

FINGERS OF THE EMBROIDERER ARE LIKE THE FLEXIBLE WIRE OF A SKILLED JEWELER



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"НАҒЫС ТИККЕН ОН БАРМАҒЫ
ЗЕРГЕР ТАРТКАН СЫМ ЯНЛЫДЫ"¹.

Abstract: This article provides a more detailed examination of the traditional embroidery of the Karakalpak people, its significance and meaning. It includes a brief study of the names of the embroideries and their history, the items in which they were used, and their application in modern products.

Keywords: culture, national clothing, ethnicity, evolution, Karakalpaks, folklore, originality, embroidery, kiymeshek, zhanse, shay kalta, epic, tamga, ornament.

Through culture, art, and the creativity of designers, artists, and musicians, their perspectives on life and understanding of universal human values transform the most progressive, advanced, and innovative ideas and thoughts in society, shaping the worldview principles of a new generation.

Culture and art are immense forces that easily penetrate the human heart. There are sacred concepts that unite creators and inspire them to new artistic endeavors, connected to the interests of the homeland and the people, as well as the principles of kindness and humanism. If every creative individual consistently perceives these as the main goal of their work and can express them vividly, artistically, and imaginatively in their creations, then literature, art, and culture will undoubtedly serve spiritual perfection and fulfill their social mission.

Every country has its rich and unique history, culture, traditions, and customs. Today, great attention is paid worldwide to the preservation and development of cultural heritage, historical monuments, and the ability to show case the vibrancy and value of cultural assets, thereby awakening interest among youth in studying the history and traditions of their people.

National clothing is an integral part of the culture of any nation and is closely tied to the history of the origin and formation of the ethnic group, making it a valuable material source for studying the ethnogenesis of a people. Scientific research has shown that national clothing—even in its most traditional form—cannot be viewed as unchanging; it exhibits a certain evolution.

Changes in the national clothing of the Karakalpaks have been influenced to a certain extent by the unique art, folklore, customs, and traditions that are inextricably linked to the once-rich and flourishing civilization located in the fertile lands of the Khorezm Oasis, surrounded by the deserts of Karakum and Kyzylkum, as well as the vast expanses of the Aral-Caspian region. As I.V. Savitsky, who fell in love with this beautiful and harsh land, once said, “A small nation, lost in the sands and channels of the Amu Darya, possesses a unique art.”²

Antiquity, originality, uniqueness, vividness, and symbolic significance are some of the characteristics inherent in the folklore style of Karakalpakia. The Karakalpak yurt and clothing

¹ "The fingers of the embroiderer are like the flexible wire of a skilled jeweler." - Karakalpak folk song.

² "The Golden Heritage of the Aral." November 19, 2014.

3. "Kyrk-Kyz": An Epic about Warrior Girls. Among the many monuments of Karakalpak folk creativity, the heroic epic "Forty Girls" ("Kyrk Kyz") stands in the first place—it is a true treasure of folk poetry. The heroic poem "Forty Girls" was recorded in 1940 from the words of the famous folk storyteller Kurbanbai Tajibaev (1876–1958) in the Turtkul district of the Karakalpak ASSR.

were richly and tastefully adorned, while jewelers crafted various decorations from silver, employing techniques such as embossing, gilding, and inlays of carnelian, coral, and turquoise. The bride's headdress, known as seukele, was decorated with a silver plate called tobelik with stone inlays; women's chest ornaments included haykel, flat and cross-shaped tuyme, earrings, bracelets, and more. In the festive attire of young women, embroidered clothing held a special place. According to folk tradition, red tones predominated in the dresses of girls. An exception is the kok-koylek—a blue dress that holds ritual significance. The entire front part of the dress is covered with very finely crafted cross-stitch embroidery. Rows of ornamental bands made up of diamond-shaped figures on the chest vaguely resemble chain mail and are referred to as "chain mail pattern." This suggests that the decoration of kok koylek reflects the traditions of the attire worn by the warrior women of the Saka-Massagetae tribes, celebrated in the Karakalpak folk epic "Kyrk Kyz" ("Forty Girls")³.



Picture 1-2. "Karakalpak Motifs" collection by a student of the K. Behzod National Institute of Arts and Design on the theme: "Karakalpak Motifs," inspired by the Karakalpak folk epic "Kyrk Kyz" ("Forty Girls").

Embroidery art is one of the vivid manifestations of the artistic culture of the people. The types of embroidered products, the nature of ornamentation, and the color and compositional solutions are diverse. Alongside other forms of Karakalpak decorative applied art, artistic embroidery stands out as the richest in terms of types, technical execution methods, and the variety of color and ornamental structures. It allows for the expression of the unique aesthetic and artistic thinking of the people, who, due to various historical circumstances, did not have a tradition of

visual arts in the past. At the same time, the art of embroidery serves as a valuable resource for studying the ethnic history and cultural and economic connections of the people.

When discussing the peculiarities of ornament interpretation in Karakalpak embroidery, it is essential to note the active role of color. Color not only introduces rhythmic alternation into the composition of uniform patterns but often also creates ornamental figures, allowing for "multiple interpretations" of the same motifs.

Among the frequently encountered elements in Karakalpak ornamental art is the spine (omyrtka), which adorns the compositions of ritual dresses such as the *kızıl kiymeşek*, sleeves of the *jengse*, tea bags called *şay kalta*, and containers for loose products known as *şanash*, etc. It is likely that among the Karakalpaks, not only the spines of animals but also the backs of fish were endowed with magical properties (similar to the beliefs of certain groups of Turkmen who were historically associated with fishing). E. G. Tsareva notes: "It was believed that if fish bones were placed on a felt during a meal, sleep on that felt would be peaceful. For the same purpose, one could use not a real animal, but its image or symbol. Hence, the depiction of a fish spine on pile carpets with *onurga-göl* – a motif in the form of a chain of interconnected triangles, an element of *onurga-göl* and some other compositions."

Picture 3. "Kimeshek" - headdress of a married Karakalpak woman.

For the decoration of clothing, traditional yurts, and household items, various ornaments were primarily used, such as: plant and animal motifs (floral motifs: *aygabagar* (sunflower) - *koraly*



gul), zoomorphic ornaments (*on eki muyiiz* (12 horns), *segiz muyiiz* (8 horns), *khorasan muyiiz*, *tokalak muyiiz*, *garga tyrnak* (crow's claws), *kurbaka* (frog), etc.), and representations of objects (*shilaush*, *tkesh*, *shakhmak* (thunder), *badamsha* (almond)).



Picture 4. Plant and animal ornaments of Karakalpak embroidery⁴

Color plays an active role in Karakalpak embroidery, allowing for “interpretations” of the same motifs. On a white background, red, yellow, and green silk threads are used for embroidery, with red being the predominant color. The white color of clothing was traditionally worn by elderly women. Embroidery on a red base was used in the attire of brides, where green, red, and yellow were predominant, along with white threads. On a black background, red, yellow, and white threads were utilized, depending on the type of clothing, the placement of the ornament, and other requirements.

The choice of ornamental motifs holds ideological and artistic significance, expressing the worldview of the people in an imaginative form, encompassing the surrounding nature, decorative items, and household goods. A significant group of ornaments consists of symbols and tamgas related to ethnic history; some images may serve as amulets or totems. However, today, few people understand their meanings. Nevertheless, through some folk legends such as "Alpamys," "Koblan," "Kyrk Kyz" ("Forty Girls"), and "The Tale of Yedige and Tokhtamys," one can shed light on some of these patterns and symbols that can reveal much about the culture of their people.

As the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov stated in his book "Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the 21st Century": "Only those people who recognize the necessity of harmonizing national, cultural, and universal human values, who possess modern knowledge, intellectual potential, and advanced technologies, can achieve the strategic goals of development. We must learn to treat with care those cultural roots that have always allowed the broadest layers of the population to connect with the best examples of national classical and contemporary culture" .

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