



ELENA NEVA

# JEWELRY OF CENTRAL ASIA



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**BOSTON**

*Jewelry of Central Asia* by Elena Neva, Ph.D.

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*In memory of Misha R.  
and my grandparents*

*I'd like to thank my daughter Natalie Landman,  
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for their help and support*

## CONTENTS

ANCIENT JEWELRY FROM CENTRAL ASIA

1

ARTISTIC FEATURES OF JEWELRY ART  
FROM CENTRAL ASIA  
(4TH CENTURY BC – 4TH CENTURY AD)

18

TYPES AND FORMS OF ANCIENT JEWELRY  
FROM CENTRAL ASIA  
(4TH CENTURY BC – 4TH CENTURY AD)

49

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF JEWELRY MAKING  
IN ANCIENT TIMES  
(4TH CENTURY BC – 4TH CENTURY AD)

66

CENTRAL ASIAN JEWELRY AND THEIR SYMBOLS  
IN ANCIENT TIMES

72

JEWELRY FROM CENTRAL ASIA  
IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD  
83

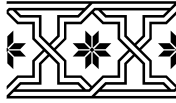
TAJIK GOLD  
91

BUDDHIST TRADITION IN TAJIK JEWELRY  
121

TAJIK JEWELRY IN THE 20TH CENTURY  
125



*The craftsmanship of jewelry will never die  
as long as there is at least one woman  
in the world...*



## **ANCIENT JEWELRY FROM CENTRAL ASIA**

The art of jewelry is a unique area of artistic work, that of great diapason and endless possibilities. Being the most accessible means of connection to art, products of artistic craft have always been an important part of people's lives.

The art of jewelers is one of the most pronounced phenomena in Eastern cultures. It is distinguished in its fulfillment and originality of artistic images, and bears immense sources of expression. Jewelry art of ancient Central Asia is a complex, non-synonymous phenomenon. In order to comprehend its conformity to natural laws, as well as such conformity of the culture as a whole, it is necessary to understand its meaning on the basis of the new information, the facts, and the latest developments and discoveries in science, especially archaeology.

The period of time between the 4th century BC and the 4th century AD is marked by the creation of unique, highly artistic monuments of jewelry art in Central Asia. It is a period of the greatest craft prosperity of the ancient masters, who played an immense role in the establishment and development of central-Asian centers of jewelry art. These centers were formed first on the territory of ancient Bactria (consisting of the modern territories of south of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and the north of Afghanistan), and in the

18th, 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries in Samarqand, Bukhara, Ura-Tube, Khodzent, Kulyab and Baldzuan.

The art of ancient jewelers was developing in a united channel of styles with other types of art, enriching and promoting the rise of diverse facets and shades in the artistic trends of the epoch. Although distinct monuments drew the attention of historians, archaeologists and ethnographers, this theme had never been developed in art history, and found a reflection only in the research done by D. A. Fahretdinova. Therefore, the ancient period in the history of jewelry art of Central Asia is an unexplored area of art history. Earlier publications of findings usually included only a description, date and analogies.

The moment of crystallization of artistic features resulted in the maturation of nationally-artistic peculiarities of Central Asian jewelry art. This allows for the understanding of the specifics of the given



type of artistic craft in the context of the development of artistic traditions in the region.

The history of jewelry art of Central Asia is researched unevenly. Elaboration on the suggested theme unravels unknown pages of birth, establishment and development of the ancient craft, building centers of jewelry workshops and unique signs of the individuality of masters.

### **The History of Research of Central Asian Jewelry**

The research on jewelry art of Central Asia dates back to the end of the last century. However, even now the documentation of all the monuments of this art remains incomplete, despite the specific questions mentioned and explored in the publications of historians, archaeologists, ethnographers and, in part, of art historians. In contrast to the ancient works, the most known and researched jewelry dates to the 19th and 20th centuries. It became highly available to researchers (especially to ethnographers), through the scientific expeditions and the studies of the well-known collections in the museums of the Former Soviet Union (in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Tashkent, Bishkek, Ashkhabad, Dushanbe).

Historians used many of the monuments of jewelry art as particular illustrations to one epoch or another; archaeologists described jewelry in relation to other findings; and ethnographers researched the principles of wearing jewelry, its symbolism, semantics, areas, and in later periods, its correlation with clothing. The amount of literature that in one way or another touch the subject of jewelry art is very impressive. Currently known literature on the given problem can be subdivided into historical, archaeological, ethnographical, as well as literature written on questions of art and culture.

Historical literature that can be used to obtain information on jewelry art of ancient Central Asia includes such historical sources as the testimonies of Arian, Herodotus, Kvint Kurzii Ruff, and Xenophon. In these sources, jewelry was described as a characteristic sign of the epoch.

Archaeological literature is the fundamental source of the given theme. Its research allows the revelation of findings related to the period of the 4th century BC through the 4th century AD.

When it comes to ethnographical literature on the given subject, most of the credit goes to L. A. Chvir, whose monograph “Tajik jewelry” is one of the currently major research works done on jewelry art of Central Asia. In the introduction to this monograph, she brings forth the history of research done on Central Asian articles, noting that “in ethnography, research of Central Asian articles has a very brief history. It is true that the establishment of economic, democratic and cultural links between the nations of Central Asia and Eastern Europe (mostly Russia) dates back to 8th – 9th centuries... However, the object of systematic and detailed study of the nations of Central Asia... not many authors report first concrete data on the traditional material culture of the immediate population.” These are the books and remarks by M. and V. Nalivkin in “Ocherk bita jenshin osedlogo naseleniya Fergani” (Essay of daily life of women from Fergana) that describe the jewelry worn by Sarts; N. S. Likoshin in the work “Half of life in Turkistan” writing about clothing also described the jewelry worn there; N. I. Veselovskii in “Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Ruskogo arheologicheskogo obshestva” (Notes from the department of Russian archaeological society) repeatedly wrote on eastern jewelry, their symbolism and semantics, for example such works as “Basbent,” “Rol streli v obryadakh I ego simvolicheskoe znachenie.” (The role and symbolism of the arrow in rituals).

“The majority of the gathering and research of Central Asian women’s jewelry,” as ethnographers L. A. Chvir notes, “was done in the Soviet period.” The majority of the jewelry studied dates back to the end of the 18th to 20th centuries. A well-known Soviet scientist-ethnographer, M. S. Andreev, while studying the way of life of the Tajik from the Huff valley, notes their jewelry in the part “Svadba» (Wedding). Tajik jewelry art is particularly distinguished in one of the latest works by A. K. Pisarchik—in the album “Narodnoe prikladnoe iskusstvo tadjikov» (Tajik Decorative Art). The album describes the

known types of jewelry in conjunction with their artistic characteristics. Another researcher, S. P. Rusaikina, notes the characteristics of the nature of jewelry of the Tajik from the Garm area.

A vast amount of credit in the gathering and the research of Tajik adornments go to the ethnographer, N. N. Ershov—the founder of a unique museum, the Museum of Ethnography in Tajikistan. The museum was established on the basis of the ethnographical collections gathered in part by the author. His research was dedicated in part to the promotion of studies done on these collections, including jewelry.

In the work of Z. A. Shirokova, “Odejda jenschin gornogo Tadjikistana” (The clothes of women from the mountain region of Tajikistan) there exists a separate chapter titled “Ukrasheniya i kosmetika» (Adornments and Makeup), where in the first paragraph she describes in detail the rings, bracelets, and jewelry worn on the neck, head, forehead, chest. The description is supplemented by information on the related rituals, beliefs, and the ways of jewelry wearing, well-known in the mountain region of Tajikistan. Adornments of Uzbekistan, their forms, types, styles and modes of wear, their symbolism and semantics are described in the works of well-known scientists-ethnographers such as N. G. Borozna, M. A. Bikjanova, A. Azizova, M. V. Sazonova and O. A. Sukhareva. Decoratively-applied art and adornments in particular, are described in the works of researchers of Kirgiziya such as E. I. Mahova, A. F. Burkovskii, K. I. Antipina and E. Suleimanova. In the research done on Turkmen jewelry, the works of G. P. Vasilieva deserve attention. In the above works, the authors “rely mostly on a well-known and worked source—clothing.” And although adornments are noted in small separate parts of research, they have never been looked upon as a type of artistic craft.

Art historians are only beginning to research the artistic peculiarities of Central Asian jewelry art. Their works focus on the later historical periods, while the ancient period has yet to be uncovered. An attempt was made to analyze jewelry art of medieval Maverannahr

in a small article written by art historian D. A. Fahretdinova. In this article, through research of the particular findings made on the mentioned territory, the author makes conclusions on the state and development of jewelry art of the given region in the 11th – 13th centuries. In her recently published monograph “Yuvelirnoe iskusstvo Uzbekistana” (Jewelry Art of Uzbekistan), one chapter “Ot drevneishikh istokov” (From Ancient Roots), is dedicated to a short analysis of ancient jewelry from Central Asia.

Jewelry of the ancient period became known, as it has already been mentioned, through the works of scientists-archaeologists and their publications. This allowed for the formation of tables of Central Asian jewelry. Among the scientists-archaeologists, N. N. Veselovski was the first to carry out scientific excavations on the territory of Central Asia. These excavations brought interesting discoveries and included jewelry.

However, the greatest scope of archaeological research dates back to the 1930’s. It seems as if since this period almost all of the publications on excavations, as well as other related archaeological works, describe and analyze adornments: jewelry articles from the bronze epoch in the works of A. Askarov, V. M. Masson, A. M. Mandelshtam, and the articles of ancient Fergana in the works of U. A. Zadneprovskii. One of the works by B. A. Litvinskii is dedicated completely to the adornments of Western Fergana, their classification, dating, and analogies. Jewelry from the Zeravshan valley is described in the work of Y. G. Gulyamov, Y. Islamov and A. Askarov, and the articles of Pre-Aral by M. A. Itina. An immense amount of information on ancient articles is included in the reference book, “Srednyaya Azia v epokhy kamnya I bronzi” (Central Asia in the Stone and Bronze Epoch). Jewelry articles are mentioned in it with other findings. Metallic adornments of the bronze epoch are looked upon by E. E. Kuzmina. Although she was the one to gather all the findings of that time period on the territory of Central Asia, the artistic aspect of jewelry art was left out of her research. Adornments from the ancient territory of southern Turkmenia and Khorezm are known

through the works of M. E. Masson, I. N. Khlopin, O. A. Vishnevskaya, S. A. Trudnovskaya, S. P. Tolstov.

On the basis of the archaeological researches mentioned above, tables have been assembled. From these tables it can be easily seen that the majority of the findings, as well as most of the publications, relate to the ancient country of Bactria. In the ancient period, Bactria included the modern territories of southern Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as northern Afghanistan. The richest and most interesting findings from this territory are described in the works of A. Ascarov, M. M. Dyakonov, I. T. Kruglikova and V. I. Sarianidi, E. V. Zeimal, O. Dalton, B. Litvinskii and R. Pichikyan, G. A. Pugachenkova, A. M. Mandelshtam, E. B. Rtvetladze.

The indicated works represent archaeological researches that also mention adornments. However, in contrast with others, Bactrian findings are greatly distinguished by their artistic qualities. This fact allows us to continue the research of ancient Central Asian jewelry art using the monuments of Bactria as a point of orientation. Jewelry of the early medieval period is analyzed in the special work of V. I. Raspopova, "Metallicheskie izdeliya rannesrednevekovogo Sogda." (Metal items in early-medieval Sogd).

Apart from metallic adornments, some scientists study the emergence and spreading of glass and stone adornments, found on the territory of Central Asia. Such works include those of I. V. Ptashnikova, G. Y. Drecvyanskaya, S. A. Trudnovskaya and E. D. Saltovskaya. There are also works that examine adornments both as archaeological and culturally-historical material (A. M. Mandelshtam, B. A. Litvinskii).

The level of knowledge on the adornments of the ancient and medieval periods is still relatively low. Many aspects in the research of the given question were left out and such sources as monumental paintings, sculpture, and relief were hardly used. Fragmentally, this is noted in the works of K. V. Trever. She examines, in part, the adornments of characters found on Airtam's reliefs. In the works of L. I. Albaum, T. I. Zeimal and B. A. Litvinskii, and M. Belenizki researchers look into the monumental paintings found in excavations,



and describe the adornments portrayed therein. Many of the written sources and archaeological findings that date back to the late Middle Ages are currently unknown. Specific notations do exist in the works of such researchers as A. S. Bobrova, D. N. Varhotova, E. V. Kilchevskaya and N. N. Negmatov, G. A. Brikina, and E. Attagariev. These authors examine jewelry as objects, monuments of material culture.

The history of jewelry art of Central Asia cannot be written in completion until all the findings of the last decade are included in the scientific data, until written sources that contain immense amounts of useful information are published. The medieval poetry of Rumi, Rudaki, Firdousi, Khaiyama and other poets preserved for us some descriptions of jewelry. However, thus far in our knowledge of the history of adornments there exists a millennium-long void of information.

### **Research Sources**

Two types of sources were used in the following research: museum collections and publications on findings of adornments (monographs, albums, catalogues, articles). The collections researched included the museums of Moscow, Leningrad, Dushanbe, Leninabad, Tashkent, Samarqand, Pendjikent, and Frunze, as well as the jewelry of the British Museum exhibited in Moscow and Leningrad, and the findings from Afghanistan (through publications). Jewelry from ancient Central Asia is found in very small numbers in the museum collections of Moscow and Leningrad. However, the articles present in these collections were used greatly for contrast and comparison analyses. The collections in Leninabad, Samarqand, Pendjikent and Frunze contain a small amount of jewelry of the researched period. These however, represent in most cases material, not artistic, or cultural monuments.

All of the adornments found in the collections of museums are very diverse, both in their materials and the techniques used of their manufacture. They also differ from each other in their functions, forms, ornaments, etc. Adornments are presented randomly, not forming

complexes. Examination of all the literature containing publications on adornments found on the territory of Central Asia was especially helpful in the given research.

Jewelry art of the given period in Central Asia has never been analyzed before. This paper is the first specific research on the subject. However, it seems as if even this research will not be able to completely uncover all of the problems of the above theme. However, it seems as if even this research will not be able to completely uncover all of the topics related to such an informative material as jewelry.

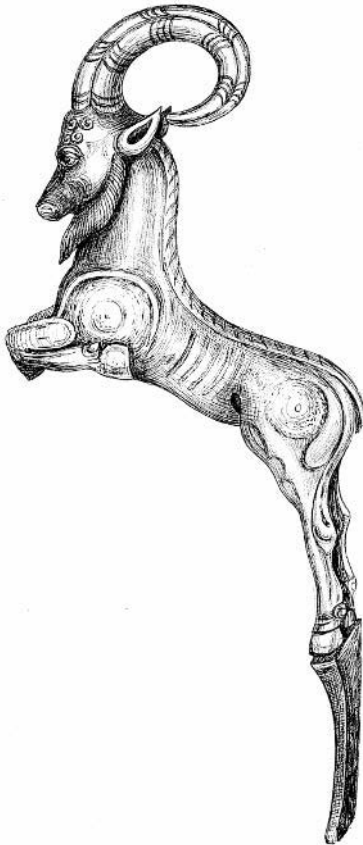
Presented literature and museum collections show that it is currently impossible to study the history of Central Asian jewelry art in full, for not enough information has been gathered on the various historical periods of the given region.

In the following research, primarily highly artistic objects will be studied, without any relation to their materials or the techniques used in their of manufacturing: including both separate findings and treasures of jewelry articles. The term treasure is often used to describe groups of adornments or other monuments of art found accidentally. These groups represent a complex of a variety of artifacts that differ not only in their types and appearances, but also in their chronology. An example of such a group is the Oxus Treasure.

### **The Oxus Treasure**

A bright monument of artistic tastes of the Central Asian elite of the 5th through the 3rd century BC, as well as interesting material evidence on the coalescence of different cultural and artistic traditions in Achaemenian Central Asia is the well-known oxus treasure, kept at the British Museum in London. A legend tells that the treasure was





found in the channel of a drying up river Amu-Darya or Oxus, as it was known in Greek sources. The treasure consists of two hundred objects, most of these being coins that date back to the 5th through the 3rd century BC, minted in Greece and Asia Minor, in Achaemenian Iran and the country of Selevkids. In the light of the newest archaeological discoveries, a new hypothesis was proposed. This hypothesis stated that the Oxus treasure is a part of the treasury of the temple of Oxus in the ancient metropolis of Takhti-Sangin where later in the 20th century the second Oxus treasure was found (excavations are supervised by I. R. Pichikyan). B. Y. Stavisky was the first scientist to suggest that the first Oxus treasure was a part of the temple in Takhti-Sangin.

The temple of Oxus was discovered in the western half of the central part of the ancient metropolis. It seems that the temple was built not later than the 3rd century BC, and was in the process of reconstructing until the 3rd – 4th centuries AD. Sacrifices to the treasury were very diverse, including primarily coins (a large number of which had been found); adornments, gold and silver vessels, votive plaques, and small sculpture.

The gifts and the decaying adornments of the temple itself (where a square, four-column “White Hall” is completely uncovered, and measures 12m x 12m; its columns having bases, decorated ionic capitols; and large altars were placed in the corners and in the arches) were falling onto the floor of separate sectors, and later these

sectors-treasuries were immured (the entire number of findings is over five thousand). Due to the long-term existence of the temple (several centuries), the findings include artifacts that differ tremendously from each other, both stylistically and chronologically. In the catalogues composed by O. Dalton and E. Zeimal, the artifacts from the first Oxus treasure are divided into seven groups, that include round sculpted, vessels, coins, a variety of small articles, plaques and finally adornments—rings, bracelets, torques, and articles with relief images.

The dominating type of art during the period of the Treasure of Oxus I was the imperial art of Suz and Persepol. However, it is possible to come across articles made in the traditional styles of classic ancient East, directly in the Bactrian manner. Many articles are stunning in their professional methods of manufacture, technical perfection, distinct styles, and the modeling of parts into a whole.

### **Dalversin-tepe**

The other treasure, that provides articles used in the given work, from the metropolis of Dalversin-tepe (modern territory of southern Uzbekistan; the Oxus treasure is from the southern territory of Tajikistan) dates back to the Kushan epoch and was found under the floor of a small room in a wealthy home (DT-5). This treasure consisted of carelessly cast disk-like ingots of gold, accurate bars with writing, describing weight (in some cases gratuitous), jewelry drafts in forms of thick cylindrical or almond-like hoops, earrings, brooches, neck adornments (pectoral & necklace), bracelets, including those in the form of a hoop with spiral rolling on both sides. There were two odd earrings made in the same technique as the bracelets; the top part of the third one resembles an ornamental cylinder with a bent eye, and completed by a snake head. Among the various neck adornments—torques, necklace, and pectoral: a large brooch is very distinct and contains a gorelief figure of a twisting aural animal, surrounded by heart-shaped openings for incrustation of precious stones.

Excavations carried out by an archaeological expedition under the supervision of G.A. Pugachenkova in the valley of Surkhandarya, showed that a small Greco-Bactrian town, surrounded by pakhsa's (a specific type of brick) walls, existed on the territory of Dalversin-tepe. Also here, a central part of a small Buddhist temple, situated to the north of the town wall, was preserved. This may be the reason for the great diversity of the articles found in Dalversin-tepe. Some of them are made in artistic traditions of Gandkhara (pectoral, necklace); others—earrings and bracelets—seem to continue the artistic line of nomads; still others—a brooch, for example, is an “echo” of the “animal style”... This occurrence may be explained by the fact that “Buddhism was not the only or the major religion in Bactria; here the gods of ‘Avesta’ and the Hellenistic gods were worshiped as well.”

### **Tillya-tepe (Golden Hill)**

In contrast with the treasures of Oxus and Dalversin-tepe, Tillya-tepe (northern Afghanistan) provided the researchers with samples of ensembles of adornments. Here in 1978, a Soviet-Afghan expedition uncovered six rich burials (five female and one male), in which many adornments that date back to the beginning of this era were preserved. Altogether, 20.000 gold jewelry articles with insertions of precious and semi-precious stones were found. The female complexes differ stylistically from each other, which show both the determination of the ethnic grouping of these women, as well as the reflections of fashion. The abundance of found jewelry articles suggests the presence of a workshop, for such a large amount of sew-on disks could have only been made by several masters.

Excluding treasures and complexes of jewelry articles, other unique findings of highly artistic monuments of the jewelry art of the 4th century BC – 4th century AD are rather well-known. Found mainly on the territory of ancient Bactria, these discoveries include an earring from Dushanbe; findings from the burials of Bishkent valley including golden earrings, and a brooch with an image of a



“rolled-up horse;” beads; adornments from Dangarian burials; and jewelry articles from the metropolis Saksanokhur.

Rich are the collections from ancient Khorezm: Yigarak, Kyusai, Geok-depe, Chirik-rabat, Babish-mulla, Ayaz-kala and others. Separate findings from the early middle ages in Sogd in the metropolis of Shirin-I, and Kutkat burial vaults are of great interest. The registration of these findings allowed a wider understanding of the area of the manufacture and the wear of adornments, where the leading place belongs to Bactria, a country with a high culture, country that was a part of the Achaemenian empire (in the middle of the first millenium BC, Bactria is mentioned in a Behistun writing of the Persian king Darii I). In the 4th century BC, it was conquered by Alexander the Great. “Imported and trophy products of Greek art, as well as those that became a major component in the imperial style of Hellenistic art directly or indirectly influenced the culture of Bactria,” in its turn influencing the neighboring countries.

Soon after the death of Alexander the Great, Bactria was conquered by Selevkids, and its relations with Greek Mediterranean cit-

ies during that period were wide and regular. Mediated trades of gold and ivory promoted the bloom of jewelry and ivory-carving arts in the south of modern Central Asia. Trading channels also served as a means of cultural exchange.

In the middle of the 4th century BC, the rebellion of Diodot resulted in the formation of an independent Greco-Bactrian kingdom, known in ancient times as the “country of one thousand cities.” With time its borders widened, reaching north-western India. After a century, Bactria was invaded by half-nomadic nations from over the Sir Darya central-Asian Indo-Skythians; following them were the Yuedjies that displaced the Skythians and settled in the second quarter of the 2nd century BC; later from the Yuedjies that assimilated with the native population, the nation of Kushan was established. Their family name became the name of a monarch dynasty and a mighty empire. During the 1st through the 3rd centuries, the Kushan Empire spread its ruling over the territories of the modern southern areas of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northwestern India, but ceased to exist in the 3rd century. In the system of the Kushan Empire, Bactria played a major role, although the main political centers gradually moved to the south over Gindukush.

Historical, political and economic processes of the researched period that embraced Central Asia, found their reflection in the culture, art and philosophy of the nations that populated the region—civilizations that left behind unique monuments of architecture, sculpture, monumental drawing, and jewelry art, the later serving as the basis of the given research.

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## **BUDDHIST TRADITION IN TAJIK JEWELRY**

Jewelry is one of the most conservative arts, where technology and decorative elements prevail without fast changes. It is a property of jewelry art that give us, for example, a great opportunity to find Buddhist elements in the 19th – 20th centuries. One of the many examples of Tajik jewelry is a diadem. The traditional wedding crown or diadem is well-known as a “Kosh-tillo” or “Tillya-Kosh” (Golden eyebrows) and has a heraldic composition of lion, monkey and turtle figures. These three animals are representative of Buddha. In some legends of the Buddhist culture, the Buddha Shakjamuni appears as a monkey, a bird or a deer. Another image of the Buddha-monkey is the Blessed Hanuman (son of Wind God Vau or Maruta and monkey Adjanta). From India the cult of Hanuman spread to Eastern Asia and China. There are stories where the Buddha appears as a lion or lioness as a maternity symbol and is attributed to Mother-God. At the same time lionesses symbolized health or magic. The third symbol, the turtle, is not only one of the images of Buddha, but also a symbol of longevity. We currently know that the Buddhist elements in Tajik jewelry are not only products of Indian jewelers who worked in Tajikistan during the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.



Buddhist art was one of the processes in the development of Central Asian art, because Buddhist culture was one of the elements of Tajik history.

Another type of Tajik jewelry articles included “brooch-fibulas,” which is known as “kulfi-girebon.” (Round metal fastenings-fibulas are known through southern Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Turkmen people.) The Fund Collection of jewelry, at the Museum of Ethnography, replenished its collection with jewelry pieces made by Kulyabian jewelers. A unique collection of jewelry, ceramics, clothing, furniture and other crafts is held in Dushanbe, at the Museum of the Academy of Science of Tajikistan. All historical items, including jewelry, were collected by the generation of ethnographers and art historians from 1948 to 1990 (when the Civil War begins) as N. Ershov, A. Pisarchik, B. Karmisheva, M. Khamidjanova, T. Mezurnova and others including E. Neva. Most of the museum items date from the 19th and 20th

centuries and include a collection of jewelry consisting of 300 articles (as of 1990). These articles also include the well-known brooches. Brooches were not only made of silver, but also from German silver (an alloy of nickel and copper).

The form of the brooch reminds the observer of the round disk that we call the sun. Shaped as a rosette, its middle has a medallion with an insertion—the medallion is decorated with triangles of granulation. These triangles also covers the edges of the brooch, probably portraying a bright sun and its rays.

A distinctive feature in the technology of the artistic processing of metal is granulation, which



consists of tiny metal balls that help create decorative ornamental compositions, giving the artifact a special appearance.

Soldered over the metallic rays are filigree miniature half-spheres, small in height and shaped as rosettes. These can portray planets revolving around the sun, or stars. Descending pendants on a wicker wire symbolize rain which gives life to earth and helps the growth of life creating seeds

The central insertion of the brooch was usually made out of coral, because this particular stone was symbolically related to the sun. Sometimes red carnelian was used, known as “hakik”—it was said that, “whoever wears it, lives in constant happiness.”

Brooches, writes L. Chvir, are a typical jewelry article of Southern Tajikistan. The most common are the so-called “kulfi-girebon,” also known as Kulyabian filigree fibulas. These fibulas are sometimes decorated with rare insertions of red glass or stones and have pendants made of chains and “leaves.” The diameter and weight vary widely: the brooches are of various sizes, which can differentiate their age.

The complexity of Kulyabian jewelry is noted in the manuscript “Tajik Jewelry” which states, «the peculiarity of the Kulyabian jewelry is due to the presence of the round filigree brooch “kulfi-girebon” in it.” The brooch was worn on the collar and also worn with beads.

The filigree brooch, in the form of the sun, was not just a type of amulet protection that had a clear astral symbolism (related to fertility and brides: the moon signified the groom while the was related to the bride). However, it also had a clear function of protection, because the brooch was placed on the location of the solar plexus—an important internal organ. The damage to the solar plexus may result in death; this once again proves the depth of knowledge of our ancestors.

Today brooches are practically out of style; the original brooches were replaced by factory-made small brooches, decorated with glass—a reminder of the familiar fibulas.

Fibulas as adornments are known from the past. Brooches-fibulas were placed on the shoulder on a cloak in the times of Ancient Rome.

Currently these adornments are known as an indispensable complement to the jewelry ensemble of the Turkmen people; even now, fibulas are placed on the shoulders of Latish people. The use of such brooches can be noticed in other nations as well, for example Hungarians.

An analogous pendant in the form of a brooch is used in India. This fact can be traced through paintings of the Manjurian and Maisurian schools of the 18th – 19th centuries in southern India.

Undoubtedly, in the past, the wearing of such an adornment had the function of differentiating among the levels of society. In Indian sculptures and paintings the fibulas are worn by their gods.

The relationship between such an adornment and the Buddhist religion is shown in sculptures from Adjina-tepe. On one of the torso's of devata, from the neck to the chest, drops an adornment analogous to our brooch—"kulfi girebon."

Findings of the last couple of years include a Buddhist cloister of the 7th and 8th century in Chepivol. This once again shows us the accurateness of the words of Chinese historians that the south of Tajikistan had been a home for many Buddhist cloisters during the early middle ages. This is the reason why even today one may notice the effects of the Buddhist culture on jewelry articles, not just in the southern regions of Tajikistan.

There still is no answer as to whether Buddhism was an official religion of the territory of Tajikistan, but the notion of its being very common in the region is already obvious.

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## TAJIK JEWELRY IN THE 20TH CENTURY\*

Tajik jewelry-making, like any other form of cultural self-expression by the people, is an original art. Visitors to this Central Asian republic have always been attracted by the bright garments of the natives and the opulence of the ornaments their women use. Russian jewelry designer Vitali Ivanov was similarly enchanted the first time he went there.

For several years he has been living and working in Tajikistan, enamored with its ancient but ever flourishing national art, and all these years scrupulously studying all the aspects and secrets of its beauty. As somebody who had grown up so far away from these parts, he wanted to probe deep into the creative atmosphere of the local craftsmen and to acquire if only a fraction of their skill. He traveled extensively all over the republic, gaining the impressions and knowledge of the ethnic culture, all of which was to bear fruit later on.

Among his works are bracelets from the **Anor** (Tajik “pomegranate”) set (filigree and grain in cupro-nickel set with corals and turquoise), a bracelet of hammered white metal, **Tavk** necklace from the same set (stamped and hammered cupro-nickel). They are not

\* Jewelry by V. Ivanov and I.Ivannikova



merely fashioned in imitation of folk handicrafts but form the artist's original ideas promoted by the rich national traditions of this old craft and creatively rendered in metal. Modern artists and designers stand to gain from assimilating creatively the cultural and spiritual heritage of the past, because artistic traditions of jewelry-making embody invaluable experience in workmanship and the fruitful imagination of craftsmen of different nationalities and times.

The art of Tajik metalwork is deeply rooted in the past, drawing on the national traditions and customs, and other countries.

Jewelry made by Vitali Ivanov is quite diverse and includes earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings and diadems of variegated ornamentation. Ornamental elements rarely repeat themselves, and the jeweler displays a masterful command of different types of metalwork, employing forging, casting and stamping. His artistic taste is manifest in the way he delicately garnishes metal with coral and turquoise.

He is brimming with plans, one of which is to try and "re-create" extinct sets of Tajik national adornments characteristic of dif-

ferent regions of the republic. In the past century, every individual craftsmen usually specialized in some particular ornament, whereas Ivanov consciously undertakes to produce whole sets to go with a particular garment, taking into consideration the wearer's age or making jewelry for some special occasion. For instance, one such set is called the **Wedding Set**. He prefers to exhibit his jewelry together with pieces of folk-style clothing produced by Tajik fashion designers. In his opinion this is the only way, and perhaps he has a point. There is no denying the fact that accessories do acquire their ambience when viewed together with clothes. Conversely, at times, fascinating works by modern jewelers lose some of their charm when displayed in shop-windows or on mounts.

The designer spends a vast amount of time drawing sketches, and then he translates them into metal—cupro-nickel, using colored glass, pastes and gems (turquoise and coral) for decorations, and produces in this way a consummate artistic image. He knows and always bears in mind the fact that in the old times every adornment also





had some magic meaning, still preserved in poetic names sometimes attributed to pieces of jewelry, e.g., *koshi tillo*—golden eyebrows or *mokhi nav*—a young moon and so on. In keeping with the old custom, Ivanov gives his jewelry poetic names, like for an example **Anor** (pomegranate—the symbol of fertility). The set consists of several bracelets and a massive necklace, which has a harmonious look due to its flowing lines, clever proportions and a well-balanced color scheme. An Oriental saying has it, “as long as at least one woman is alive the jeweler’s art will live on.”



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Thanks to modern life—the art of jewelry has been shrouded with a veil so attractive and so mysterious that we tend to overlook the true essence of jewelry and its correlation to the history of mankind.

In her research, Elena Neva makes a monumental effort to save us from being trapped by clichés and introduce us to the true beauty disguised as common household matter.

Her profound and at the same time seemingly effortless narrative opens the soul of the ancient jewelry of Central Asia to her readers, as if they were speaking to us in their own language...

**Yu. A. Godovanetz, Ph.D.**

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Moscow, Russia*

For centuries, jewelry has played an important role in expressing ones religious, social or financial status. Extensive academic research has been done to understand the artistic expressions of jewelry. From an art historical perspective, surprisingly enough, little to no research has ever been undertaken with regard to the ancient jewelry of Central Asia...

Fully dedicated to revealing the history of the ancient jewelry of Central Asia, Dr. Elena Neva has managed to compile a sound historical overview on ancient jewelry of this region. She reveals the different artistic features, symbols, types, forms and technical aspects of the ancient jewelry of Central Asia, ranging from the medieval period to the present time.

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