



ANDIJAN EMBROIDERY: REVIVING FORGOTTEN PATTERNS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23276615>

Abstract: This article examines Uzbek embroidery as a national cultural heritage, outlines the general characteristics of the Tashkent, Nurata and Fergana embroidery schools, and discusses the near disappearance of this tradition in the Andijan region. Based on the author's research into the patterns, colors and history of Andijan embroidery, large, widely spaced motifs and bright color combinations are identified as its main distinguishing features. The article also considers the symbolism of the pomegranate, pepper, palak and tulip motifs and of colors, the importance of stitching on natural silk, adras and atlas fabrics, the potential of embroidery as a home-based profession and source of income for women, and the demand for it among foreign tourists.

Keywords: embroidery, Andijan embroidery, national heritage, symbolism of patterns, natural silk, handicrafts, master-apprentice tradition, tourism

Introduction

Embroidery is an art form of the Uzbek people that has been formed over centuries, embodying aesthetic taste, historical memory, and worldview. In the 19th century, suzanis were made as an integral part of the bride's dowry; that is, the embroidery was a symbol of the family and the bond between generations. Uzbek embroidery is divided into regional schools, and each school has its own pattern language, color harmony, and sewing techniques [2, 3].

Nevertheless, the status of this heritage is not the same in all regions. Andijan embroidery has been relatively overlooked by specialists, and the number of people engaged in traditional embroidery in the region has significantly decreased. The purpose of the article is to highlight the unique features of Andijan embroidery, the symbolism of patterns and colors, and to summarize practical experience in restoring disappearing examples.

EMBROIDERY SCHOOLS IN UZBEKISTAN

In traditional descriptions, the Tashkent embroidery school is distinguished by large circular central patterns (palak) and the plant-like ornaments surrounding them [3]. The Nurata school is known for its combination of large and compact forms and bright, saturated colors [3, 4]. In the embroidery of the Fergana Valley, a continuity of floral-vegetable compositions, delicate embroidery, and craftsmanship traditions is noticeable [4]. Although these schools differ from each other in pattern structure, ground color, and sewing methods, they constitute a unified system of general Uzbek embroidery.

CURRENT STATE OF ANDIJAN EMBROIDERY

Andijan region is rich in handicraft traditions. For example, in 2025, the Andijan skullcap was registered as a geographical indication [6]. However, the situation in the field of embroidery is different: today in Andijan, there are almost no regular practitioners of

traditional embroidery, old samples are disappearing from families, and their patterns have not been systematically studied.

To fill this gap, the young artist is conducting in-depth research into the patterns, colors, and history of Andijan embroidery. The author was born and raised in an ordinary rural family in the Andijan district and today has achieved significant results in the field of embroidery. She is a student of the famous teacher Madina Kasybayeva and has taught the secrets of embroidery to more than 200 students. Training courses have been organized in four districts of the Andijan region. In 2024, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) won a grant of 75 million soums, and the Andijan regional administration allocated several grants and additional support for the development and restoration of embroidery.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF ANDIJAN EMBROIDERY

According to the author's practical observations and research, the main difference in Andijan embroidery lies in the size and rarity of the patterns: the flowers are presented in a large form, a free ground is maintained between them, and the composition is not densely filled. The second important feature is the extensive use of bright, saturated colors. These features are shown in Figures 1 and 2. It should be noted that this conclusion currently relies on the author's field and workshop experience and should be further reinforced by archival and museum materials in subsequent studies.



Figure 1. Sample of Andijan embroidery: large, sparsely arranged floral-sun patterns (author's archive)



Figure 2. Sample of Andijan embroidery: central circle pattern and bright red color (author's archive)

SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF PATTERNS AND COLORS

Every pattern in the embroidery carries a unique meaning. The pomegranate flower is seen as a symbol of family, children, and blessings. In embroidery, almond, pepper, pomegranate, petal, and tulip flowers are primarily used. According to the traditional interpretation, the pepper is perceived as a symbol that protects from the evil eye, performs a protective function, the palak is a symbol of the sun and sky in the form of a circle, and the tulip is a symbol of spring and beauty [5]. Colors also have a symbolic meaning: red is considered a symbol of strong, determined people, which is why it is the most frequently used color in embroidery.



Figure 3. Pomegranate and tulip patterns, made of natural silk (production of the author's workshop)



Figure 4. Circular sun pattern, red ground (production of the author's workshop)

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURAL FABRICS AND EMBROIDERY

Traditional embroidery is sewn with natural silk threads on fabrics such as silk, adras, and atlas. These materials are 100% natural, comfortable for human skin, and environmentally friendly. Embroidering is a delicate task that requires high concentration and regular hand movements. According to the observation of practitioners, such small and rhythmic movements help to strengthen mental calm, patience and concentration. Of course, separate medical and psychological studies are necessary for rigorous scientific conclusions regarding the impact of embroidery on health. Nevertheless, this activity undoubtedly fosters patience, diligence, and aesthetic taste in women.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF EMBROIDERY

Embroidery can be practiced at home, allowing women to earn a stable income without being separated from their families. According to the author's experience, national embroidery is in high demand among foreign tourists: unique items made by hand from natural silk have both cultural and aesthetic value for tourists. This makes it possible not only to preserve embroidery as a heritage but also to make it part of the modern tourism and craft economy.

RESEARCH ON THE RESTORATION OF LOST EMBROIDERY

One of the author's most important works is the search, study, and restoration of lost Andijan embroidery. This process involves collecting old samples from the population, documenting patterns and colors, identifying sewing techniques, and teaching them to apprentices. Each restored specimen is not only a beautiful object but also a document that revives the lost cultural memory of the region. Through the mentor-apprentice tradition, this knowledge is passed on to the new generation.

CONCLUSION

Uzbek embroidery is an integral part of the national heritage, with its regional schools being rich and diverse. Although Andijan embroidery is characterized by large, sparse patterns and bright colors, today it is almost forgotten and little studied. Studying the symbolic meanings of patterns and colors, continuing the tradition of sewing on natural fabrics, turning embroidery into a domestic profession for women, and bringing it to the foreign market are real ways to revive this industry. In the future, it is advisable to create a systematic catalog of Andijan embroidery patterns based on archival and museum materials.

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