

Traditional types of women's handicraft

Since ancient times the women's handicraft was widely spread in Kazakhstan. At the age of 6-7 girls were attracted to work around the house and taught to sew, embroider, make carpet, etc.

Out of the wool of cattle and camel the clothes, items of household and felt were made. *Kiiz* – irreplaceable material for the yurt cover. In the work participated women of different age group, they also sang songs, made joke.

The production of felt as the item of household and, at the same time, the piece of art – a complicated process, demanding certain skills. It consists of several stages: preparation of wool, placing on the mat, spraying in of hot water, packing, getting ready felt.

For the coloring of wool into various colors till XIX century they used dyes, which were boiled out of different plants, roots and mineral salts. Since the second half of XIX century they started to import the aniline paints to Kazakhstan. Those paints gradually forced out the natural ones.

In the production of felt items not only women of one family, but also residents of the aul took part.

The paramount necessity in the life of a nomad – creation of different parts of felt cover of the yurt, which was the main dwelling of Kazakhs for centuries. Besides, the saddle pad (*tokym*) under saddles were made of felt, they sewed felt floor items (*kalpak*), coats (*kebenek*), felt nylon stockings for boots (*baypak*), braces for kaban (*kol kap*).

The main mass of items of felt was used in the interior of the yurt, house. These items were the samples of art among Kazakhs.

The most wide-spread in the household of Kazakhs before revolution was the felt carpet – *tekemet*, which was used for covering the floor of the yurt, house. The production of *tekemet* was realized in several ways.

The ornament of *tekemets*, created by means of putting the stripes of wool in the form of patterns on the base, was traditional: on the central space were put several diamond-like figures, into which the special pattern *kos muiiz* in the form of a cross of “double horns” was fit in.

In addition, the pattern in the form of “running waves” or double in the shape of ram’s horns *koshkar muiiz*, in the shape of one horn *synar muiiz*, but specific one was the diamond with the pattern *kos muiiz*.

The central place was bordered with the frame in the form of repetition on the stripe of border stone of zoomorphic or geometric pattern. In the ornament of tekemets the zoomorphic patterns predominated.

The other way of the production of tekemets was the preparation of colorful cloths (*taldyrma*), out of which the patterns were cut out, and they were rolled into the layer of wool (base of tekemet). The cut patterns were practiced in the south-east of Kazakhstan, in Semirechensk region, in the east – in Semipalatinsk region and several volosts of Akmolinsk county.

In the production of tekemets the pattern application was also used, when on the one-colored base the patterns of various material: cloth, velvet, cotton cloth were sewed. Also, tekemets were called “*oyuly tekemet*” which means “*cut tekemet*”.

Syrmak – a type of felt carpet, which was specially valued by Kazakhs. If tekemets were placed on the floor, then syrmaks decorated the walls of yurts and houses.

The production of syrmaks was spread on the great territory, embracing the east and south-east, several districts of central and Southern Kazakhstan.

The production of syrmak is not difficult, but more effort-taking and demanding more time, than the creation of other felt items. At the production of syrmak four ways were used:

- 1) The mosaic from colorful pieces of felt;
- 2) Application of one-color cloth on white felt;
- 3) Cord ornamental script with the thread on the one-color cloth of felt;
- 4) Creation of the ornament with stitching colorful thread.

In comparison with the tekemets, in the ornament of which the zoomorphic patterns predominated, the syrmaks were often decorated with floral patterns or transitional from zoomorphic to floral. Syrmak had the central place and ornamental frame, which locked it.

The ornament of syrmaks with the application mainly repeated the picture of mosaic carpets, but along with that the layout of the central space to diamond net was widely spread, in each cell of which – the pattern *kos muiiz*. The central field was framed with the ornaments and often with the fringe out of colorful lamb hair. In that case the items were called “*shashakty syrmak*”.

Felt *tuskiizes* in comparison with the tekemets and some syrmaks decorated only the walls of the yurt and house. They were created by means of mosaic, application and embroidery. The ornament of tuskiizes created by the first two ways has П-shaped border stone framing the inner rectangle. In the ornamentation of border stones and inner rectangle used equally both zoomorphic and floral patterns.

Embroidered tuskiizes differed by their compositional decision: the central space always had the ornamental frame, the predominant ones were floral motives, but the main difference of embroidered tuskiizes was that the embroidery was made on any material (cloth, velvet, cotton cloth), and then they were sewed to the felt base.

Mosaic tuskiizes with the application were peculiar for the districts of Eastern, South-Eastern, Central and Southern Kazakhstan, also in certain places of Western Kazakhstan.

Except for the felt carpets, Kazakhs produces different hanging bags made of felt for the storage of wooden dishes (*ayak kap*), felt cases (*shabadan*), packs (*ten*), etc.

Especially beautiful in the interior of the yurt was the ayak kap, which was hung on the corner loops at the head of the yurt kerege. Ayak kap usually was placed in the household part of the yurt – to the right of the entrance.

Along with the felt items the decoration of the Kazakh yurt contained the items of weaving.

Each felt covering of the yurt had the strips (*bau*), by which it was fastened to the wooden carcass of the yurt. The cover of the yurt dome on each lateral side had three ornamental strips: at the upper tip – *bas bau*, at the lower tip – *ayak bau* and in the middle – *orta bau*. At the top tips of the felt cover of the yurt base was per one strip (*tuyrlyk bau*). For the fastening of the yurt under the windy weather served the patterned strip (*zhelbau*), one end of which was tied to shanyrak, and the second one – so far as necessary to the iron pole dug near the hearth of the yurt. All those strips were sewed at the machine (*ormek*), had the width from 10 to 16 cm, and the length reached up to 3-4 m.

The foundation of the yurt from the exterior was tied with the thread on the top of which in rich yurts the ornamental strip was put. The lower edges of the strip were decorated with fringe and tassels.

In each yurt the ornamental strip (*baskur*) was obligatory, and its width reached to 50 cm, and length depended on the volume of the yurt, that is the more threads

contained the base of the yurt the longer the baskur was. On average its length was from 7 to 9 m.

The basements of the dome poles (*uyk*) were tied, that imparted strength to wooden construction of the yurt.

The most widespread was the napless baskur (*kyzyl baskur*) with traditional ornamentation in the form of horns (*koshkar muiiz*, *synar muiiz*) on the sides of diamonds. More often the colorful baskur (*ala baskur*) was met, and it differed from kyzyl baskura with many-colored ornaments, taken from carpet ornament.

Semi-napped baskur (*ak baskur*) was extremely beautiful. Its base was sewed in the form of smooth cloth, and ornaments – a method of napped weaving – the tie of napped knots on the smooth base.

Various strips (*bau and baskurs*) were sewed on the whole territory of Kazakhstan. The production of carpets was the significant branch in the sewing among Kazakhs. Carpets were sewed of two types: napped and napless. Napped weaving was spread among Kazakhs in Southern and Western Kazakhstan. These carpets (*tukti klem*) were woven at the horizontal machines with the help of tie of napped knots on the thread of the carpet base and cloth interweaving of each knot row, which created the solid carcass of the carpet and napped surface.

Along with the zoomorphic and geometric patterns, in the ornament of carpets were also widely used floral patterns in the shape of various flowers, leaves, sprouts of plants. Those ornaments unite in one term *gul oyu*, that is floral, floristic ornament.

The patterns of napped carpets were put separately or were put into different patterns: squares, circles, stars, etc.

Napless carpets (*takyr kile*) were woven on the vertical and horizontal machines. The first one was spread in northern and central regions of Kazakhstan, the second one – in the south. The construction of theirs is not complex and represents the wooden frame with drawn tight on it threads of the base. Interweaving them with the duck (ornamental) colorful thread in a certain order, they got the carper with the even surface.

In the ornament of napless carpets the main were zoomorphic ornaments, seldom the geometrical ornament occurs. The ornaments were framed with the squares, diamonds, multangulars.

Napless carpets were laid on the floor or hung on the wall, napped mainly were the decoration of the house walls.

Alasha – a wide spread type of the carpet in the past – it was woven on the machine (*ormek*). It was the most available carpet item, it was made on the whole territory of Kazakhstan. The width of the stripe reached 40-50 cm and even more, and the length depended on the tolerance of the master and number of threads. The stripe was cut into equal parts, which were sewed one by one. The *alasha* ornament was mainly the zoomorphic and geometric ornaments. The floor was covered by *alasha* and hung on the *yurta kerege*, the wall of the house.

With the production of carpets the weaving of hanging bags (*ayak kap*), saddle bags (*korzhyn*), hanging bag of large sizes (*korme*), covers for chests (*abdre kap*), packs (*ten*) is closely connected.

The frontal part of these items with the ornament was woven on the same machines as the carpets, but of a less size.

Comparatively small unit weight of women's handicraft was taken by embroidery, which was not that various as the embroidery of Central Asian people. They embroidered on felt, cotton fabric, cloth, velvet and silk. On felt they embroidered the ornament of *tuskiizes*.

In the beginning of XX century Kazakh women adopted the crosswise embroidery (*orys kresh* from Russians and Ukrainian settlers).

In the Kazakh embroidery the following traditional stitches were used: *biz keste* - tambour stitch created with the help of a hook; *shim keste* – tambour stitch put with the needle; *basna* – satin stitch embroidery; *tigu* - stitch in the form of continuous and non-continuous stitch; *shalma*, *sharysh keste* – buttonhole stitch.

By the stitch *biz keste* and *shym keste* they embroidered on the cloth, drawn tight on embroidery hoop, and the rest of stitches – by the needle on the spare cloth. The embroidery was produced mainly by cotton and silken threads. In ancient times the gold embroidery existed, the mastery of it was not possessed by everyone.

With the embroidery the pillows heads, covers of horses (*at zhabu*), storages for pialas and cups (*kese kap*, *ayak kap*), edges of the towel (*sulgi*) were decorated.

Kazakh women decorated with the embroidery various parts of the clothes: sleeves, lap and breast part of the dress, kamzols, loose skirts (*beldemshe*), parts of the wedding headwear (*saukele*), headwear of the married woman, gowns, of shirts, *tyubeteykas*.

The ornament, used at the embroidery of items, mainly floral – in the form of plants sprouts, different flowers, interwoven leaves.

Tuskiiz – the huge panel picture, decorating the interior of yurt or the living room. Its sizes were in the following location: lengthwise from 200 to 350 cm, widthwise - from 120 to 160 cm.

Seysep – the bed carpet, which was used as the wall panel picture.

Perde – the curtain on the top of cloth. Its sizes were widthwise to 100 cm, lengthwise – to 150 cm. The ornament was embroidered on its upper part.

Shymyldyk – the bed-curtain made of two parts, which was used for separating off the bed. The upper part of the bed-curtain was decorated with the embroidery.

Used material:

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