

## Development Of National Knife Schools (In The Case Of Ferghana Valley Knife Schools)

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**Abstract:** In this article, the directions and problems of the national knife schools are highlighted from the historical and ethnological point of view, using the example of the Fergana Valley knife schools. In particular, information is provided on the problems that prevent the development of knifemaking centers.

**Keywords:** national knife schools, strong steel and animal horns used in knife making, Chust knife factory, knife blade watering, comma line, knife wheel.

### INTRODUCTION.

Craft production is considered one of the main factors of the development of society, and these people are considered as a social class with a special position. Therefore, over the centuries, under the influence of various factors, national craft industries have been improving [1]. Although the knife-making centers of the Fergana Valley are known for their high-quality knives not only in the regional markets, but also in the whole of Central Asia and a number of distant countries, but the economic relations during the colonial period had a negative impact on the development of the industry. Later, that is, during the Russian Empire and Soviet colonialism, there was a view of national knives as a cold weapon. This was caused by the comma line opened in order to strengthen the flexibility of national knives. In fact, there were also dagger-type knives made as cold weapons, but these types of knives were not made by local craftsmen. [2]. In addition, the structure of artels in the knife industry during the period of Soviet colonialism had a negative impact on the development of the industry. [3].

One of the processes that undermined the development of knifemaking schools and the master-apprentice tradition was the opening of artels and training schools in the regions. In

particular, in Chust first the "Qizil kuch" artel was built (1932), then a knife production plant was built (1970), and a production combine was established (1978). The production of more than 100 types of knives, daggers, swords and other types of edged products has been launched at the Chust knife factory. [4].

However, the development of national knifemaking in the country did not stop completely. It is worth noting that since the first years of independence in Uzbekistan, national crafts, cultural heritage of the people, restoration of traditions and national values, support of craftsmen have been raised to the level of state policy. Thanks to the implemented reforms, knife-making centers in the Fergana Valley, Samarkand, Tashkent, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya and Khorezm regions continued their activities freely and ensured that they became important in the formation of national knife-making schools. After independence, the activities of knifemaking schools such as Chust, Shahrikhan, Karasuv, Ko'kan, Khiva, Tashkent, Poitug' again rose to a new level. [5].

Generally, researchers divide Central Asian knives into two types based on the structure of the blade. The first one is divided into northern and the second one is divided into southern regions. The

Fergana Valley, being located in the center of two regions, embodies both northern and southern traditions. Knives made in Fergana Valley knifemaking centers have their own characteristics as well as the structure of the blade. The products made in the knifemaking schools in Chust and Shahrikhan in the Fergana Valley are mainly made in five different forms. In particular, khaki, kashkarcha (dagger blade), willow leaf, straight and Kazakh knives are made in a special form [6]. It is also distinguished by the fact that a single type of knife is made in the Fergana Valley. For example, it has become a tradition for the masters of the Chust School of Knifemaking to make keel knives with the tip of the blade slightly raised. Due to this, among the people, such types as Chust knife, Shahrikhan knife, Andijan knife, Kokan knife, Karasuv knife appeared. Knives made by the masters of the Shahrikhan and Chust school of knives are distinguished by the high quality of the metal from which the blade is made [7].

There are 87 different ways to make a single knife, and only when all of them are done, the knife is ready. One of the things that makes Valley Knifemaking different from other knifemaking centers in the region is the emphasis placed on the irrigation process. If the knife is watered low, its sharpness will decrease, if it is saturated with high water, it will cause the blade to crack. Therefore, watering the knife is considered the most complicated process. Only the master himself could determine that the knife was properly watered by the condition of the metal. If the blade is watered in moderation, it will not break and lose its sharpness for up to 40 years. The process of watering the blade differed regionally. For example, the masters of Shahrikhan watered the knife once, and the Chusts several times, and achieved the desired result. After that, with the help of Rishta Egov, a stream was opened in Tig [8]. The knife made in this way was distinguished by its sharpness and durability.

Today, one of the distinguishing methods of the Fergana Valley knifemaking schools is the process of preparing the handle part of the knife. In the Fergana Valley, it has become a tradition to make knife handles from wood and from animal horns. Generally, valley knives are known for their sharp bladed blades. Later, these traditions disappeared with the decrease of food. Local craftsmen mainly used animal horns to make knives with a pointed handle.

There are also some differences in the unique design of the handle of the valley knives. For example, there are differences in the designs given to the parts of the heel by the Kokan craftsmen. In Shahrikhan and Chust, the handle of the knife is somewhat stronger, its wreath is decorated with a unique "taginishon" pattern, the core nails on the handle are reinforced with "halmekha" nails, and a turquoise ring is installed on the handle. This aspect is especially evident in the Karasuv knifemaking center in the valley. In Karasuv, craftsmen set a red, blue, and yellow lock on the handle of a knife, and in Shahrikhan, they set an "eye" from a blue precious stone obtained from a stream called "zaharmura", and then a white wire nail was hammered between them. Around such a flower, a small hole is made with a drill and a yellow copper wire is made. This method is called "Chelmekhagul" method and has been used since ancient times [9].

Today, the craft of knife making in the valley is developing and progressing, the demand for national products is increasing from local and foreign tourists. A number of reforms are being implemented in our country aimed at the development of handicraft industries. However, today there are a number of reasons that prevent the development of modern knife craft and the development of national schools.

There are also some problems in the development of the knife industry and meeting the demands for a

number of products. One of these is the lack of animal horns used to make knife handles. Nowadays, finding animal horns is becoming more and more a problem for knife craftsmen. Because there are no shops selling animal horns in centers where knifemaking is developed. Masters turn mainly to butchers to find horns and marrow bones of domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, and goats. In this way, the need for this is satisfied to a certain extent. But it is very difficult to find horns of animals such as alkar, rhinoceros, deer, and moose. Tourists from abroad pay special attention to the naturalness of the handle of the knife, which causes the price of the knife to rise to a certain extent. The horns of these animals are brought by hunters from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and sold on the black market.

Local knife makers exchange this product for money or for products of their own making. Usually, imported antlers are dried in knife workshops for 3-4 years, after which they are used to make a handle. [10].

One of the next problems in the development of the national knife industry is the entry of counterfeit products into our country. The market of handmade knives is suffering due to counterfeit products imported from China. Local businessmen put the quality mark "Chust" and "Shahrikhan" on the knives imported from China and sell them in Uzbekistan at a reduced price..

Since counterfeit knives come with wooden handles, the handles are removed and, for a fee, traditional animal horn handles are installed. The Chinese products with a handle have special marks of knifemaking centers such as Chust, Shahrikhan, Ko'kan, images such as crescent and star, cotton, wheat typical of national knifemaking. [11]. All processes characteristic of local knifemaking were carried out on knives imported from China.

Usually, this knife is not only made of grass, because "Halolak", bouquets, and chelmekha

flowers are printed on them. As a result, only real masters can distinguish the finished knife from the products made by local craftsmen. Ordinary people can't distinguish between local and foreign tourists and keep buying knives. In this way, it damages the traditions of national knifing that have been passed down from generation to generation. It can be seen that the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan "On Support of Applied Art" and the "Law on Copyright" are causing violations of legal documents.

Craftsmen use the strongest metals to make national knives. Finding such metals is one of the obstacles in the development of knifemaking today, because the sharpest and strongest knives are made of oboyam, valves and egos. Local butchers also pay close attention to the metals the product is made of when purchasing a knife. Today, there are no stores that sell such strong metals in areas where knifemaking is developed. Blacksmiths search for strong metals at flea markets.

That is why it is difficult to make strong and sharp knives. Non-ferrous metals such as copper, tin, and lead are obtained from auto repair shops and flea markets.

Generally, the art of making a knife is a complex process that involves heating the metal, hammering it, and stamping it to sharpen the blade. It was mentioned above that there are 13 different ways of sharpening a knife, but today's knives used in knife workshops are imported from China, which makes them expensive. The price of one big wheel is 1-1.2 million soums.

Such problems did not stop the national knife art. The demand for knives made by local master knifemakers remained high. Knives produced in Uzbekistan are not only a household and household item, but also rise to the level of a national work of art, which is why they are valued as the most valuable gift for foreign tourists.

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