

Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding
International Conference

New Frontiers of Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

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CONFERENCE
MATERIALS



National Museum of Ethnology



Centre
Under the auspices
of UNESCO



International Research Centre
for Intangible Cultural Heritage
in the Asia-Pacific Region



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Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

OBJECTIVES

The Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding, a platform for research promotion and cooperation established in 2022 by the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), is organizing its first international conference, 'New Frontiers of Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage'. The conference is co-organized by National Museum of Ethnology and sponsored by Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan.

Organized as an academic and interdisciplinary conference, this international event aims to explore new approaches and methodologies for research and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, reflecting the changes and developments in ICH research and safeguarding over the past 20 years since the adoption of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH. With growing awareness of the vital role ICH plays in social, economic, and environmental development, the conference covers a broad range of topics, including issues and challenges related to economic development, emergencies, gender, migration, and more, aligned with the thematic initiatives and priorities emphasized by UNESCO. The conference provides a unique platform for researchers working in these areas, both within and outside the framework of UNESCO's 2003 Convention, to gather in one place and engage in critical yet constructive discussions and exchanges of views and perspectives on the future of ICH research and safeguarding.

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Preserving Uzbekistan's Rich Heritage: Safeguarding Traditional Embroidery of Bukhara Region in the Modern Digital Age

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Uzbek embroidery compositions differ by location, although their cultural connection may be discerned by the primary characteristics of floral designs and colour selection for tracery. Six primary distinctions in embroidered art exist across the regions of Uzbekistan, as instructed in the embroidery schools of Bukhara, Samarkand, Shahrisabz, Tashkent, and Fergana. Bukhara compositions encompass critical and fundamental aspects of Uzbek needlework.

Bukhara embroidery is renowned for its intricate floral and leaf patterns characterized by round shapes embellished with branches featuring delicate, pointed angles. Embroidery schools are functioning in Gijduvon, Shofirkon, Vobkent, and Karakul districts of the Bukhara region. Various stitches are customarily employed by artisans. Embroiderers in Bukhara are special and unique in terms of its various features. One of the amazing stitches is "Chamak" stitch which is executed from left to right in parallel, with the needle and thread inserted from the right side. This stitch is mostly used to construct the framework for embroidered designs. Another one is "Baxya" suture. It is employed to secure the termini of needlework effectively. The needle is raised from the back at the initial point to form a loop.

Safeguarding and advancing Bukhara's cultural legacy is essential for sustaining the region's distinctive identity and for enhancing tourism and education. Conservation and modernization initiatives seek to guarantee that future generations can enjoy and benefit from this profound cultural heritage. The article underscores the vital nature of promoting traditional crafts, especially embroidery in Bukhara region, Uzbekistan in digital world to connect artisans with broader audiences and world markets, ultimately ensuring lasting inheritance of this valuable art form.

A SWOT analysis was undertaken to assess the current status and future prospects of Bukhara's embroidery, emphasizing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This method aids in assessing the complex dynamics influencing this traditional art form and establishes a basis for formulating strategies to preserve and promote it successfully. Below you can see the results of the SWOT analysis in Bukhara embroidery workshop:

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive work experience;• Qualified personnel;• Located on the Great Silk Road;• His creative works were exhibited in 25 countries of the world (Spain, Mali, Tunisia, Greece, France, Turkey, Germany, Japan, Pakistan, Switzerland, Austria);• More than 1500 classes, seminars, trainings were organized (most of them with the participation of international experts).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve traditional designs;• To preserve a unique art form;• Teaching and training young people;• The possibility of selling their products in markets and stores;• Participation in various national and foreign exhibitions and festivals;• Bringing artisan products to the international market;• Product Branding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 500 students; • Presence of “House-Museum”; • Included in the tourist route; • Workshops for tourists; • Ancient sewing styles. 	
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not included in the network World Craft Council; • Use of synthetic fabrics; • Shortage of raw materials and fabrics; • The Center Site has not been created; • Online sales are not established; • Weakness of promotion in social networks; • Low quality of yarn sold in the markets at the moment; • Long-term sewing of products; • Low quality of velvet fabrics on the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 Pandemic; • Automated sewing machines; • Strong competition; • Disappearance of hand-made products in quick photographs; • Young people's interest in embroidery has decreased due to heavy manual labor; • Introduction of modern technology and computers; • Disappearance of quality yarns.

Though Bukhara embroidery is alive and continuing as an art form in the region, it has significant challenges. The lack of integration into the World Craft Council is a significant concern, hindering its global visibility and support. A significant issue is the use of synthetic textiles and the diminishing quality of raw materials and velvet in the market, which undermines the authenticity and durability of the products. The digital archiving of historic patterns and techniques can conserve the craft for future generations while also rendering it accessible to academics, designers globally.

The SWOT analysis presents a complex overview of Bukhara’s embroidery, highlighting its rich heritage and the challenges it faces. To mitigate these issues, many steps may be implemented. Digital technology currently plays a crucial role in the preservation and advancement of embroidered art. With the increasing global interest in embroidered goods, Bukhara artists are innovating by designing products suited to contemporary markets. This encompasses embroidered apparel, accessories, and home decor goods that preserve traditional characteristics while catering to modern preferences. Initiatives are in progress to preserve the cultural and artistic importance of Bukhara’s embroidery. The article concludes by discussing the crucial role of collaboration between cultural institutions and local communities in ensuring the sustainability and future of Uzbek embroidery. Museums and archives of Bukhara can play an important role in collecting, preserving, and documenting traditional embroidery techniques, designs.

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