



THE TRADITIONS OF CARPET WEAVING IN THE SOUTHERN REGIONS OF UZBEKISTAN

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ANNOTATION

In the article is enlightened local features of traditions of the Uzbek carpet weaving on examples of samples from southern regions (Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions) of Uzbekistan. Also, are shown distinctive features in the processes of preparing raw materials and weaving machines, including the dyeing process of yarns, and are also described types of carpets and their features.

KEY WORDS: carpet weaving, craft, loom, types of carpets, wool, carpet products

DISCUSSION

Carpet weaving is a long developed rare type of textile, it has been continuing its traditions for ages[4]. Mainly women deal with carpet weaving and they knit many household furnishings, felt rugs, felts, carpets and other carpet products.

Carpet weaving is basically tightly connected with livestock, it is developed in Andijan, Samarkand, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, Bukhara cities of Uzbekistan and lowlands of Amudarya and is still continuing in the present days too. Particularly, the southern regions of Uzbekistan (Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions) are distinctive as the ancient and unique ethnographic area. In these regions this craft is the women manufacture, and the carpet weavers have different techniques of knitting woolly and non-woolly carpets[13].

WAYS OF CARPET WEAVING

Carpets were woven mainly from local wool and cotton painted in natural paints, and rarely they were knitted from silk at home. Goat wool, camel wool, cotton and silk threads were used in carpet weaving as supplementary products.

At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century the main raw material of carpet weaving was sheep wool. The carpet weavers of the southern regions almost didn't use the wool brought from Russia. But, there is information about that they used the products brought from Afghanistan, Iran and Eastern Turkistan[14].

On the carpets of Kashkadarya the traditions of carpet weaving of desert livestock breeder tribes are seen. In the carpet weaving of the oasis mainly geometric designs and partially plant-like designs were used. The carpet weaving, whose main raw material was sheep, goat and camel wool, was widely spread among the nomadic tribes (Turkmen, Arabian, Qungiro, Saroy and mangit tribes of Uzbek), they include western and central part of Kashkadarya (Muborak, Dekhqonobod, Chirokchi, Guzor and Kamashi). The nomadic Uzbek tribes Qungiro, Turkmen and Arabian tribes who lived in Muborak and Dekhqonobod districts in the western and south-west of the region widely used the carpet products[16]. In the oasis of Surkhandarya goat wool was highly demanded, local craftsmen made different things from it such as carpet, felt, saddlebags, sacks, rope, cloths and also made boots, mahsi (sole and heelless leather boots worn with



overshoes), overshoes, mesh (a large skin for storing water), airbag, cholvar, belt from sheep skin. Carpets were weaved in different forms according to the size of yurts, huts or rooms, in different designs such as in handasaviy design, with lily flower, wide border and with the picture of horned deer. Because of natural polishing the carpets didn't lose their quality for a long time. But because the wool is not tough for rain and high temperature, ancient types of carpets didn't remain.

The livestock breeder Arabians and Turkmen living in the southern oasis, the deserts of Karshi lived in Kamashi, Jeynov and Chirokchi districts and they are still continuing the traditions of carpet weaving even now. The articles of carpet weaving may include *bazaar gilam* (market carpet), *qiz gilam* (daughter carpet), *julkhirs*, *Arabian*, *qoqma* (beaten), wool, and *rugs*, the carpets, saddlebags and sacks in which different things are put. Moreover, the city of Karshi is one of the places where carpet weaving is the most developed in Central Asia.

The carpets of southern regions belonging to the beginning of the 19th-20th centuries are distinctive with their high quality and different designs. Particularly, Muborak district of Kashkadarya (the village of Geolog, Jaynay), Karshi city (the village of Shoykhuja), Dekhqonobod (Oqyirtma village), Koson (Oqtepa, Jizzali, Obron villages), Kasbi (the centre of Kasbi), Chiroqchi (Madaniyat, Chiyali villages), Yakkabog (Qorasuv and Gurjob villages), Kitob (Doniyorshaykh, Varganza, Qurama, Chirkay and Urus villages), Shakhrisabz (Dung, Avaz, Malik, Shombi, Ovul, Uchuyli, Miroqi, Palandara, Narimonov, Hazrati Bashir and other villages) are the main centres of carpet weaving[15]. In these places today the traditional ways of carpet weaving as well as local features of modern designing and technology is developing in a particular way.

The necessary devices for carpet weaving were small, comfortable and easy to install as well[17]. On the devices the threads are strung 40 sm for length and width.

Usually, sheep wool and sometimes cotton thread is used for carpet weaving. For one carpet up to 8-12 kg raw material is needed. The wool taken from sheep in spring must be of high quality. According to the reporters, a good carpet can not be made from the autumn wool[17]. Because the difference between spring and autumn wool is that the spring wool is long and soft, comfortable for knitting, more shining and less flexible, that is while knitting it less becomes crossbred or mix together. The autumn wool is hard and rough, and mainly used for pressing felt. The sheep, whose wool is the main raw material for carpet weaving, were separately fed with attention before cutting their wool. It helped the sheep to be fed well and the wool to be of high quality. According to this the quality of wool was

estimated, because the wool of a thin sheep was dry and easily severed and was not fatty[17]. Before cutting the wool of the sheep, they were washed several times in order to take high quality wool. For example, in Surkhandarya the wools cut from August 20 to September 10 were widely used for carpet weaving[14].

The carpet weavers used the herd wool because it is shining, elastistic and less work demanding and for taking more products as well[17]. And very rarely they used the unwashed sheep wool. The wool was washed in cold water in big sheds. The wool was soaked for sometime in the water and squeezed by rubbing well. After that the wool was dried in the sun. The process of washing the wool was different, the Kashkadarya Arabians, the Turkmen girls (carpet weavers) living on the Amudarya coast didn't do the first washing, they washed the ready products, that is the spun thread only. In Surkhandarya too the wool cut from sheep was washed well and separated into fibers, and beaten with a stick[12].

Carpet weaving began first of all with washing the wool, after washing it was combed with a wool-comb, separated into fibers and spun by a spinning machine. First the wool thread was put into salty water, and then it was boiled and removed its poison. Because the threads were boiled in salty water, they were distinctive with their strength and durability. After the wool threads were boiled, they were dried[3]. After the threads had dried well, they were washed in clean water again and put into dough mixture in order to be strong and durable. Because making the wool ready was done by hand, it badly affected on the hands of people and caused many different skin diseases. Furthermore, when women used the wool threads their hands turned red, the skin of their hands was peeled out and became calloused, and sometimes it brought different allergic diseases of skin as well. That's why the thread was boiled in salty water and removed its poison. Sometimes some flour was added into the water and boiled and then the thread was put into the mixture of flour and kept for about 2 or 3 hours[12; 2].

Combing the wool was the main process of the work, it was carried out by separating, combing, piling by its length etc. This all was done by a single complex device of combing. The combing device consisted of two raw iron teeth placed in a sharp angle to each other; it was installed on a wood. Such comb was often used by Turkmenistan carpet weavers. In some places of Uzbekistan and in the southern districts of Kirgizistan the comb was rarely used. Instead of the comb in Uzbekistan and southern Kirgizistan the wool was beaten by hand or by a stick while washing. The Arabians of Karshi didn't comb the wool, but they spun it separating into pieces. In Surkhandarya too the wool was combed mainly by a



comb. The combed wool was spun by a spindle[12]. The wool spun by spindle was winded in skeins and made ready for weaving, and this is the finish of the first step of carpet weaving.

THE PROCESS OF PAINTING CARPETS

The technical achievements of any nations in the field of carpet weaving are unique, it is mainly connected with the materials used for painting the raw material used for carpet weaving. Until the end of the 19th century the skeins used for carpet weaving were painted in the paints taken from the different plants growing on the mountains. Later the Russian low quality paints lightened this problem a little. However, it caused the decrease of the quality and value of the carpets. Now different paints are taken from the roots, skins and fruits of plants and making experiments for taking mechanically. It should be noted that, painting the carpets still in natural way and using natural paints more in the regions of Uzbekistan show unique local features on the carpets. For example, in Gumatak village Bousun district of Surkhandarya province a black paint is taken from the fruits of a tree named Tatum, a yellow paint is taken from the mushroom growing on a nut tree, and a red paint is taken from wild madder. The roots of oleaster, apricot and polar trees were also used as a paint, because they are very comfortable in taking the red and brown colours. But, the colour of the wools painted in these colours cannot be very bright, they look a bit paler[5]. The painted threads are chosen according to the design of the carpet. The carpet is made by simply weaving the threads with each other. The backside of the carpet is not painted. Because, when weaving it cannot be seen at all under the upper and lower threads. As a result the carpet will come out two-sided: the front side is plain and the rows are in different width, it doesn't differ from the back side. The carpet weaver presses the weft that are passed crosswise quickly with special wooden sword made of a nut tree; as a result the threads will be tightly dense. This sword is the main tool of carpet weaving; it is passing from generation to generation as a material value and property of handicraft.

Because making clothes and daily household products from wool like chakmon (men's long woollen cloak), po'stin (fur coat, sheepskin coat), different carpets, poach, napramach, sack, saddlebag is the tradition among the Kungirots tribes who deals with livestock in the deserts and mountainous areas of southern Uzbekistan, spinning threads from wool is widely developed in these areas too. The researchers emphasize that at the beginning of the 19th and 20th centuries there were many similarities in the designs on the carpets of Boysun and Nurota Kungirots. It shows the ancient family relationships between the Kungirots tribes in the two districts[6].

Kungirots women weaved carpets in the local way in summers. According to the tradition, they weaved a special carpet (daughter carpet) when girls were getting married and gave it as a dowry. Girls (daughters) and brides (daughter-in-laws) kept them as a heritage. Besides that, several types of carpets were the main parts of the dowry the same as embroidered clothes[17]. Thus, the handicraft products made by the people of the oasis were sold in the markets very little, they were made only for the children, relatives and for using in the household. Therefore, embroidering was done by a high skill and the harmony of the colours was also strictly paid attention[8].

Among the products of fuzzy carpets, especially, Andijan, Samarkand carpets and Karakalpak yurts have a particular place. In the second half of the 19th century Andijan carpets were made by Uzbek and Kirgiz people of Fergana valley, unique local bases, repeated cross-like motives on the surface of the carpets and "waves" are clearly seen on the edge of the designs. We can see many models of Iran, Azarbaijan (Kirman, Tebriz, Ardebil), China (uygur), "pomegranate" (Koshgar, Khotan) in Fergana valley too. Because, in the local carpet weaving interpretation had a particular style[7].

In southern Uzbekistan woollen carpet, feather carpet, julkhirs (a coarse hand-woven woollen material), Arabian carpet, gajari carpet, saddlebag knitting, chakmon (men's long woollen cloak) knitting, supra (a leather mat used for making dough upon) making and pressing flower upon the felt widely became customary[1].

One of the biggest centre of carpet weaving is Jaynay village of Kashkadarya, the Arabians, who moved here in the middle ages, live here. Now they are mixed with local people. However, they have kept their ancient traditions. The ancient jihiz carpets are weaved and kept here. It should be noted that, G.Moshkova noted the "jihiz carpet" weaved here as "daughter carpet"[9].

Livestock breeding had been the basic and beneficial branch for the people of the region, especially, for Uzbek, Turkmen, Arabian and Karakalpak people for long years. Mainly Arabians dealt with traditional carpet weaving here. For the reason of their best quality they were fast-selling. And it raised the interest to carpet weaving. Carpet weaving is very developed in Kamashi, Khujaki, Jeynov villages 30 kms far from Karshi. Featherless carpets which were named as "Arabian carpets" were knitted here. Also, prayer rug, curtains, sacks, bags, saddlebags, covers for different household things were made here. On these things the culture of the nomadic livestock breeder people was reflected. Tajik women in Surkhandarya made designed felts and even they knitted fuzzy products for the yurts[10].



A wide pulley loom was used for carpet weaving and a narrow pulley loom was used for knitting other small household things. Carpets were mainly woven from wool. A silk thread was used for the edge of the carpets and other things. The carpet weavers used only the natural paints for carpets until 1870, and later aniline paints took the place of the natural paints. The paints consisted of red, dark yellow, blue, green, white and black colours which were clearly distinguished from each other. That's why the carpets differ from each other according to their weaving style and design. The designs of Arabian carpet consist of tooth-like, stair-like, square, rhombus and triangle figures. In addition to the designs chain-like square and rhombus figures in different colours were added. Arabian carpets and Uzbek carpets have certain commons in their weaving style and designs (exchanging of geometric figures). It came from the close traditions of these two Muslim nations. Furthermore, there are some different sides of Arabian and Uzbek carpets. For example, on the Arabian carpets it is proven that in the first years of Islamic culture old and new elements, figures, cultures existed in harmony. We can see the motives of Islamic art from triangular, niche, geometric and plant-like designs on the carpets. Besides that, in the Art Museum of Uzbekistan there kept a sack¹ knitted by the Arabian carpet weavers in 1928 in Kamashi village of Kashkadarya, Arabian rugs² knitted in 1976 in Koson district, the sacks³, mirror-bags⁴, bo'g'joma⁵ (a large square piece of material for wrapping clothes and material) designed with plant-like and geometric figures related to the first half of the XXth century of Surkhandarya region.

The elderly women of the family taught carpet weaving in home condition and the girls had to learn to twist the wool with a spindle from their childhood and when they got mature they had to learn to weave a carpet. Mainly, they made poyondo (carpet spread out for entrance), small pouch, napramaches⁶.

TYPES OF CARPETS

In Kashkadarya region the most popular carpets such as *g'ajari carpet*, *hard carpet*, *bald*

carpet, *donakli carpet*, *qoqma carpet*, *terma carpet*, *cart carpet*, *Arabian carpet* and in Surkhandarya region, *bald*, *sheroziy*, *silk*, *gajakli*, *Arabian*, *Iranian*, *qoqma*, *shol*, *bozoriy*, *quroqi* carpets were widely known among the people.

Particularly, in Surkhandarya region featherless (not fuzzy) type of the carpet was developed, such carpets were called "qoqma carpets". The loom (machine) of qoqma carpet was trough-like and built on the ground. The qoqma carpet consists of striped colours, it is woven by length. Then it is cut and joined together by "triangular knitting"[17]. Several types of qoqma carpet such as "chumchuqi"(sparrow), "ko'rchumchuqi" (blind sparrow), "chumchuqko'zi" (sparrow eye), "bibishak", "shoyi"(silk), "g'ajari" are woven a lot in the oasis. On this carpet there are about 10 lines, the upper and lower sides are woven the same. Weaving techniques is complicated, its type woven by putting designs is called *terma* or *tukli*(fuzzy) carpet.

Besides that, the carpets are divided into several types according to their designs such as *olcha* (cherry), *qulf-kalit* (lock and key), *qo'zitish* (lamtotooth), *tumor gul*(amulet flower), *chumchuq bosh* (sparrow head), *bo'ri ko'z* (wolf eye), *quroq gul* (sedge flower), *baliq ko'z* (fish eye), *guldor* (flowery)[17]. Naming the carpets like this means a particular symbolic meaning. For example, the carpet named *qulf-kalit* (lock and key) is designed with the design reminding two horned rams' heads standing opposite to each other, it symbolizes that the door of the owner is open to friends and close to enemies[11]. The carpet named *Bo'riko'z* (wolf eye) is hung on the wall that everybody can see it, because it is valued as the defender of the family members from different misfortunes and demons and jinns. This carpet is woven by the designs putting black frames or points in a white circle. And also, it is valued as a valuable present and gift at holidays and weddings.

"Dig-diga" carpet – this carpet differs from other carpets because it is full of designs equal to its height. Its inner lines are in geometric figure, its outer side is decorated with fringes in different colours. Making this carpet is like making g'ajari carpet. This type of carpet is particular to Kungirov tribe, the designs as scorpion, comb, star, edge can be met in it.

G'ajari carpet – the most common type of carpet among the people who deal with livestock breeding, is separate by its unique style of weaving. On these carpets there are striped lines in geometric figures and long designs, they glimmer in different colourful forms. Dark red on a white background, a yellow flower on a black background are particular local solution of the local people. The main colour is dark red, green colours are separated from each other by black, white stripes. The upper and outer sides of

¹ Inventory 199

² Inventory 513

³ Inventory 1274

⁴ Inventory 1276

⁵ Inventory 1277

⁶ Embroidered napramach (handbag for things) belonged to the 20th centuries in Surkhandarya region prepared in printing plate. Inventory 1309



the colours are the same. This harmony of the colours is traditional to g'ajari carpets. Because the designs are knitted in narrow lines, all parts of them get a long form.

In weaving the g'ajari carpet thin woollen threads are used, after the threads are tightly twisted, they are rolled up on two stakes before painting and poured boiled water on, a spindle is put in the middle and the wet threads are rounded by the spindle. It is repeated several times and the threads are dried in roll. The threads twisted in such way become quite thin and make the carpet beautiful.

For g'ajari carpet two lines threads are made and a loom is built. Each thread is joined together and tied to the body thread. So the designs will come up uniformly. After the body thread is tied and the loom is placed, different design are made and if the red threads are on the surface and the white threads are under, according to the design of the carpet the threads are counted and the white thread are taken to the surface, and the red thread on the body thread is put instead. Because the g'ajari carpet is weaved by picking it requires great attention.

"White width" carpet– this carpet is also made in g'ajari style, there are plant-like and geometric styles on its lines. The designs are joined together in chain. Each stripe is joined by a hand sewing seam and is bordered by a material again.

Oygilam is also a decoration carpet of Kungiro people, which is hung on the walls of their house, and 1 or 2 pieces are given to the dowry of the bride[17]. In order to weave oygilam the wool of white sheep is twisted, combed and spun. Then it is clearly washed in hot water and dried and made a skein. For weaving the face, that is the designed side of oygilam one ready oygilam is used as a model and the designs are copied out.

Taqir gilam (bald carpet) is weaved big and big and can be distinguished by its design in the form of niche which covers all its width. The taqir (bald) carpets, which are weaved from cotton threads, are considered to be the simplest one, because cotton threads are not as strong as wool. When weaving a taqir (bald) carpet first of all its beginning part is weaved. It is necessary to pay attention to the place of the colours while weaving the carpet, the colours mustn't break each other. This beginning part of the carpet consisting of different colours is called *"water way"*. In *"water way"* there is a design called *qosh uyurma* which is weaved from 3 or 4 piles of thread. It is a component which provides the design for the carpet and also to be beautiful and finish quickly. The most necessary component for the taqir (bald) carpet is its black edge. Because, the edge has great significance for the carpet to come out flat and straight. The thickness of the black edge is 4-5 sm, the tread twisted from goat wool is used for it. And also an iron comb with 13 teeth, which has about 4,5

sm interval between each, is used. The handle of the comb is made from wood, the light and tiny teeth of the comb help to move the thread easily. After the *"water way"* of the carpet is finished its initial flowers are weaved according to its type. The size of the flowers and their forms must be taken correctly. The necessary threads while weaving are made like small bundles when they are in skein. When weaving begins, the bundles should be weaved in one side, if they are weaved in all sides, there may come up disorder.

While weaving it is necessary to weave the carpet hiding its inner lining material as possible, because enables the carpet to become smooth and beautiful. Naturally, as the carpet is weaved the installed body thread and coming close to the interval is observed. That's why the body thread is often shaken to the backward. While weaving the carpet when the bundles made from the colourful threads are moved to the right and left one time the back tool is moved forward and backward. If the bundles are parallel to the threads of inner lining material, they are not passed, if the bottom part is crossed, then they are passed. Weaving the carpet is cut when 1-1,5 metres is left up to the end of the mold. Because as weaving comes to an end the work gets harder and harder. Because the threads of inner lining material get tight as the work comes to an end and they may cut off. That's why the two edges are designed beforehand. The threads of inner lining material are made bundles consisting of 3-4 pieces of threads, and it doesn't let the threads become loose. Weaving taqir (bald) carpet is a complicated process, it needs about 12-14 kg threads and several people take part in this process[17]. There several types of it such as *"qo'chqor mayiz"*, *"imom sultoniy"*, *"terma"*, *"tuya bo'yin"*, *"qo'l soldi"*, *"oq enli"* and so on.

Turkmens were popular in weaving taqir carpet. Besides carpets they knitted koshma too, and sold 1 piece of koshma for 5 rubles 87 kopecks. there can be met information that on sale days Turkmens sold about 500 carpets[9].

The carpets weaved in Termiz and Sherobod districts of Surkhandarya are popular not only in the markets of the region, but also in Central Asia, Russia and European countries, they were sold at high prices. Even, some types of carpets were highly estimated in the exhibitions held in Paris[14]. Moreover, merchants took the carpets weaved in the mountainous villages of Sherobod to the markets of Karshi, Kerki and Shakhrisabz, and even, to Afghanistan and India via Amudarya and sold there[20]. Besides that, in Surkhandarya felt rugs, fur coat, warm men's trousers, women's and men's belts[These melts made from sheep's wool and names as kind of *"qumoq"*, *"chumchuqlay"*], turbans, foot bindings[*Men foot bindings made from wool and fluffy hair, their width was 25 sm and length 1*



m. At the top of it was a string for binding. Foot bindings were weaved by women embroidering in width and length. Foot bindings were wrapped in shins and differed depending on whoes. For example, puttee for boots was simple, and mukki puttee was coloured and fringed] were made from sheep wool. In Denov and Sariosiyo districts men's long cloak was also made from this material. Chakmans (Caftans) with printing ornaments differ to kinds of "oq bosma" (white print), "qora bosma" (black print), "kok bosma" (blue print), "malla bosma" (yellow print). These chakmans (caftans) were nor handwork and they were weaved by special masters in printing form. Blue chakmans prepared from wool of the blue sheeps, yellow chakmans from the isliqi black sheeps wool and white chakman from the wool of white sheeps. The these chakmans added wool of goats. Also there were chakmans prepared from the wool of only goats and they were expensive.

The cloaks were made long and wide and they had a feature to resist water when it rained. That's why they were worn upon the coat and a belt was not worn upon. In the region instead of the belt a rope twisted from goat wool was tied.

Felt rug – is particular to the craft of Kungirov people of southern region, and is made from wool painted in different colours. On the felt rugs the designs called "qo'chqorak" which resemble to rhombic medallions, and horn-like designs can be often meet. The felt is mainly pressed (made) from autumn wool. Because it is very strong. The technology of making felt rugs is simple, and hasn't changed for long ages. According to the style of making felt rugs can be two types, simple flowerless and flowery. Flowerless black felts were used for yurts as a cover (a wrap) [Field notes. Kashkadarya region. Guzor district. 2017]. The flowery felts are also called as takiyanamat or taki namat (felt rug). In Surkhandarya many types of felts such as "tug'donagul", "taqirgul", "tug'ma baqa", "gajakgul", "gultaylama", "qirqdonagul", "shokhmola", "qirqdo'ngil", "oltido'ngil" were made [Field notes. Surkhandarya region. Termiz and Sherobod districts. 2009]. In Kashkadarya the types of the felt such as "chiliki", "o'yma gigiz" are met. The first felt remains were found in Poziriyq fortress in Altay.

One of the household facilities *napramach* [Napramach is a woven trunk. It was widespread before the appearance of trunks made of wood. The form of napramach is octagonal or quadrangular two medallions and sharp rhombuses and x-shaped shapes in its background. In Guzor and Dehqonobod districts of Kashkadarya region it called also as *mapramach*, Field records. Kashkadarya region. Guzor district. The village of Yargunchi 2017.] was also used as a box (chest), its front side was weaved like a thick carpet and the two sides and the back side were weaved like a taqir carpet. The

height of napramach in the form of a box (chest) was 70-80 sm, the width was 45-55 sm, the length was 1 metre and 1,10 sm, hooks were made from wool threads round its mouth and 120 sm sticks were put through the hooks from front and back sides of *napramach* in order to become comfortable to carry [Field records. Surkhandarya region. Sherobod districts. The village of Roz 2009.]. After napramach was filled with things it was tied with threads passing through the hooks on its mouth. Then quilts wrapped *bo'g'joma* [A woven linen for wrapping household items. They have rhomboid, ramified, stepped and curled ornaments. This kind of it called also as *bog'cha* (box) and stored in them clothes. According to the tradition of the oases the things of the newlyweds were also kept there.] were piled on it.

Among the Uzbek carpets, especially, the ones particular to Southern Uzbekistan have local features according to their designs, weaving styles and decoration. These features depend on the technology of carpet weaving, the raw materials used for carpets and the paints. The carpet weaving traditions kept their significance until now and is still being weaved according to the demand of the people of the regions.

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