

KNIFE MAKING

Knife is the most ancient daily object of humanity and it was invented in the late Paleolithic period. Initially knife was used to prepare hunting weapons and labor devices. Settled and half settled population's demand was high for knife. Initially knife making developed as an independent branch of blacksmith in Fergana valley and have been evolved in Chust, Shahrikhon, and Kokand. Craftsmen had their own traditional style which had ethno-territorial characteristics.

Knife production process is as follows: steel is bonded in fire in the farmstead and brought to the necessary shape, next from mild iron its tail is prepared and joined to steel bellows. While processing the knife it was cooled with sheep fat. Recently technical cooling became a habit. In order to make knife's handle bone (or any hard material) was used and necessary shape was created. Then it was joined to its grip and was filled with lead. Knives of Fergana valley differ with the ornaments on the blade, compactness of the blade, weight of the knife and with the shape of the handle.

As knife making was one of the sacred handicrafts, customs associated with knife making was formed. For instance in chust, knife maker masters annually held the ceremony of *"is chiqarish"*.

Masters from the valley stated that the most important process in knife making

is saying *"Allohu Akbar"* maintains the knife's sharpness. They also stated that in doing so using clean water is important. Among the population there are such customs as not praying over the table on which a knife is laid, not passing a knife with its edge side, not playing with knife and not showing knife in front of the domestic animals. About the significance of the mineral items E. Taylor wrote "Eastern demons are afraid of iron". For this reason there is a habit to put a knife under the pillow of a baby's cradle. Customs and traditions associated with knife go back to the ancient times. Initially knife served as a daily household object, subsequently, it became the symbol of power, masculinity, honor and pride. In the past our ancestors imagined a man with a belt on his waist and with knife in his pocket, as knife was considered as a companion of a man.



