

Traditional Folk Art Crafts in the Culture of Contemporary Russia: Tyumen People's Carpet (XVIII – BEG. XXI Centuries)

Natalia Ivanovna Sezeva

Altai State University, Barnaul, Altai Region, Russia

Abstract: The article reveals the main stages of development of Tyumen original carpet craft, - one of the largest centers of Siberia and Russia in the XVIII – beginning of XXI centuries based on the regional (archives, documentary, expedition and art) materials. The author considers the question of ethnic origins of Tyumen national terry carpet. The main areas of distribution of the Tyumen carpet craft were identified as well as historical centers of the carpet weaving of the XVII – beginning of the XX centuries and large peasant carpet centers in the south of the Tyumen oblast of the second half of the XX century have been characterized. Special attention was paid to the analysis of the specifics of the technological and art-stylistic peculiarities (including variability and diversity of ornament-decorative motifs) of Tyumen traditional national terry carpet. Considered artel-factory period in the history of development of Tyumen carpet craft of the XX century was considered including the role of the carpet laboratory of the Moscow Research Institute of Art Industry in its revival, formation and development. The activity of Siberian Carpet Factory – the only centre for realization of the program of revival of Tyumen traditional national carpet industry - a unique artistic phenomenon at the modern stage was considered.

Key words: Archive and documentary sources • Western Siberia • Ishim • carpet craft • Carpet artels and factories • Carpet craftswomen • Tyumen terry carpet • Tyumen district • Tobolsk province • Siberian Carpet Factory • Traditions • Tyumen • Tyumen region • Technique and technology of carpet manufacturing • Carpet weaving centers • Fairs

INTRODUCTION

Tyumen national carpet is a unique phenomenon in the traditional cultural heritage of Russia. This phenomenon possesses the great artistic, spiritual, aesthetic and scientific value.

The art of Tyumen carpet hand weaving, along with other art crafts, was widespread in many villages and settlements of Tyumen district (Tobolsk province) beginning from the XVIII century. Evidences of this we found in numerous literature sources: on the pages of capital and Siberian newspapers, magazines, archival documents, numerous travel notes, letters, diaries, statistical reports and commemorative books.

Over last three centuries, the Tyumen carpet craft has undergone both brilliant periods of prosperity and years and decades of total oblivion [1].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on a complex methodology, the modern cultural concept and an interdisciplinary approach, involving the implementation of the methods of historicism, systematization, stylistic method, the method of comparison and comparative analysis. We used the some elements of the sociological method (interviews, questionnaires, photographic imaging), as well as the method of frontal mapping of the territory of the southern districts of the Tyumen oblast, which allowed the identification of the distribution of the Tyumen carpet craft, its centers and leading craftswomen and their carpets.

General

The Origin of the Tyumen Carpet: Tyumen is the first city in Siberia, founded by Russians. It was built in 1586

on the crossroads of the ancient caravan routes and great Siberian water route, opening the way to “Cold” Sea (the Arctic Ocean). The construction of new Babinovskaya road (in 1597) increased the significance of Tyumen town as the transport junction. In those days, Tyumen had a brisk trade with Bukhara and the city has inherited the trade relations of the Siberian khanate with Central Asia.

From 1596, Tyumen was annually passed by Central Asian trading caravans. Gradually, the part of Bukhara people settled in Tyumen for permanent residence. In the beginning of XVII century, Bukhara Sloboda settlement has appeared against the city, behind the Tura River.

In subsequent centuries, the Tyumen strengthened the status as a major trading and craft centre linking the markets of the Europe and the East.

The center of the commercial life of the Tyumen was annual fair, as well as lively Saturday small fairs and markets where the merchants brought the goods from fifty cities of Russia. Together with the Russian manufacture goods, the fair suggested a variety of Eastern carpets such as Bukhara long-pile carpets (dzhulkhirses), matins, felts, palaces and expensive silk fabrics.

Crowded, noisy fair allowed local handicraftsmen and merchants quickly assimilate the innovations that appeared in crafts of other regions and skillfully use their experience. It also created conditions for tight trade and cultural contacts of Russian re-settlers who arrived in Siberia from different districts of the Moscow state with the indigenous population: Tatars, Bukhara people settled in Tyumen long before the arrival of Russians. According to studies of different scientists, the interpenetration of different cultures and traditions affected the development and characteristics of the various crafts. The most striking result of symbiosis of Eastern and Russian culture in the Siberian land was the appearance of an original artistic phenomenon as Tyumen national terry carpet [2, p. 111-115].

The Historical Centers of Carpet Weaving: The destiny of the Tyumen carpet craft is related with the unique history of the Tyumen beginning from its appearance, development, the periods of greatest prosperity and decline.

The first settlers have resided in Tyumen adjacent territories creating arable lands, squatters and building the villages. A century later, the territory of Tyumen district was densely inhabited by “townsmen” and soldiers arrived from large commercial-industrial and craft cities of the Russian North and Pomorye. During this period, there

was the first center of the old-timer Russian population formed which late transformed to the largest Siberian handicraft and small-industrial district.

At the turn of XVII - XVIII centuries, the different industries related with the maintenance of Yamskoy craft have appeared in the villages located up the Tura River and its tributaries (the right bank), as well as along the Irbitskiy and Siberian tracts – the main roads in Siberia.

In the first half of the XVIII century, the carpet weaving became the widespread among peasant crafts of Tyumen district. The carpets were so famous that were called “Tyumenian”. This is confirmed by the archive materials and literary sources.

The earliest documentary evidence on the production of carpets was found in the proceedings of the Tyumen custom. For example, Tyumen townsman Gregory Reshetnikov declared 10 carpets of “karmatskoe” production in the customs among other goods, on September 30, 1724 [3, p. 36]. Since the 30’s of the XVIII century, the carpets of “Tyumen” production has already been delivered throughout Siberia and sold at major Russian fairs.

Along with archive materials, the notes about “Tyumen” carpets were found in the works of the participants of the Siberian academic expeditions, famous scientists and travelers of the XVIII century such as G.F. Miller, I.P. Falk, I.G. Georg and I.I. Lepekhin.

At the beginning of the XIX century, the craftwork was very profitable and the production of terry carpets and horsecloths “for own needs and for sale” engaged almost all villages and settlements located along the main route in Kamenskaya, Troitskaya and Uspenskaya volosts of Tyumen district. This is evidenced by the numerous articles, essays, statistical surveys and collections on artisanal and handicrafts of the Tobolsk province of those years.

In the second half of the XIX century, the Siberian carpet craft experiences the period of greatest prosperity becoming a local landmark and pride of the region.

Sometimes whole villages and towns of the Tyumen district were engaged into the manufacture of carpets. If carpet production counted 20 thousand pieces in 1864, their production increased until 50 thousand up to 1884. During the period from 1885 to 1891, 34 villages were engaged into to the carpet production and joined other 24, thus where the carpeted craft production totally engaged 3.780 people. According to S. Davydova [4, p. 295]: “Non of the center of carpet production in European Russia had such great number of skilled craftswomen”.

Tyumen carpets produced using lint-free and terry technique include the wide variety of carpet goods for benches, chests, tables, woolen palace-paths, colored strips of carpet and rugs widely used in the interior of the Siberian peasant's hut. The carpets performed sacred, utilitarian and aesthetic functions transfiguring the space of a house and determined the spatial-figurative structure of its inhabitants [5].

The products of craftswomen from the rich trading villages Kamenskoe and Uspenskoe (Karmatskoe), as well as the Kulakovo village – the largest carpet centers of the Tyumen district were especially valued due to “the clean finish and durability of the paints”.

The Global Triumph of the Tyumen Carpet and the Formation of Artistic and Stylistic Peculiarities: At the end of XIX – beginning of XX century, Tyumen carpet craft with triumphant success represented the Tobolsk province in all major Russian and international handicraft-industrial exhibitions in Moscow (1895), Kurgan (1895), Nizhny Novgorod (1896), Paris (1900), Omsk (1910), Genoa (1913) and St. Petersburg (1902; 1913).

Due to the assistance of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and the Ministry of State Property, a large collection of Tyumen carpets was shown on the first and second All-Russian handicraft exhibitions in St. Petersburg (in 1902 and 1913). The organizers of these large-scale exhibitions aimed to acquaint Russian and foreign people with “the best samples of Russian artistic handicraft work” [6].

The names of many of Tyumen craftswomen, whose works were awarded prizes and awards, can be found in the documentary evidences, catalogues of exhibitions and newspaper articles. Their creative work is the result of continuous development of carpet weaving throughout the XIX century.

Tyumen terry carpet and its artistic peculiarities invariably conquered both the public and specialists-experts. Generally, the black ground of the carpet contained in various combinations of scarlet and purple-crimson roses or poppies with green leaves and buds. This traditional motif always varied, however all variants can be divided into two main groups. The first group characterized by a large bouquet of flowers in the centre of carpet framed by the emerald green leaves. The pattern repeated in the corners in reduced dimensions or spread single bright roses and poppies. This carpet was bordered by narrow line or ornamental selvedge. The second group of carpets contained typical wide flower selvedge on a black background and the central ground was filled with the small bright flowers framed by

green leaves and branches. Thus, Tyumen terry carpets had high pile and differed by riot of colors that shaded each other, revealed the strong sides of the pattern saving the general color spectrum. Russian native preference to the brightness of paints and flowery pattern has influenced these carpets revealing the national identity.

Artel-Factory Period in the Development of the Tyumen Carpet Craft: The XX century was one of the brightest and complex periods in the history of the Tyumen carpet craft [7].

In 1929, carpet-weaving artel “Kovernitsa” was organized in the Kamenskoe village – center of carpet production. Terry and smooth carpets with diverse artistic design were the main products of Siberian craftswomen. Along with the traditional folk patterns – “checker”, “circle” and “rose”, the carpets contained the plenty of flowers, thematic and ornamental drawings specific for terry carpets produced at the end of XIX – beginning of XX century.

In the late 1940s, the carpet weaving in the village of Kamianske gradually faded and artistic traditions were interrupted due to the reorganization of artel “Kovernitsa” and transfer of the head production facilities in Tyumen. Later, the carpet artels (factories from 1960) were organized in Tobolsk, Ishim and Yalutorovsk. Within a few decades (until their closure in the 1990s), the artists, art historians and technologists of the Moscow Research Institute of Art Industry has made a great contribution to Siberian carpet artels and factories.

In these years, the factories have largely extended the range of products: along with wall carpets, they produced the large and small carpets to decorate the floors, sofas and chairs. New floral, geometric and thematic carpets were designed using the drawings created by local carpet-makers and the author's sketches of the leading artists of the Institute. The best of these carpets have retained the specificity of the local national carpet: bright floral ornament on a black background with a great variety of plant motifs [8].

Wide demand for the products of carpet factories and the desire to bring the rural interior to the urban in the 1950s – 1960s, had an enormous influence on the further development of Tyumen national (peasant) carpet craft and contributed to the revival of old and new carpet centers.

Public Centers of Carpet Weaving. The Second Half of the XX Century: In the second half of the XX century, the centers of carpet weaving included the many villages and settlements of Omutinskiy, Isetsky,

Golyshmanovskiy, Uporovskiy, Armizonskiy and Berdyuzhkiy regions of the south of Tyumen oblast. In XIX century, there was the most significant and brisk handicraft district throughout Western Siberia. The reserves of own raw materials (wool, flax and hemp) and the availability of experienced craftswomen migrated from the largest weaving centers of Voronezh, Kursk, Orel, Smolensk and Vladimir provinces, have contributed to the development of handmade carpet weaving.

Carpet Origin: The entire process of creation of Tyumen terry carpet is slightly changed: the same ordinary peasant horizontal weaving machine, instruments, types of raw materials (hand spin wool, cotton threads for base and strong, very harmonious natural dyes and later – aniline or in local language “buksins”) and the same technique of weaving.

The carpets have always been produced by the woman’s hands. As in the past, the village craftswomen treated fleece themselves. It was “dismantled” by color to the spring and autumn type according to the time of shearing, rinsed, dried and hackled in autumn and winter and only after that, the weavers spin it using the spinning wheel or hand-spinning wheel. Spun wool thread then was unwound on swifts into the hanks or large “hanks” of a certain size and weight and convenient for further preparation for weaving - dyeing of woolen yarn. However, first of all, the craftswomen the carefully thought over pattern and then accordingly dyed the wool into the bright colors to receive the neat and multicolor carpets. The brightest colors and loud patterns were usually chosen for the furry and soft terry carpets. Stained in desired color and wound hanks of thick woolen yarn then was cut on the “ends” (zhichki) with a length approximately 4 to 6 cm, to knit pile nodes. The technique - pining of wool nodes (components of worth) gave the opportunity to complete the pattern of various colored shades. Approximately 30 shades were used for weaving of handmade carpet. Their number depends on the complexity of the ornament and composition.

In late winter or early spring, almost every peasant’s family have established a loom “Krosna” in the house. Device of the mill was rather complicate and required sufficient experience and skills as well as a sense of rhythm, beauty and symmetry. Since childhood, women have learned the traditional skills of weaving, improving their skills from the carpet to carpet varying the patterns and color of the carpets and brining their own understanding of beauty. The artistic merit of the Tyumen terry carpets depended on both the skill of carpet-makers and the quality of wool, dyes and patterns.

Decorative and Ornamental Motifs of Tyumen National

Carpet: The effect of the bright flower pattern on the traditional black ground was one of the favorite decorative techniques in the Siberian carpet weaving of XIX – beginning of XX century. This technique was developed (applied) further in carpet products village carpet-masters of the second half of the XX century.

Splendid and bright flower bouquet in center and freely twisted selvedge around the edge were typical for the composition, which allowed implementation of infinite variety of decorative motifs in the pattern.

Every local district possessed own interpretations of traditional ornamental, decorative motifs and compositions. Siberian carpet-masters achieved the great virtuosity in design development creating numerous patterns and techniques. This originality attaches special artistic value to the works of different carpet centers.

However, despite this diversity in patterns, compositions and colors, the Tyumen national carpets possess the common features specific for all regions such as monumentality, specific splendor (a type of a “people’s neo-baroque”), the dynamic and uplifting. This is explained by the strict logic and reasoning of composite design, accuracy of selected forms, understanding of ornamentality as a balance of the colors with deeply saturated bright sounding.

The talented rural carpet-masters are related with the craftswomen of the XIX - XX centuries in devotion to the art, a deep understanding of work specificity and amazing ability to work together. Collective creativity is one of the most remarkable features of the Tyumen carpet weaving.

CONCLUSIONS

The Features of Present Conditions of the Tyumen

Carpet Industry: One of the main conditions for the existence of any national craft is the preservation and development of specific traditions formed over the centuries, learned and passed from generation to generation [9].

The art of handmade carpet weaving, having experienced periods of prosperity and decline, preserved in the traditional form in terms of materials, technique of weaving and artistic-stylistic techniques [10].

In present, Siberian Carpet Factory is the only center for the implementation of the program of revival of a unique artistic phenomenon – Siberian carpet craft. Before the revolution, there was a carpet workshop in Ishim city, which reorganized into the carpet artel in the 1940s and later to the factory. “Siberian Carpet Factory” organized in the Ishim city in 2001, has continued the

traditions of predecessors and was reconstructed and newly equipped. At the same time, the factory has retained skilled professionals – hereditary carpet-masters.

Serious search for assortment and artistic priorities have began immediately after reorganization of the factory. Despite the innovations, Siberian Carpet Factory remains always in the circle of problems of the traditional Siberian carpet production. This is a result of changes in the traditional canons developed for centuries and the tendency to introduce the new features into traditions, striving for innovations caused by the rhythm of present times. However, the carpet craft is firmly rooted in the present. Natural and organic unity of traditions and innovations are the basis of the unique and original style of the carpets produced by Siberian Carpet Factory. This provides with opportunity to revive the traditional carpet craft by direct succession of the skills [11, p. 230-234].

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