

## Respect for Man, Attention to The Father in Nurota Oasis Textiles as An Innovative Approach

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The article is devoted to the types of traditional carpet weaving crafts characteristic of the Nurota oasis and the results of research conducted by scientists. The article describes the current state of the Nurota carpet weaving traditions, the preservation of carpet weaving traditions, features passed down from generation to generation, and innovative research. **Method:** The lifestyle of the oasis population, the ethnographic description of some types of carpets that have survived in the oasis to this day. Scientific research materials, ethnographic observations, and historical sources related to traditional crafts were analyzed. **Results:** The attention paid to carpet production during the years of independence and the problems awaiting solutions in this regard are discussed. The study highlights distinctive forms, ornamentation, and ethnolocal characteristics of Nurota carpets within Central Asian textile traditions. **Novelty:** The study emphasizes an innovative approach to preserving traditional carpet weaving as cultural heritage, linking ethnographic continuity with contemporary perspectives on textile production and cultural identity.

## INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, priceless works of art have been created in the traditional crafts of the peoples of the East. In these craft schools, examples of blacksmithing, pottery, carpentry, and weaving were produced, while carpet weaving and embroidery developed and were refined over the centuries, reflecting the worldview and national identity of the Uzbek people.

The art of carpet weaving confirms that traditional craftsmanship has its own long historical and ethnographic characteristics. According to research, the carpet weaving traditions of the Uzbek and Tajik ethnic groups living on the slopes of the Nurota mountain range, located in the desert and semi-desert regions of Uzbekistan, were not well studied until the mid-1940s. Information about Central Asian carpets and the Nurota oasis region is rare in Russian and foreign literature. The traditional handicraft weaving industry, although considered an "obsolete phenomenon" in the former Soviet Union, has become a pressing problem with a scientific basis and requires additional study.

The Decree No. PF-5242 signed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev on November 17, 2017 is an important legal and regulatory document in this regard [1]. The Decree emphasizes the urgency of preserving various forms of traditional craftsmanship, in-depth study of production practices, and the restoration of

national cultural values through the use of material resources. These goals are an important factor in preserving material and spiritual values in modern New Uzbekistan based on an innovative approach, from the point of view of respect for the person and attention to the family in textile products.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The Nurota oasis, one of the historical and ethnographic regions of our republic, has long served as a distinctive ethno-contact zone facilitating interethnic and cultural interaction as well as the assimilation of various ethnic groups. As a result of these processes, the Turkic-speaking population—despite linguistic diversity—expressed shared features in their traditional activities, particularly in the material culture of cattle-breeding communities, most notably in the carpets woven by women. Our field research shows that the customs and traditions of the local population have been well preserved in the textile artifacts we examined. At the same time, several examples of handicrafts produced in the Nurota oasis, especially carpets, are distinguished from those of other regions by their unique forms and ornamentation.

To date, scientific research devoted to the historical development of traditional crafts in the Nurota oasis during the 19th and 20th centuries can be classified into three groups:

1. Literature published during the period when Central Asia was part of the Russian Empire;
2. Research and scholarly publications produced in the Soviet period, reflecting the methodological principles and ideological paradigms prevailing in Soviet academia;
3. Academic studies and research conducted after Uzbekistan achieved independence.

After the conquest of Central Asia by the Russian Empire, a number of scientific expeditions were organized in order to thoroughly study the territory of the colony. The members of this expedition were D.N. Logofet, N.A. Maev, A.D. Grebenkin gave important information about the cities, markets, ethnic composition of the population, clothes, and occupations of Central Asia, especially the Bukhara Emirate [2-3]. In addition, A. Burns, A.P. Fedchenko, P.I. Maybe P.I. Pashino, A. Vamberi, N.F. Petrovsky, M. Bekchurin, E.K. Meindorf, A.Kun, L.F. Kostenko, K.K. Palen, V.I.Masalsky and others published works also included some areas of craft profession. Among them A. Semyonov's article "History of carpets of Bukhara" contains information about the history of carpet-making, which is an important craft in the economic life of this emirate [4].

During the Soviet period M.S. Andreev [5], A.A. Semyonov [6], Moshkova [7] contains some valuable opinions about weaving and related professions, which are one of the important occupations of the peoples of Central Asia, and craft associations involved in production processes.

In the years of independence, researches on the history of Nurota oasis were carried out by scientists such as A. Togayev, G. Yoldosheva, Latipov, N, Kh. Berdiyev [8]

Nurota Oasis as a national cultural heritage has not yet been covered in a comprehensive historical-ethnographic order.

As noted by the famous ethnologist P.F.Priobrazhensky, "The main task should be focused on the comparative study of large cultural complexes on the basis of historical sources, to determine the aspects of their interdependence" [9]. In fact, carpet-making as a type of carpet product in the people's lifestyle from time immemorial appeared in the form of leather, animal wool, plant (reed or burra) in the form of a product designed for people's recreation and leisure. Textiles originally served to meet the needs of every natural economy. More precisely, carpet weaving is the first form of handicraft deeply rooted in the narrow economy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the researchers who studied the types of carpet and textile products and decorations, it was formed as a product of the lifestyle of the nomadic and semi-nomadic people of the Caucasus, Ancient Asia (Iran, Turkey, Egypt) and Central Asia. Over the centuries, the growth of statehood, socio-economic types of life, and the relative increase in the need for highly cultured carpet products have led to the further development of this industry. "Through the spinning and processing of wool, which is the main raw material for the cattle-breeding population in general, this product has become a real carpet-making profession"[10].

It is widely recognized that the ancient urban centers within the Zarafshan and Surkhan oases, the Fergana Valley, as well as the Khorezm and Tashkent oases, which represent the historical and ethnographic regions of Uzbekistan, each developed their own distinct schools of craftsmanship. In this article, we consider it appropriate to highlight certain dimensions of the art of carpet weaving, which held a central place within traditional crafts of the "Nurota Turkmens" who inhabited the Nurota oasis for many years, alongside the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Tajiks. Carpet weaving, one of humanity's oldest textile industries, has consistently exhibited unique ethno-local characteristics throughout various historical periods.

The Nurota oasis is intertwined with carpet weaving in the lives of pastoralist communities, as evidenced by sources that confirm the persistence of these traditions, the main population of the oasis is mentioned as "Nurota Turkmen" in the sources of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is known from history that in 1928-1929, G. Moshkova conducted research in the areas inhabited by the Turkmen people engaged in carpet weaving as an expedition employee on the establishment of palos production artels on the government's order [7]. One of the areas visited by the author is Nurota Oasis. According to the author, other Uzbek peoples - Burkut, Naiman, Turk, Mitan, Karakalpak and Kazakhs - were less than Turkmens in the oasis at that time. Along with the Kazakh clans that formed several villages in the region, there were also other Uzbek groups that lived in these lands for many years. One of them is the Tomas (they lived in the villages of Zulmkoriz and Konasaroy) who became famous in carpet weaving (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The hard work of carpet weavers of the Uzbek toma clan.

V.G. Moshkova in her views A.D. Grebenkin, I.I. Zarubin, M.S. Relying on Andreev's information, the 19th-century Turkmen tribes of Kozayogi, Bojajali, Kanjigali, Oytamgali claim that they belong to the "Taka" clan of Turkmen, which allows us to consider them as Uzbeks based on the national identity, language and daily life of the Turkmen clans He was especially interested in antiques of carpet and embroidery art.

According to him, Nurota rugs were made by people belonging to several clans, such as Naiman, Hoogoli, Tukman, Yuz, Kirq, Saray, in addition to the "six-father Turkmen" and "five-father Mangishlov" Turkmen living in the oasis. Nurota carpets were good and much higher than the carpets produced by the Uzbeks of Andijan, Samarkand, Kashkadarya regions and the lower reaches of Amudarya in terms of quantity and quality. Jizzakh and Nurota oasis carpet weavers weave long woolen carpets "julkhirs" or "juvaraki", short pile carpets of not too large size, "kohma", sholcha and olachi from carpets without feathers. In addition, there are decorated "girl's carpets" designed to be installed on the wall, "bokhjoma" of semi-sedentary herdsman, "qur", "baskur", carpet with feathers, "terma gilam" or "kohma" without feathers and such various items consisted of used bags (small bags) - ("napramach", "khorjun" - road bag) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Feather carpet in the village of Josh (photo 2019)

At the end of the 19th century, the experiences of Nurota's Uzbek-Turkmen clan women in carpet weaving began to increase. Carpet weaving has become an additional source of income for some sections of the indigenous population, that is, they sell their carpets in the markets. Woolen carpets with and without feathers were taken to the bazaars of Samarkand and Bukhara. They were mainly bought by Uzbeks and Tajiks.

Nurota carpets were used in Samarkand residents' houses and teahouses, and such products could be found in many peasant houses located in the regions from Mitan to Samarkand. According to carpet sellers, many Nurota carpets were taken to the carpet markets of Samarkand and sold in the pre-revolutionary period. In local markets, they were known as Nurota's "white tov" carpets. The popularity of Nurota carpets in the markets of Samarkand region increased a little especially in the period before the First World War [11].

V.G. Moshkova stated that merchants and rich Kazakhs in the southern part of Karatash (located in Oktog's region adjacent to the Zarafshan oasis) increased their income by buying carpets and selling unsaleable carpets and old items as speculators [8]. But during the difficult years of the First World War and the Civil War, the production of carpet products in this area decreased significantly. The lack of wool and dyes, the lack of the possibility of free sale of products caused a slowdown in the production of carpets in this area.

If we pay attention to the history of the study of this issue, we can see that in the 30s and 40s of the 20th centuries, the number of women weaving feather carpets in the villages decreased. In this regard, V.G. Moshkova wrote that she visited many households to get to know the lifestyle of Nurota Turkmens. It is noteworthy that older women (at least 40 years old) recorded in their works that they were engaged in weaving feather carpets.

In the 19th century, Nurota was a large village, the center of the Nurota province of the Bukhara Emirate, and its embroidery was famous everywhere; Moreover, "many consider Nurota embroidery to be the highest achievement of this branch of Central Asian folk decorative art". It is related to Bukhara with a certain direction in the creative style of professional decorative artists. In this regard, O. Sukhareva quite rightly singles out the "Bukhara-Nurota stylistic group" whose main features are "a rich pictorial diapa of soft, quiet tones zone, smaller decorative forms, their richness and variety, less stylized decorative patterns, compositional distribution of borders, complex technique of compositional solution" [12].

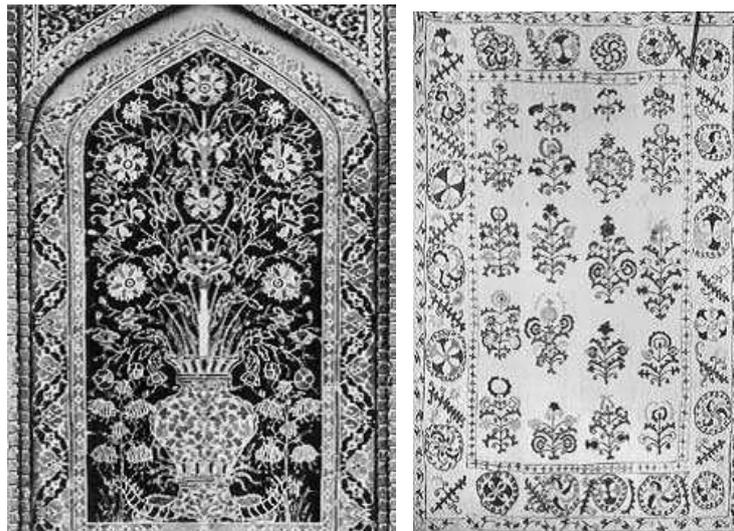
Despite the similarity of some compositions, for example, lace compositions such as tobadoni (bandi-rumi), Nurota's embroidery shows an invariable connection to one favorite theme - the image of lush flower bushes. At the same time, the skill of local artists lies in their amazing ability to create countless options based on one standard theme, surprising each time with unexpected finds. This variability was related to both the compositional solution and the interpretation of floral motifs - bushes or bouquets.

Nurota artisan women made almost all known types of embroidery: *sozana*, *nim sozana*, *joynamaz*, *takiyapush*, *sandal-push*, *dastorpech*, *acha-bacha* sets (mirror-bag and shona-bag), *bogcha* (*bugdhjoma*). *Sozana* is the most popular group.

The typical Nurota composition is centered, characterized by large, intricately designed, fringed or star-shaped, large "*bugdhjoma*" bushes (bouquet) "*growing*" from the four corners of the central square to the medallion. The background, devoid of the main pattern, is also filled with smaller bushes and willow motifs located parallel to the

embroidery field, and the filling is much sparser, giving lightness and airiness to the whole artistic solution. One option is to use the same bouquet bushes in the center instead of a medallion. The word in the Rickmers (Museum of Ethnology, Berlin) collection is very distinctive, and is used as a central medallion in a square with three round rosettes in its background; large flower bushes are placed along the entire perimeter of the rectangle.

The size and composition of the bushes in Nurota's word cannot be counted - lush green, oval, leaf patterns drawn with a thin line, in the form of elegant, long flowering branches. The number of flowers in one bush varies from 3-25 or more, up to 40; some of them had very real prototypes: china-flower - carnations, flower sausar - iris, etc. The number of bushes was different each time and did not repeat each other in detail, it could reach up to 20 in one embroidery. It is interesting that one of the bushes is depicted with green flowers and red leaves; this technique can be interpreted as a deliberate disorder similar to incompletely patterned pieces. Such a violation of the usual order could be interpreted as follows: "Only God is ideal, it is human nature to make mistakes"; at the same time, changing the usual color scheme attracted the eye and thus avoided the evil eye (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Flower bouquets and bushes are traditional and widespread motifs in the art of Uzbekistan. A fragment of the mosaic covering of the Madrasah of Abdulaziz Khan (Bukhara, 1652) and the Nurota sozana with king-king composition, early 20th century, collection of the Bukhara State Museum-Reserve of Art and Architecture

The genesis of the central compositions is focused on the lachak-turundj scheme mentioned above, but the draftsmen adapt it to their own taste and replace the corner quarters of the medallions - the lachak with flower bushes. It should be noted that such a unique solution of the medallion-bush composition is also known in Iranian ("afshar", "geris") and Azerbaijani ("*khanlig*" or "*ag chichekler*") carpets - they also use the medallion scheme. together with bouquets sprinkled with white flowers placed in vases. Regardless

of whether this scheme is original or unique, the overall artistic solution shows the boundless creative imagination of Nurotai draftsmen. Thus, the flowers differ in shape, size and the detail of choosing threads of different colors that set the rhythm of the design. The embroidery is attractive due to the slight asymmetry of the design, the different sizes of the bush, even when, according to the idea, they should be the same - in this discomfort and disproportion, one can see the impressive simplicity of the people.

The "flower bush" motif is a traditional and widespread element found across various forms of art in Uzbekistan, including architectural ceramics, tableware, wall paintings, and textiles. As a symbolic derivative of the "tree of life," this motif embodies the themes of growth, blossoming, and abundance, making it particularly relevant in the context of wedding celebrations. The composition, featuring bushes, is popularly referred to as "*chor shohu yak-moh*" [13] ("four horns and a moon") by the local population. This name reflects a deeper cultural significance: female artisans integrated a formal professional technique associated with divine symbolism, imbuing it with a more accessible, poetic meaning tied to ideas of fertility and flourishing. The prominence of this composition can be attributed to the central role that flowers played in both pre-Islamic ritual practices and Islamic artistic traditions, as previously mentioned.

In contrast to Bukhara motifs, Nurota floral motifs are simple, sometimes natural and naturally represent the local flora, but this simplicity is their diversity.

Such forms are known here as *guli hafrang* (seven-colored flower), *guli kashtark* (eight-petaled flower), *hibcha bakhmal* (velvet flower), *guli olicha* (cherry flower), *guli guza* (cotton flower), *guli chinda-khiyool*. The most famous ones are real-imaginary *zaboncha* (carnations depicted in the form of a palmette or rosette, with thin processes - *zaboncha* tongues between the petals, giving the flower a detailed, complex shape), *guli zanjira* (chain). small flowers, border pattern), hoof (horse track) - palmette with half a leaf.

Among the words of this group, there are exclusives made to order - this is an example of an unusually complex, saturated with flower bushes, filling the entire area of the central square. What makes it unusual are two bushes with blue flowers (blue indigo was a very labor-intensive and rarely used dye), as well as the presence of gold thread in the details (private collection).

Also unique is the 19th-century "*sozani*" in the collection of the State Art Museum (Tashkent), which, in addition to the bushes, also includes four bouquets (with similar decorative embroidery) in vases located on each side of the medallion. in the collection of the State Museum of Art of Oriental Peoples). The vases are placed on lyagans (flat vessels), with two pomegranates on each side; The bouquet itself consists of six large and many small flowers and leaves, in which one can guess the real shapes - irises and carnations. The overall solution of the embroidery composition impresses with the artist's skill and imagination. It is easy to notice that all the above-mentioned motifs, symbols of fertility - flowers, leaves, bouquets, bushes, pomegranates, vases are combined as the image of the womb, medallions as a star idea. patronage - helps to increase the magical power of embroidery many times.

The design of the word borders of this group is also focused on Bukhara traditions: "*chor-chirog*" and "*gerati*" chain motifs are used. The further development of "*Chor Shahu yak-mokh*" composition moves away from classical schemes and in the direction of simplification. A variant with a narrow border and a medium field appears in which many and various flowering bushes are placed around the medallion in rows or in the form of a checkerboard - a king-king and moon-moon composition (the moon embodied in the branches), or king-king - branches without a medallion. The free light background of the field is still important, which gives the overall composition elegance and elegant beauty.

The simplification of the decor did not weaken its magical power: flowers, blossoming branches and their like took part in wedding ceremonies, for example, when the bride was dressed on her wedding day, the threads of her robes were wrapped with the help of fruit sticks [14]. One of the unique features of Nurota embroidery is the inclusion of various zoomorphic and object patterns in decorative floral compositions; this style is very characteristic of folk art. Each object or image always had a hidden meaning that was understandable to beginners. For example, the image of ablution jugs "*aftoba-nuska, kuzacha-nuska*" is widely used to decorate prayer rooms. We see the image of a peacock in one of the embroideries in the collection of the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan (Tashkent). The design attracts with its combination of primitiveness and ingenuity - the feathers are transmitted in many lines, which makes the silhouette of the bird look like a fish bone, and the idea of a luxurious tail is decorated with three long feathers. The semantics of this image in different cultural traditions was unclear. If we talk about general meanings, in Zoroastrianism the peacock is a symbol of the Sun, and the image of Anahita is also associated with it; in Islam, the peacock is a bird of paradise associated with ideas of happiness (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The image of a peacock in embroidery was undoubtedly associated with the concept of a happy and prosperous life for the newlyweds and was an attribute of wealth.

In folk embroidery, the image of this royal bird was associated with the concept of a happy and prosperous life for the newlyweds, and was also an attribute of a rich life - it is known that these birds were bred nearby. In the ancient Navoi region, Bukhara was renowned for the Amir Gardens, while Nurota embroidery often depicts small bird figures, likely representing the mythological Simurgh, adorned with enigmatic curls or spheres on their backs. This iconography is believed to echo ancient Zoroastrian customs, wherein small oil lamps were placed on clay bird figures to kindle sacred fires. In pre-Islamic times, such statues of revered birds or animals were often placed in ossuary chambers as a part of burial rites. Despite the antiquity of these practices, their essence persists in various conservative art forms; small lamps can still be observed on birds' backs, not only in Uzbek embroidery but also in Turkmen carpets and jewelry.

Uzbekistan's tradition of crafting clay figurines is rich and varied; certain pieces served as lamps, while others functioned as both lamps and whistles, often used in rain-invoking rituals. Throughout the twentieth century, whistle toys were produced across multiple Uzbek regions, with the small village of Uba near Vobkent in the Bukhara region home to the renowned craftsman Hamro Rahimova, whose legacy continues with artisan Kubaro Babaeva becoming a noted center for such creations. Mid-twentieth-century bird figurines crafted by folk potters often featured a distinct protrusion on their backs, symbolic yet sometimes replaced by the image of another creature, such as a bird positioned atop a horse. The original Zoroastrian symbolism has largely faded, yet the amuletic significance of these lamps, associated with animals and birds, remains intact. Additionally, some animals underwent a demonization process, transforming into menacing figures a phenomenon reflecting the ideological tensions between pre-existing and emergent religious beliefs (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** In my research, I have found that the image of a peacock in embroidery was undoubtedly linked to notions of a joyful and prosperous life for newlyweds, symbolizing an attribute of wealth and well-being.

Within the Nurota embroidery held in the collection of the State Art Museum, the depiction of a saddled horse appears within a fenced enclosure an emblem of household prosperity. Positioned along the border of the central field, this motif remains subtly embedded, revealing itself only upon closer examination. The invention of the artist, who skillfully "*fixed*" the horse figurine in the triangular sector allocated for it, sacrificing of

the concept of "*stability*," along with the segmentation of the figurine into multi-colored rhombuses resembling an embroidery composition, draws particular interest for its antiquity. Each rhombus is centered with a distinct white dot a classic symbol representing fertility, procreation, and the "*sown field*". These motifs, akin to hidden signs, often blend seamlessly into the intricate interweaving of leaves and flowers, enhancing their intended mystical effect. By the early 20th century, however, the ornamental complexity of Nurota embroidery begins to wane, with a noticeable simplification of designs and a reduction in both the number and variety of plant motifs, only 19th century samples have been preserved. This shows that the traditions formed in this wonderful center were developed at an unusually high level. Different floral patterns become the same type of circles; the border design uses the usual wavy line - *tanobak* (rope) pattern or *bibi-naqsh* pattern (grandmother pattern) - the simplest design of a flower with a leaf. Nevertheless, the general benevolent meaning of floral motifs remains understandable at any time and in any cultural situation (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Elmira Gul. Gardens of Heaven and Gardens of Earth (embroidery of Uzbekistan hidden meaning of sacred texts) –Москва: Mardjani Foundation, 2013

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** In general, carpet traditions of Nurota Turkmens are a product of ethnoculture formed over a long period of time, and are the result of creative artistic activity of the people who lived in this area at the same time. Undoubtedly, it can be seen that not only the Turkic peoples of the oasis, but also the culture of other people's found their expression in the carpet weaving traditions of the Nurota mountain range residents. **Implication :** The local people's carpet art traditions are complex and varied. **Limitation :** Today, the demand for modern type carpets in the domestic industry is increasing day by day, but the demand for hand woven carpets and palos is disappearing. **Future Research :** Therefore, in order to further improve it, it is necessary to research more branches of the traditional material culture of the people of the Nurota mountain range together with the carpet weaving tradition. For this, it is necessary to preserve, develop and, if necessary, bring to the level of a brand on the scale of international relations the ancient methods of hand-made carpets and palos.

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