

Soltanbayeva G.,
Dr., Assoc. Prof.
Gumilyov Eurasian National
University, Kazakhstan

ORNAMENTAL ART OF KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakh ornamental art has gone through several stages of development before coming to its modern forms and characteristics. With formation of the sovereign independent state Republic Kazakhstan the traditional art has received a rebirth. Further development of ornaments goes deeper in history and uses all steppes cultural achievements.

Keywords: ornamental art, petro glyph, Saks, animal style, vegetative ornament, geometrical ornament, animalistic ornament, cosmological ornament, traditional Kazakh ornaments.

Participant of the Conference

Казахское орнаментальное искусство прошло через несколько ступеней развития до приобретения им современных форм и характеристик. С созданием суверенного независимого государства Республика Казахстан традиционное искусство получило перерождение. Дальнейшее развитие орнаментов идет по пути более детального изучения древнейшей истории и использования всех культурных достижений степи.

Ключевые слова: орнаментальное искусство, петроглиф, саки, звериный стиль, растительный орнамент, геометрический орнамент, анималистический орнамент, космологический орнамент, традиционный казахский орнамент.

Ornamental art of Kazakhstan has a very long history. It is influenced by the cultures of many nomadic and settled peoples living in the territory of ancient Kazakhstan. The history of the development of Kazakh ornament can be divided into several stages.

1. The ornament of Neolith and Bronze Ages;
2. The petro glyphs;
3. Saks (Scythian) style ornaments;
4. Arabs-Muslim style ornaments;
5. The ornaments of the Kazakh khans epoch;
6. Soviet period;
7. Modern time.

The first ornamental compositions have appeared on the territory of Kazakhstan during a neolith and bronze epoch (III-II Millennium BC). It was, first of all, simple ornaments usually found on ceramic products such as bowls, vases, jugs, pitchers. All of it was in the form of different kinds of lines, points, triangles, rhombuses, circles engraved on pottery.

The second stage in the development of Kazakh ornament can be associated with petro glyphs, the ancient paintings engraved on rocks. The petro glyphs appear on all

the territory of Kazakhstan from East to West and from South to North where one can find the mountains. There are petro glyphs from different periods of history: from the Bronze Age, Saks time, and ancient Turkic epoch. Later petro glyphs can be connected with the XV-XIX centuries during the period of the Kazakh khanstvo (kingdom of the khan). But all this petro glyphs have similar drawing themes, through the ages they practically haven't changed eventually. There are images of different kind of steppe animals such as goats, horses, deer, camels, dogs, wild boars; the mountain extinct and now present wild animals as rocks bulls, tigers, snow leopards. There are a lot of images of anthropomorphous characters - horsemen, archers, men with sun head. The rock carvings presented the scenes of hunting on horses with arches followed by the dogs, fights between men and the animals torment scenes.

The third stage of development of the Kazakh ornamental art is connected with the art works in Saks (Scythian) style (I Millennium BC). This highly decorative style also named "animal style" owing to the images of the various animals in the particular characteristic form of presenting.

A considerable quantity of the extraordinary works in Saks style has been found on the territory of Kazakhstan in burial places of Issyk and Berrel. There are anonymous golden and wooden peaces covered in gold thin sheets presenting decorative images of deer, elks, horses, mountain sheep (arkhars), and leopards. These original figures have remained in very good conditions.

The great influence on ornamental art of Kazakhs was made by Arabs-Muslim culture (XI-XVII centuries). During the penetration of Islam religion among the Kazakh people, there were built a lot of mosques and the mausoleums in steppe. There design and architect were brought from original Muslim places – Middle East. The ornament of this period characterized by development of a vegetative ornament, more decorative than own steppe geometrical ornament.

In parallel with Arabs-Muslim traditions the Kazakh ornament has formed its own way of development. During an epoch of the Kazakh khans (XV-XVIII centuries) the traditional form of the Kazakh ornament was generated. The national style in this period finds a characteristic features that allow recognizing Kazakh ornaments among others. There are a lot of examples of traditional Kazakh masterpieces in the country museums collections that belongs to XVI-II- XIX centuries. They present a great number of geometrical, vegetative, animalistic, and cosmological ornaments that now accepted as traditional Kazakh ornaments. This ornamental art developed and improved up to an establishment of the



Picture 1. Petro glyphs.

Soviet rule in Kazakhstan.

In Soviet times the Kazakh ornament hasn't undergone essential changes. Basically the historical material of XVIII - XIX centuries was used. Most often in Soviet period one can meet the ornament *koshkar muiz* (the sheep horn) symbolizing abundance and wealth. It was used as single ornament, or creates a border with a line of several symmetric ones, or makes closed shapes (square, rectangle, diamond, pentagram, etc.) ornamental compositions. Also there are a great number of variations of basic ornament *koshkar muiz*: *ai muiz* – moon horn, *arkar muiz* – mountain sheep horn, *synyk muiz* – broken horn, *tikmuiz* – straight horn, and etc. Only few ornaments were generated during the Soviet period. For example such element as wheat ears that has been connected with development of virgin lands in the central and northern Kazakhstan.

The ornamental art has received a rebirth with formation of the sovereign independent state Republic Kazakhstan. More and more national motives began to be used in various areas of design - in clothes, architecture, advertizing, etc. First of all the forgotten ornamental motifs and compositions of a traditional Kazakh ornament were bringing to life. The artists and designers began to study the ancient history and culture of Kazakh people. It was period of preservation the historical materials which have remained by miracle in museums or private collections. The scientists study ancient Kazakh architectural constructions and gravestones (*kulpytases*) from Mangystau and other regions of Kazakhstan.

The historical ornamental material, its reconsideration put a new turn to development of modern Kazakhstan design and art. The ornaments such petro glyphs and of the Saks period began to be inspiration for modern designers. And first examples were the state symbols of Kazakhstan - coat of arms and flag. The central element on the coat of arms is *shanyrak* – specifically designed dome of a *yurta* - traditional house of ancient Kazakhs-nomads that you can take with you everywhere by loading on horses and camels. *Shanyrak* is a symbol of family and its well-being for Kazakh people. Now it became a symbol of the peace, hospitality and an openness of Kazakhstan for all nations around the world. Also there are two winged race horses – *tulpars*, on the coat of arms. *Tulpars* have the long mooned horns and are stylized in specific Saks



Picture 2. Variations of basic ornament *koshkar muiz*.

animal style. Gold wings of the horses remind of sheaves of gold ears of wheat, and symbolized the work, abundance and a material richness. The national flag of the Republic of Kazakhstan has the picture of the sun with wheat - shaped beams and the eagle flouting under the sun. On the left is a vertical line of the popular national ornament *koshkar muiz*. Primary colors of national flag and the coat of arms are blue and gold. Blue color symbolized *Tengri* – god of the Sky for ancient Kazakh people. Heraldic and Kazakh interpretations of colors are the same: blue color symbolizes honesty, chastity, fidelity, faultlessness, and gold personifies power, force, riches, eminence, justice, virtue, mercy.

The popularity of the coat of arms and flag among nation has given huge potential for development of a new direction in ornamental design of Kazakhstan. First of all we see elements of the state symbols in logos of the state structures and the national companies. One of the elements which have strongly entered into ornamental design is the stylized image of *shanyrak*. It is used in sculptural compositions, in small forms of architecture, and in logos of the various Kazakhstan companies and establishments.

One of the new symbols of independent Kazakhstan is a particular symbol of its young capital Astana. The silhouette of high-rise buildings and *Baiterek* against the sky is the objects and elements of modern design. *Baiterek* is the Kazakh name for elm tree which can be connected with *Tree of Live* – the prototype of the Universe. The *Tree of Live* growing on the bank of the *River of Live* according to traditional Kazakh mythology. It penetrates all layers of life of a soul: tree roots leave deeply in the underground world, its trunk is in terrestrial, and the crone is stretching to the heavenly world. The crone of the *Tree* is holding on an egg of *Samruk* (Phoenix) – a fantastic bird, the tsar of all birds. *Samruk*'s waves of wings scatter seeds of the world which a rain and the wind carry all over the world. *Samruk* symbolizes original knowledge, identity of the creator and creation. It is a symbol of saving force, nobleness and selflessness. The egg of *Samruk* symbolizes the Sun, an origin of live, light and power.

Among the last ornaments there are a lot petro glyphs, and elements from Saks period. The designers take inspiration from a *Gold Man* from the *Issyk* burial mound near *Almaty*, one of the biggest cities of Kazakhstan. The *Gold Man* is a symbol of Independence of Kazakhstan. Golden details of its suit are used in architecture, advertizing and design. There are images of deer, mounting sheep, birds, and snow leopards with and without wings. The snow leopard traditionally had the high status. The Kazakh khans repeatedly present governors of other states live leopards or their fell that was a sign of their special respect.

Now in modern decorative art, design and architecture you can see a lot of forms and interpretations of the traditional Kazakh ornaments. The ornament becomes easier, graceful, its possibilities amaze imagination. Use of modern forms of the traditional Kazakh ornament in graphic compositions gives quite good results. The ornament doesn't look alien and brings national characteristic in design. All it has affected the further development of ornamental art of Kazakhstan. Now days the government supports cultural projects through the program "Cultural heritage" which helps to prevent and study the objects of Kazakh ancient history. All this studying will give an additional material for inspiration for young designers and bring the further development of ornamental art.

References:

1. Оразбаева Н.А. Қазақ халқының сәндік ою-өрнек өнері. Народное декоративно-прикладное искусство казахов. – Ленинград: Аврора, 1970. – 207 с.
2. Марьяшев А.Н., Горячев А.А. Наскальные изображения Семиречья. - Алматы, 2002. - 264 с.
3. Медоев А.Г. Гравюры на скалах. Сары-Арка, Мангышлак. Ч.1. - Алматы: Жалын, 1979. - 164 с.
4. Тасмағамбетов И. Кулпытас. – Астана: ОФ «Берел», 2002. – 392 с.
5. Ерофеева И.В. Символы казахской государственности. Позднее средневековье и новое время. – Алматы: «Аркаим», 2001. – 152 с.