainly of wood, it has shape of a circle, a square, a rectangular. The circle rim is used for a little embroidery, because it is

convenient. The rim is not used for all embroideries. Thread and needle are selected in such a way as to match the thickness of the embroidery fabrics. Two kinds of awls with wooden handle are used for embroidery, that is, with a hook and without a hook. The awls without a hook are used to sew without difficulty on some materials, such as leather and cardboard. Scissors with a sharp tip of 10-12 cm are used for ornaments. For convenience of sewing, the fine thread should not be longer than 50-60 cm, and if embroidery is sewn on the rim the thimble is not used. A copy of the pattern is drawn to different materials in different ways.

There are specific tools for embroidery by hand. Needles, thimbles, scissors, centimeter tape, awls with a hook and without, and rims are used in embroidery.

In embroidery, fabrics such as white, gray, light yellow, light yellow coarse calico, calico, silk, velvet, chintz or sateen are used. In such fabrics, the patterns look good when drawn, most of the colored threads are suitable for it.

For drawing a flower, a picture, patterns, you will need rulers, hard and soft pencils, notebook, album, rubber, graph paper and transparent paper. The rims are used to tighten the fabric. It consists of two rims of 20-40 cm and falls into each other. If it is difficult to get into the small rim, it is necessary to clean the inner side of the large rim with a sandpaper.

And in the early times, embroidery was sewn only from natural fibers, such as thread, that is cotton, wool and flax. Today, the strong threads made from artificial fibers, gold wires, and even braids made of raw leather are expanding in embroidery.

The mutual matching of colors of threads used in embroidery makes the embroidery attractive. The embroiderer should choose a pattern of embroidery, depending on the shape of the cloth, the color of the fabric. Embroidery threads are made of cotton fiber, four-layer, faded and are traded in the form of 50 meter skein.

Mulina made from high quality cotton fiber. It comes in 12 layers, the highest quality with special treatment, and is resistant. It is produced in the form of ten or twenty meters of skein. Silk threads are made of natural and chemical fibers. The threads are twisted, painted white on different sizes, the skein is hang (40 gr.), wrapped in coils and paper patron (50, 100, 200 m long). Silk threads number 13-18 are the threads prepared from wool, flax, artificial fibers, sewn with thin ribbons made of fine wire, gold thread, leather.

There are two types of hand embroidery: first, embroidering with counting of weft and braid threads of the fabric. The second is a type of freely embroidery, drawing the contour of the pattern, flower, and image on the fabric.

³ BULATOV S.A. *Uzbek folk decorative-applied art*. Tashkent, Mekhnat, 1991, pp. 313-314.

⁴ BULATOV S.A. *Uzbek folk decorative-applied art*. Tashkent, Mekhnat, 1991, p.316.



Iraqi, ilma, burma, bosma, khamduzi, chamak, chinda khayol, bakhya stitches are widespread in Uzbek embroidery. In artistic embroidery in different places, the stitches are sewn differently. For example, in Tashkent is sewn mostly with bosma stitch, in Shakhrisabz with yurma, kandakhayol, iroqi, in Bukhara, Samarkand, Nurata with yurma stitch.

Yurma stitch – yurmaki is sewn with an awl with hook or needle, forming a chain of loops on the right side of the fabric, and on the reverse side straight lines. This stitch is sewn on the machine. The machine stitch is famous for its popop name. With yurma stitch mostly jiyaks, the outlines of decorative items, the filling of the inside of the embroidery, also, some parts of the large embroidery, the stalk that connects the flowers and leaves to the main branch and others were sewn in such a way from ancient times. The Samarkand, Bukhara, Kashkadarya embroiderers widely used the yurma stitch.⁵

Chinda khayol – duruya stitch is sewn evenly, pinned the needle on the fabric. In the same way a uniform flower is formed from the front and back side of the fabric. This stitch is used in the decoration of items visible from two sides, that is, the towel, scarf and other.

Khamduzi is a two-sided flat stitch, it was called that because it was sewn straight or slightly crooked. This stitch is used a lot to sew the gentle geometric patterns on a belt for skullcap flowers and so on.

Ilma stitches are usually used for framing the embroidery which sewn with a bosma stitch. Ilma stitch is wide spread in the Ferghana valley. First, after forming a hoop, the needle is injected into the hoop and taken over the thread, the thread on which presses the beginning of the left hand is left behind the needle, which was stuck.

Chamak stitch – is one of the stitches of embroidery, which is sewn from the left to the right along two parallel lines, and the needle through which the thread is pierced, is stuck from the right. Then it is pulled out from above to the left obliquely and it sticks straight parallel to the bottom line, also the bottom is pulled out obliquely. Chamak stitch is used to enclose the pattern in the frame or for decorating a wide band of skullcaps. The small scissors with a sharp tip is used. Chamak stitch is called among the Russians as “kozlik” (“goat”).

Bakhya stitch - serves to strengthen the edges of the embroidery, stitched, considering the smooth seam and distance as if outlined. After that, the fabric turns around again stitched, the result is formed smooth thread line. This stitch was sewn in the

machine much earlier than later by hand. It can also be two rows, that is, the rows intersect.

Kuppa stitch is formed by sewing a plain in different directions, that is, from the left to the right, from the right to the left, from the top to the bottom, from the bottom to the top. Side-by-side stitches are even or from small to large, and from large to small in size, depending on the shape of the flower. This stitch is called by the names of duruya, (bilateral) sanama, piltaduzi. It is widely used in skullcaps and embroidery.

Embroidery is a kind with its ancient traditions among the types of decorative applied arts of Uzbekistan, is widespread in large trade centers and villages of Central Asia. This type of art, while maintaining its poetic coloring, was appreciated among the people and did not lose its essence. Embroidery is mainly divided into six territorial groups, that is, schools. In particular, Nurota, Bukhara, Samarkand, Shahrisabz, Tashkent and Ferghana embroidery schools.

Nurata, Bukhara, Samarkand, Shakhrisabz and Ferghana embroidery schools were advanced schools in Central Asia in the XIXth and early XXth centuries. Khujand, Zarafshan embroidery schools also had their own style. In particular, the Nurota embroidery school is characteristic of the following: bouquets are arranged rarely on a white background of fabric, plant patterns are depicted with images of birds. In the middle of the embroidery is placed an octagonal or vegetative turunj (flower circle), the composition of the embroidery is found in the form of a finished with bouquets in the direction of the center from the corner.

Nurota, one of the largest centers of embroidery, is distinguished from other schools by the sharpness of the image of embroidery, the iridescent of floral patterns during the centuries. In Nurota embroidery, we can often see that the plant patterns are animated with the shape of birds. And sometimes we see the human and animal forms in some of the most invisible areas. Embroideries are sewn with bosma stitch in bright and gentle colors, the edges with zanjircha (chain) stitch. The closed composition embroideries with large bouquet in the four corners of the square and eight-pointed star are wide spread in the centre of Nurota. This type of composition means in Nurota “Chor shokhu yak mokh” – “Four horns one moon”. Nurota embroidery differs from other embroidery schools with the branches sewn mainly in the style of “yurma” or “zanjircha”.

Among the embroidery schools, Nurata embroidery has been remarkable for its compositional structure and bright color. In the traditional embroidery of Nurota horn, branch, leave are introduced as additional elements, but the flowers reveal the main essence. Floral patterns such as “Guli

⁵ BULATOV S.A. *Uzbek folk decorative-applied art*. Tashkent, Mekhnat, 1991, p.316.p.318.



safsar”, “guli hafrang”, “guli lola”, “chinnigul”, “mukchagul”, “khibcha”, “makhbal” are used.

In the villages of the Surkhondarya region, the current women with skillful hands can still be seen, whose products are intended to meet the demand of the local population. A large wall panel syuzane is considered panel is considered the most fashionable of the products of the craft. Wonderful embroidery samples decorated embroiderers of the oasis – joynamaz, zardevor, bolinpush and joypush, ruidjo, bughjoma, lyulabolish, belbogh or belqars, beshikpush, dasturkhon, oynakhalta, tuzkhalta, choykhalta, djiyak and etc. All these items have preserved the overall style associated with the pattern or ingredients, manner of execution. “Oynuskha” or “tupbarggul” are the main patterns of Surkhondarya embroidery. In some areas there are embroideries with the image of animals, which stylized forms of bird, scorpion, sheep horns, cock crowns are expressed. Generally, islimi – vegetation forms, including flowers and fruits, tulip, pomegranate, almond flower, curly leaves dominates in Surkhondarya embroidery.

The art of embroidery in Surkhondarya is known from ancient times as an integral part of folk crafts. There is also the fact that embroidery has been improved and enriched since ancient times, and the forms of the patterns and images multiplied and created separately, and raised to the level of a whole work of art. Surkhan embroidery school was formed mainly in two directions: in the style of Boysun and Kunghirot. Although these methods do not differ sharply from each other, but differ in terms of types of patterns, shapes, colors.

The circle patterns were large in Samarkand embroidery. Several of these circles are placed on the embroidery surface in both horizontal and vertical axes. Circles are composed of wide rainbow circles. The so-called “shamchiroq” (“candle”) element, used in Samarkand embroidery, gives embroidery a distinctive beauty. Because the leaves in the center circle turundj are like flames spread out in four directions, they are called “chorchiroq” – four lamps.⁶

Samarkand embroidery is of particular importance with its bright and originality. Despite the close proximity to the traditions of Bukhara, Nurota, Shahrisabz embroidery, the Samarkand embroidery school is distinguished by its artistic excellence, the rigidity and purity of its colors, the mobility of its forms. The main place of Samarkand embroidery is occupied by large-walled “palyak” - shaped suzannies. For their preparation, hand-woven cotton, silk fabric or factory-made colored fabric was used. And for embroidery, hand-woven or factory silk,

cotton or wool threads were used. Samarkand embroiderers sewed embroidery with “bosma”, sometimes with “kandakhayol” stitches. The images were formed on the basis of a “yurma” stitch. The decorative compositions of syuzane consist of the flower branches and large floral decorations surrounding with leaf rings. In 1905-1917, new directions appeared in the field of embroidery. That is, embroidery is sewn on white, sometimes red, green or purple fabrics woven in the factory, threads of yellow, blue, grey, green, purple black color have already replaced the additional decoration. “Lola” (“tulip”) described in large form became the main decorative motif. With the disappearance of the other colors, the mutual co-ordination of red, black and white colors became a distinctive feature of Samarkand suzane from various embroideries in Uzbekistan. The image of a single flowering shrub in the center is an ornament of Samarkand suzane. At the end of the XIX beginning of the XX century, the so-called “bolishpuches” appeared in the form of a series of identical bushes, completely new to the Samarkand embroidery. A brief analysis of the images from the Samarkand suzane shows that both the methods of decorating local embroiderers and the traditions of local art are associated with a common heritage. The researchers claim that the decorations have an archaic feature. Samarkand embroiderers, along with the adoption of certain aspects from the ancient heritage, also form their own private artistic direction. This is exactly what determines the peculiarity of Samarkand embroidery. Embroidery is often used as a symbol of amulet, and has been used to protect the bride from evil eyes at major wedding ceremonies. Throughout the XXth century, women aware of the secrets of embroidery began to decline greatly. However, Samarkand embroidery traditions have been preserved in Urgut. At present, Urgut has become a local center of embroidery. Here, at the beginning of the XX century, the embroidery composition, which appeared in Samarkand, that is, a large toothed pattern, surrounded by a ring of wide leaves, was preserved. But the images of Urgut are simpler and coarser than the Samarkand embroidery. The three-color features, such as red, pink patterns and black leaf rings, have been retained. Urgut embroidery is a completely new stage in the development of image. The bunch of leaves occupied the entire surface of the embroidery, became a complex decoration property. As a result, the white fabric, which forms the basis of the embroidery, also served as an important decoration. Embroidery in such a direction is not encountered in the embroidery of the Samarkand school.

Bukhara has been considered as one of the largest centers of embroidery for many centuries. Bukhara embroidery differs from other schools because of its sharpness of the image, the graceful of

⁶ NOZILOV D.A. *Ўрта Осиё дизайн тарихидан*. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, p.100.



the stitches and the flexibility of the floral patterns. The ring-shaped ornament is found in Bukhara embroidery. Bukhara embroidery is unique in its simplicity of embroidery. They have fewer leaves and a thin branch is slightly wider. The “three leaves”, which are held inside the base circle, both internally and externally, make it lacy green ring. Bukhara suzane differs from Samarkand suzane, Bukhara suzane has a wide border rich in decorations. The influence of the traditions of the “palace” style is clearly felt in Bukhara suzane.

In Bukhara embroidery turundj, davra-turunj, several ring circles, star-shaped and large patterns were widely used. They are arranged in different compositions. In particular, a large round – turundj in the middle surrounded by smaller turundj or four-leaf large pattern in the middle can come in compositions in the form of surrounding around round-shaped patterns, also a thin band of flowers arranged in rhombic cells organized as a result of the intersection of the diagonal lines as well as the middle of the embroidery, and in the compositions around with large circles.⁷

Shahrisabz embroidery school is one of the major schools that stands after the school of embroidery from Bukhara and is famous for its own skilful masters. It is one of the largest centers after Bukhara, is distinguished from the embroidery of another places with its high artistry. Its difference from other schools is that it used most the “kandakhayol” method. Besides, the masters also used “yurma”, “bosma”, “iroqi” methods. Shahrisabz embroidery differs by the brightness of colors, the width of the frame and the asymmetrical arrangement of the patterns. The decorative decoration of the embroidery made by them rose to the level of the legendary imagination.

In the center of the Shakhrisabz suzannies there is a large turundj, and in the corners there is a smaller turundj or leaf ornament and a newly opened tulip composition are used. A pattern occupies most of the surface of the suzanes.⁸

The surface of the embroideries of Tashkent embroidery school is completely covered by the patterns. The basis of embroidery is often used in the form of geometric circles using red and light red. In the early XIXth and XXth centuries, folk craftsmen, like other crafts, continued their traditions in embroidery. That is, oypalyak became a distinctive mass in embroidery, large inflorescences symbolizing the moon and the sun were sewn with black threads on a reddish pink fabric. The Tashkent suzanes were mostly in square shape, and the embroideries of small

size were called “gulkurpa”. Gulkurpa is mainly used the floral patterns and resembles Nurota embroidery school. The embroiderers of Pskent territory, which is situated in the northeast of Tashkent, sewed the embroideries called “Palyak”. “Palyak” was sewed in square shape printed style, they used mainly red, yellow colors.

The suzannies in Tashkent were called “palyak” and “gulkurpa”. The word palyak was filled in large circles symbolizing the image of the moon and stars. The name of palyak was fixed according to the quantity of the circles. Such as, six circles were called as “olti oyli palyak” (“palyak with six moons”), twelve circles as “o'n ikki oyli palyak” (“palyak with twelve moons”). The size of circles was bigger to make easier of the composition of pattern in palyak at the end of the XIX beginning of the XX centuries. As a result, the number of circles is reduced. The names also change, that is, “oy palyak”, “kiz palyak”, and “togora palyak”.

The gulkurpa is separated from the palyak by its large open surface. Ancient gulkurpas were made of white fabric.

The star-shaped pattern on the Tashkent gulkurpas is used not only in the center but also in the corners.⁹

In Khujand suzanes the floral and foliage patterns on a white fabric play the main role. The complex turundj-circles located on horizontal and vertical axes on composition of ancient suzanes and large turundj in the centre of suzane is occupied the main place. Then there are patterns circles with horns. The image of the horn squeezed the complex turundj-circles from the suzane composition. And instead the patterns such as “anor guli” (“pomegranate flower”), “lola” (“tulip”), “bodom guli” (“almond flower”), even “qalampir guli” (“pepper flower”) appeared.

The suzannies are widespread in the villages of the upper reaches of the Zarafshan river from Falghar to Panjakent. The small embroideries were sewn in Maschokh and other oases. Large patterns called “lola-turundj” and “chorchiroq” are typical for Falghar suzanes. The chorchiraks (four lamps) used in the Falghars are completely different from the Samarkand suzane, they are in the structure of a four-room lamp, and several occupy the entire surface. This pattern is also known as “lolai guli rang” in the villages of Falghar. Also, the compositions with large lola-turundj in the middle of Falghar suzane and the leafy patterns flower sprout around are met.

The above shows that embroiderers tried to make the decoration of the suzane from a light

⁷ NOZILOV D.A. *From the history of design of Central Asia*. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, p.101.

⁸ NOZILOV D.A. *From the history of design of Central Asia*. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, p.103.

⁹ NOZILOV D.A. *From the history of design of Central Asia*. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, p.104.



fabric, a light composition. For this, they used mainly curved lines and circular patterns. Circles of the same size are located on the intersection of vertical and horizontal axis. When working out circles of different sizes, there was a large one in the middle and a small one around it. Their colors were also more closely related to each other (in the close range of colors). Therefore, a general, common composition was preserved in them. It is pleasing to the eye with the integrity and simplicity of the suzane pattern composition. Hanging on the open spaces of the wall, the suzane helps to make the room look cool and solemn. That is why the composition of suzane of the early Middle Ages was still preserved.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that the Ferghana embroidery school was poorly studied. The study of the samples of the Ferghana school in the collection of museums serves to reveal the peculiarities of the embroidery of this region. In general, embroidery samples were important in everyday life. When a girl is born in the family, embroidery samples are sewn as her dowry in good intention by her mother, grandmother until she grows up. Girls were taught to embroider from a small age. There are edifying events among the people about the fact that if a matchmaker comes to a girl, her embroidery will be shown. Embroidery sewn by a girl gave the opportunity to determine the girl, temper, and her character. The embroidery sample was of great importance in determining the taste of women in the family as a whole. Even for the rituals associated with death, women prepared an embroidery sample on their coffins. This is a tradition that exists even though it is still preserved at present, albeit less frequently. That is, an embroidery sample is closed on a women's coffin, in each family there is such an embroidery sample that passes from generation to generation. If it does not exist, older women have prepared such an embroidery sample.

The achievements in the development of embroidery art are as follows:

- leading a simple colored fabric into works of art;
- the use of the drawing in weaving suzane;
- the execution of a large circle, multi-faceted turundj in colors conspicuous in, which play a dominant role in the suzane pattern;
- the creation of integrity compositions, formed from a combination of curved, straight-line branches of plant patterns, such as leaves, flowers, which look two or three kinds in the corners of suzane or around large circles on the surface of the suzane;

- ensure the integrity of the composition of patterns on the surface of the suzane, and the harmonization of colors;

- emerging to decorate the inner part of the room with suzannies;

- emerging of suzane pattern for ceremonies and holidays. 11

The richest collections of Museums of Uzbekistan are associated with these embroidery samples. There are many such exhibits in museum funds that have not yet been explored.

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¹⁰ NOZILOV D.A. *From the history of design of Central Asia. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, p.106.*

¹¹ NOZILOV D.A. *Ўрта Осиё дизайн тарихидан. Tashkent, Fan, 1998, p. 108.*