

ADORNED

TEXTILES AND JEWELLERY FROM CENTRAL ASIA

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Adorned: Textiles and Jewellery from Central Asia

Central Asia occupies a vast region of steppe and desert, stretching from Russia in the north to Afghanistan in the south and across the middle of Asia from the Caspian Sea to China. It includes the republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan and Mongolia are also often considered part of Central Asia. *Adorned: Textiles and Jewellery from Central Asia* explores the splendour and opulence of Central Asian fashion from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the distinct sartorial traditions of two of the largest cultural groups of the region: the Uzbek and Turkmen peoples.

Urban Uzbek mercantile communities were based in oases market towns on the famed Silk Routes that carried goods between China, Europe, Persia, India and Russia. The wealthy Uzbek cities of Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Kokand and Ferghana were renowned for sumptuous silk and cotton garments in bold, vivid patterns. In contrast to the settled river valleys and oases, the broad steppes of Central Asia were peopled by nomadic herding communities, including the Turkmen. Their textile tradition is distinguished by intricate woven rugs and embroidered garments, furnishings for yurts (felt-covered, domed tents), animal trappings and monumental gilt silver jewellery. These two styles of personal adornment are illustrated in more than sixty works from the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Uzbek textiles

The Uzbeks, originally members of nomadic Turkic tribes, were largely urbanised by the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth century dominated the metropolitan culture of wealthy and powerful Central Asian khanates or emirates. Urban Uzbek garments and textiles feature boldly patterned, vividly coloured fabrics made using a resist-dyeing technique known as ikat, in which the threads are dyed and patterned before they are woven. The fabrics were produced by men employed in family- and guild-based workshops. Specialist pattern designers, thread binders, dyers and weavers created sumptuous fabrics sold in the bazaars of Silk Route towns and cities, including Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. Women reared silkworms at home to provide yarn and sewed garments for their families.

As well as Uzbek textiles produced in metropolitan centres, nomadic Uzbeks such as the Lakai Uzbek tribe produced unique textiles. The Lakai Uzbeks are one of more than ninety Uzbek tribes and until the late nineteenth century were yurt-dwelling farmers or nomadic shepherds living in the area now included in northern Afghanistan, southeastern Uzbekistan and southern Tajikistan. The women were skilled embroiderers and produced a wide repertoire of textiles decorated with bold geometric patterns embroidered in bright silk thread in a range of stitches, including chain stitch, slanted buttonhole stitch and slanted couching stitch (*basma*).

UZBEK people

Man's coat

Chapan

20th century, Uzbekistan

silk (*shohi*), cotton (lining), silk and cotton (*adras*) (lining), cotton (thread); warp ikat, tablet woven braid

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.346

The coat was a ubiquitous garment in Central Asia, made in different fabrics according to the wearer's rank and wealth. Gold, silver and silk brocade coats and those covered in embroidery were the most costly and prestigious, and robes of Russian machine-printed cotton fabric were the least expensive. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Central Asian garments comprised coats worn with tunics and loose trousers, with garments layered to show one's wealth or to provide warmth. The cut of men's and women's coats was similar, although men's coats usually had a small, stand-collar and ties at the front.

UZBEK people

Woman's tunic

Kuylak

20th century, Uzbekistan / Afghanistan
silk and cotton (*adras*); warp ikat, moiré

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.347

LAKAI UZBEK people

Woman's or girl's mantle

Paranja

early 20th century, Central Asia

silk and cotton (*banoras*), silk (thread) cotton (lining);
embroidery, loop manipulated braid

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2010

2011.296

From about the age of nine, girls in Central Asian towns covered their heads with a cloak-like garment when they ventured outside their homes. The mantle, called a *paranja*, had long, narrow sleeves that hung down the back and was made of patterned or striped silk, brocade or velvet. *Paranja* were often decorated with embroidery, tassels and fringing, and were worn over a cap with a long veil attached so the upper body of the wearer was completely covered. The veil (*chachvan*) was woven from horse hair.

UZBEK people

Woman's tunic

Kuylak

20th century, Uzbekistan / Afghanistan

silk and cotton (*adras*); warp ikat, calendaring

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.348

Central Asian textile workshops produced several types of warp ikat fabrics, of which pure silk fabrics known as *shohi* were the most expensive. This tunic is made from *adras*, a ribbed fabric made with a cotton weft and silk warp. The fabric has been 'finished' after weaving by beating it with a large wooden mallet and then polishing the flattened surface with a smooth stone or shell. This technique, known as calendaring, creates a glossy surface. The neck opening of the tunic has not yet been cut and the hems and cuffs are unfinished.

UZBEK people

Woman's trousers

Lozim

20th century, Uzbekistan

silk (*shohi*), cotton; warp ikat

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.352

UZBEK people

Woman's coat

Munisak

20th century, Uzbekistan

silk and cotton (*adras*), cotton (lining), silk (thread), cotton (padding); warp ikat, loop manipulated braid

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2010

2010.516

Women's and men's coats were often cut in the same square shape, although the style displayed here, with gathers under the arms and a wide, curved front opening, was also popular. The edges of Central Asian garments were generally finished with braid, which could either be worked on the garment or made separately using several techniques, including tablet weaving or embroidery, and sewn onto the garment. The braid on this coat has been made on the garment using a loop manipulation technique worked onto stitches which can be seen inside the coat.

UZBEK people

Woman's coat

Munisak

early 20th century, Bukhara, Uzbekistan
silk, cotton and metallic (brocade), silk (thread), cotton
(lining); loop manipulated braid

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.340

By the 1880s Russia controlled all of Central Asia and most of the imported cloth found in the bazaars was Russian, including luxurious and costly metal brocades which were popular for wedding garments. In the early twentieth century the Soviets confiscated ecclesiastical property across Russia and many gold and silver brocade church garments, including chasubles and surplices, were shipped to Central Asian workshops where they were refashioned into caps and garments.

UZBEK people

Man's coat

Chapan

20th century, Uzbekistan / Afghanistan

silk (*shohi*), cotton (lining), silk and cotton (*adras*) (lining), cotton (thread); warp ikat, loop manipulated braid

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.344

Silk ikat fabrics were woven in urban workshops which employed specialist craftsmen for each stage of production, including tying the threads, dyeing, weaving and finishing the fabric to produce special effects such as moiré (a wave-like pattern embossed on the fabric surface) and calendaring (a polished surface). The entire production was undertaken by men, except for the rearing of silkworms which was supervised by women in their homes. Different communities were involved in each stage of production. Many of the weavers were Uzbek or Tajik and indigo dyeing was undertaken by Jewish artisans.

LAKAI UZBEK people

Bag or bike seat cover

20th century, Uzbekistan

wool (broadcloth), silk (thread), cotton and silk (*adras*)
(lining and piping); embroidery, warp ikat

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.866

LAKAI UZBEK people

Tent hanging

At torba ilgich

early 20th century, Uzbekistan

wool (broadcloth), silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2011 2011.8

The Lakai Uzbeks are one of more than ninety Uzbek tribes and until the late nineteenth century were yurt-dwelling farmers or nomadic shepherds living in the area now included in northern Afghanistan, southeastern Uzbekistan and southern Tajikistan. The women were skilled needleworkers and produced a wide repertoire of embroidered textiles for their yurts or mudbrick houses. This included various types of hangings or bags, known as *ilgich*, which were decorated with bold geometric shapes in strong colours worked in a range of stitches, including chain stitch, slanted buttonhole stitch and slanted couching stitch (*basma*).

UZBEK people

Cap and veil

20th century, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

silk (velvet), metal (thread), cotton, horsehair, metal (plaques), glass (beads); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.801

UZBEK people

Woman's boots

20th century, Uzbekistan
leather, cotton, silk (thread)

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.827.a-b

Embroidered, soft leather boots were worn indoors by men and women. Outdoors they were worn with a pair of leather, clog-like overshoes with a relatively high heel.

UZBEK people

Belt

late 19th century – early 20th century, Bukhara, Uzbekistan
silver, emerald

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.924

UZBEK people

Belt

late 19th century – mid 20th century, Central Asia
silver

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.913

LAKAI UZBEK people

Bag

Khalta

early 20th century, Uzbekistan

silk (thread), cotton, glass (beads); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.840

Traditional Central Asian garments did not include pockets, so small bags for personal possessions were hung from a man's belt or tucked into the sash worn over a man's tunic. In the towns of Central Asia bags were used to carry tea to the tea shops where men socialised. Bags with narrow necks or drawstrings held coins. All Central Asian communities, whether urban or nomadic, produced bags, and each community had a distinctive style of decoration. Lakai Uzbek women, renowned for their skill in needlework, decorated their bags with cross-stitch embroidery in silk thread.

LAKAI UZBEK people

Bag

Khalta

early 20th century, Uzbekistan

silk (thread), cotton, glass (beads); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.837

LAKAI UZBEK people

Bag

Khalta

early 20th century, Uzbekistan
silk (thread), cotton; embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.834

UZBEK people

Hanging *Suzani*

20th century, Nurata district, Uzbekistan
cotton, silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.879

Suzani means 'needle' in the Persian Tajik language and describes silk thread embroideries created by Uzbek women of the Silk Road towns. *Suzani* embroidered by a bride and her family were an important part of a bride's dowry and used as hangings, bed covers, partitions, curtains, coffin covers and prayer mats. *Suzani* from different areas have distinct styles. Those from Nurata, northwest of Samarkand, are designed as a flowering garden, with naturalistic flowering bushes or sprays around a central eight pointed star. The form of the flowering bush may originate in the art of Mughal India and Safavid Iran from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

UZBEK / TAJIK people

Cap

1920s, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

silk (velvet), silver (thread), gold (thread), cotton (lining),
cotton (thread); embroidery, quilting

Gift of H. I. Harding, 1940

4756C-D3

LAKAI UZBEK people

Cap

1920s, Central Asia

cotton (sateen), silk (thread), cotton (velveteen), cotton (lining), cotton (thread); embroidery, quilting

Gift of H. I. Harding, 1940

4756D-D3

Lakai Uzbek women are renowned for their embroidery which often incorporates motifs that harken back to pre-Islamic beliefs and are grounded in the worship of nature and the ancestors. The spinning disk is a characteristic Lakai embroidery pattern and may refer to the sun. It is worked in slanted buttonhole stitch over a quilted base. The spaces between the rows of quilting are stuffed with cotton floss to create a series of raised rows.

Turkmen jewellery and costume

Most Turkmen were nomads and did not settle in cities and towns until the advent of the Soviet government in Central Asia after the 1917 Russian Revolution. They were renowned as horse breeders and fierce warriors, and often conducted raids and held Persian and Russian settlers captive, to be sold as slaves. Their material culture is distinguished by knotted-wool pile rugs, splendid animal trappings and embroidered garments and monumental jewellery worked in gilt silver and set with carnelians.

The textiles were made by Turkmen women, and men made the jewellery in home smithies or urban workshops. Turkmen jewellery was a form of portable wealth and details in technique and finish distinguish the jewellery of different Turkmen groups, such as the Ersari, Tekke and Yomut. Although Turkmenistan has abundant metal resources, most metal used in jewellery produced from the nineteenth century was sourced from Iranian, Russian and Chinese gold, and silver coins which were smelted down. Coins were also used as decoration and their dates provide an earliest possible date for individual items. Cornelian, coral and baroque pearls were imported from India and Europe, and turquoise was sourced in Central Asia. Glass beads were produced locally and imported.

UZBEK people

Pendant cosmetic set

after 1916, Bukhara, Uzbekistan
silver, coral, turquoise

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.917

Uzbek and Turkmen examples of pendant cosmetic sets usually include tweezers and ear scoops. This set also has an awl and a small fork. The Russian fifteen kopek coins are dated 1916 which provides an earliest possible date for the work.

UZBEK people

Woman's pectoral ornament, earrings and pendant jewellery

Shokila

late 19th century – 20th century, Uzbekistan
silver, gilt-metal, carnelian, semi-precious stones

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.909

Central Asian women wore jewellery in sets comprising various pieces for the head, forehead and temples; neck and chest ornaments; jewellery worn in the hair and on hats; brooches, amulets and fasteners; bracelets and girdles. The ensembles included pieces made to order combined with inherited items. The town of Khiva was an important jewellery-making centre, with twelve jewellers recorded there in 1860. In the Khiva area the *shokila* was a popular jewellery item, consisting of a diadem or crown, temple pendants and three necklaces that were worn over the neck and upper chest.

AFGHAN / UZBEK people

Pectoral ornament with amulet holder

early 20th century, Central Asia

silver, gilt, coral, turquoise, silk (thread), metal (thread)

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.914

UZBEK people

Cap

1930s, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

cotton (velvet), metal (thread), cotton, silk (thread);
embroidery, loop manipulated braid

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.826

This style of cap was produced in Tashkent and the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan, where both men and women wore hats embroidered with flowers and birds. Those worn by young girls also incorporated beads in the floral designs. This particular style, with a *chakmatur* background of small white stitches arranged in a grid, and a floral pattern known as *chamanda gul*, appeared in the 1920s. It combines design and compositional elements found on Tajik skullcaps and older skullcaps from Kokand and Tashkent. The hat is made in four sections and can be folded into a flat triangle.

UZBEK people

Comb

20th century, Uzbekistan
ivory, silver, coral

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.925

UZBEK people

Cap

20th century, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

silk (velvet), metal (thread), cotton, silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.809

Hats from Bukhara were renowned for their luxurious gold embroidery, known as *zardosi*. Traditionally this was the only style of hat embroidered by men, as a woman's touch was thought to tarnish the gold and silver thread. After the Soviets set up embroidery collectives in the 1930s to undertake this type of work, most of the embroiderers employed were women.

CENTRAL ASIAN

Beard comb and case

early 20th century, Kashgar, Xinjiang Autonomous region,
China

wood, paint, silk (velvet), cotton, gold (thread), silver
(thread); embroidery

Gift of H. I. Harding, 1940

4761.a-b-D3

UZBEK people

Cap

20th century, Bukhara, Uzbekistan
silk (velvet), metal (thread), cotton; embroidery, loop
manipulated braid

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.808

TEKKE or YOMUT TURKMEN people

Bridal camel trapping

Duye bashlyk

20th century, Turkmenistan

wool (broadcloth), silk, cotton, silk (thread); patchwork, embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.878

A Turkmen bride was carried in procession from her family home to that of the groom's family on a camel splendidly adorned in a patchwork textile incorporating numerous fabrics and protective elements, such as feathers, hair and blue beads. The patchwork sections hung down either side of the camel's neck. The bride was concealed during the journey in a small tent set atop the saddle.

UZBEK people

Canopy or horse blanket

mid 20th century – late 20th century, north Afghanistan
wool (felt), wool (cord); appliqué

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2014

2014.287

This style of felt textile is described as either a horse or camel blanket, or a canopy for a yurt interior. During the first year of marriage couples from nomadic Uzbek groups, such as the Lakai Uzbek, live in a white felt yurt with this type of canopy suspended from the roof.

TURKMEN people

Horse blanket

Gezemen keçe

mid – late 20th century, Afghanistan
wool (felt), wool (thread)

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2014

2014.286

Turkmen nomads were expert horsemen and renowned as horse traders and breeders. A fine, swift horse was a prized possession and a source of status. Turkmen horses were famous for their leanness, speed and endurance. To maintain the desired wiriness they were covered with felt blankets which protected them from the extremes of cold and heat of the desert climate of Turkmenistan. Wool felt horse blankets such as this example were made by the Tekke and Yomut Turkmen and embroidered in wool thread. The design incorporates slits for the girth strap that holds the saddle in place.

KYRGYZ / UZBEK people

Tent band

20th century, Central Asia

cotton (velvet), cotton (lining), silk (thread); embroidery

Gift of Leigh and Alexandra Copeland, 2014

UZBEK / TURKMEN people

Tent band

20th century, Central Asia
cotton, wool

Gift of Leigh and Alexandra Copeland, 2014

The nomads of Central Asia lived in felt yurts (circular domed tents) constructed from a lattice of flexible wood lathes covered in thick felt. The yurts were easily dismantled, facilitating seasonal migration with the herds in search of pasture. Tent bands served practical and decorative functions inside and outside the yurt. They were wrapped around the exterior to hold the felt in position or laid diagonally across the roof, and interlaced at the ends to provide decoration. Inside the yurt, ornamental tent bands were hung around the lattice and bands were also threaded through the lattice to stabilise the structure.

TURKMEN people

Young woman's hat

20th century, Afghanistan

wool, silk (thread), metal, cotton (lining); embroidery, loop manipulated braid

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2010

2010.94

This style of domed hat with a metal ornament on the crown is worn by young Turkmen girls until marriage. The ornament, *gupba*, usually has owl feathers inserted in the top if the girl is engaged. If a girl's hat is worn without feathers it means she is looking for a husband. Owl feathers also adorn children's caps as a protective device.

TURKMEN people

Necktie

1959, Turkmenistan
cotton, silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.888

Textiles of this type are variously described as epaulettes, hand covers or neck ties. The attached tape with a button and loop fastening suggests this example is a necktie. It is embroidered with Soviet Russian symbols, including the hammer and sickle, the red star and an image of the Kremlin; CCCP, the initials of the Russian name for the Soviet Union; the date 1959, which probably refers to the year the work was made; and an untranslated word in Cyrillic script.

TURKMEN people

Necktie

mid 20th century, Turkmenistan
cotton, silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.889

Soviet Russia gained control of Central Asia in 1924 and established five Soviet Socialist Republics (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan) in place of former emirates. The Central Asian Republics became independent in 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet occupation of Central Asia, symbols of the regime appeared in textile decoration; for instance, on embroidered caps and accessories, woven carpets and Russian, printed-cotton lining fabrics.

TURKMEN people

Young woman's hat

early 20th century, Central Asia

wool, silk (thread), metal (plaques), cotton (lining);
embroidery, appliqué

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.805

TURKMEN people

Young woman's hat

20th century, Central Asia

cotton, silk (thread), metal (plaques), glass (beads);
embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.802

TURKMEN people

Hat

20th century, Central Asia

cotton, metal (plaques), carnelian, mother-of-pearl (buttons), glass (beads), cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*); netting

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.804

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Woman's mantle

Chyrpy

20th century, Turkmenistan

silk, silk (thread), cotton (lining); embroidery, block printing

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.787

Tekke Turkmen women wore elaborately embroidered mantles on ceremonial occasions. The garment was draped over the wearer's head with the sleeves hanging down the back. The mantles, named *chyrpy*, are characteristically worked in interlacing or ladder stitch (*kesdi*) in patterns featuring tulip forms. Red tulip flowers covered the steppes each spring, heralding new life, and were a symbol of abundance and prosperity. The colour of the mantle indicated the wearer's age. Dark blue was suitable for youth, yellow for middle age and white for the elderly.

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Woman's mantle

Chyrpy

20th century, Afghanistan

silk, silk (thread), acrylic (thread), cotton (lining);
embroidery, block printing

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2010.93

CHODOR TURKMEN people

Cap

20th century, Turkmenistan

silk, silk (thread), cotton, cotton (thread); warp ikat, embroidery, quilting

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.806

Caps and headdresses were an essential part of Central Asian attire worn by nearly all members of the population, except elderly women. Caps were sometimes concealed beneath other headwear, such as Turkmen sheepskin hats (*telpék*), but were often a feature in Central Asian dress. They were made by women for members of their households and, in the towns, by individual craftsmen and women who sold their work in the bazaars.

YOMUT TURKMEN people

Cap

20th century, Turkmenistan / Afghanistan
cotton, silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.815

TAJIK / CHODOR TURKMEN people

Cap

20th century, Turkmenistan

wool, silk (thread); embroidery, loop manipulated braid

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.812

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Neckpiece

20th century, Central Asia

silver, gilt, carnelian, turquoise, coral, metal

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.915

TURKMEN people

Pair of bracelets

Bilezik

early 20th century, Central Asia
silver, gilt, carnelian

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.908.a-b

Turkmen bracelets are worn by all Turkmen tribes. They are decorated with carnelians arranged in two to four rows and worn in pairs, one on each arm. Large examples, with eight rows of stones, could cover the entire lower arm. Bracelets were generally reserved for festivals and ceremonies, although women from wealthy Turkmen families wore them every day. Occasionally bracelets were part of an elaborate ensemble with five linked rings and a thimble chained to each other and to the bracelet. This style was worn by girls from the age of ten.

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Cap

20th century, Turkmenistan / Afghanistan
silk, silk (thread), cotton; embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.814

In the nineteenth century a cap's style indicated the wearer's ethnic identity, tribe and region. This style of cap, with embroidery worked in interlacing or ladderstitch (*kesdi*) in red, yellow, blue and white silk thread, identifies the wearer as a member of the Tekke Turkmen tribe. Similar embroidery can be seen on the Tekke Turkmen woman's mantle on display.

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Dorsal braid ornament

Sačbagy

early 20th century – mid 20th century, Central Asia
silver, carnelian

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.912

Plait ornaments of this style are worn by all the Turkmen groups, with distinct styles favoured by each group. They were predominantly worn by married women and were threaded in pairs on thread which was tied into the hair or attached to a headdress.

ERSARI TURKMEN people

Dorsal braid ornament

Saćlyk

early 20th century – mid 20th century, Central Asia
silver

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.910

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Headband

Manlajlyk

early 20th century, Central Asia

silver, gilt, carnelian, metal

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.918

Manlajlyk are one type of headband or headdress ornament worn by Turkmen girls and women including Tekke Turkmen women of the Merv oasis. Two or three rows may be worn one above the other, covering the front of a high fabric headdress and attached by hooks at the sides and a loop at the centre which is stitched to the cloth. Some Turkmen groups such as the Saryk combined *manlajlyk* with pendant temple ornaments.

TURKMEN people

Double-sided dorsal pendant

Asyk

1850–1900, Central Asia

silver, gilt, carnelian, turquoise, cotton (thread), metal (thread)

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.906

After Turkmen women married they wore their hair in two plaits which hung down their back. *Asyk* refers to ornaments attached to the plaits, or attached to a headdress and worn hanging over the plaits. They were presented to the bride by the groom's parents and were worn from the wedding day until the birth of the first male child.

TURKMEN people

Pectoral ornament

Gönžuk

early 20th century, Central Asia
silver, gilt, carnelian

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.907

This type of breast ornament is worn by many Turkmen groups. Jewellery was a form of portable wealth in nomadic Turkmen society and a massive piece such as this example clearly indicated the wealth and status of the wearer's family. Several ornaments were worn on the front of the body, either sewn to garments and the headdress or suspended around the neck. In addition to pierced work and fire-gilding in a leaf and blossom pattern, this example includes forty-six table-cut (flat-topped), collet-set carnelians. The gilt plaques at the top of the chains have an ancestor motif at either end.

TURKMEN people

Heart-shaped dorsal pendant

Asyk

early 20th century, Central Asia

silver, gilt, carnelian

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.927

This plait ornament is inscribed 'Made by Mulla Heidar', presumably referring to a workshop jeweller. The design is associated with the Tekke Turkmen. The term *Mulla* was used by the Turkmen to refer to anyone who could read and write. Turkmen smiths worked within a guild system and trained under a master craftsman, usually a male relative, working either at home or in an urban workshop. Silversmiths, coppersmiths and goldsmiths were found in every large nomadic settlement (*aul*) and urban centre. Metal was either obtained as ingots or plates or melted down from Russian, Afghan and Persian coins or damaged jewellery.

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Pectoral ornament

Guljaka

20th century, Central Asia
silver, gilt, carnelian

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.929

Guljaka are ornamental discs worn as part of everyday dress attached to the front of women's tunics at the centre of the neck. The form originated among western Turkmen tribes, such as the Yomut, and its use spread east, where it was adopted by the Tekke after 1920. The fire-gilt decoration of this example is a style associated with the Tekke Turkmen community. Fire-gilding is accomplished by mixing gold with mercury to create an amalgam with a low melting point that is brushed onto cleaned silver jewellery and heated so that the mercury evaporates, leaving a gold layer.

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Head section of a camel trapping

20th century, Turkmenistan

silk, silk (thread), cotton (lining), leather, feathers;
embroidery, block printing

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Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.875

Turkmen children's costume

The Turkmen people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Central Asia. They comprise several tribes, including the Tekke, Yomut and Ersari, and until the late nineteenth century were mainly nomadic herders and shepherds. Turkmen spiritual belief incorporated Islam, spirit worship and ancestor worship. Ceremonies designed to appease the spirits and deflect inauspicious forces were combined with the use of talismans and amulets to protect children and other vulnerable members of the community, including expectant mothers, babies, and the elderly.

Children were the most precious resource in nomadic Turkmen society and accordingly their garments and jewellery are highly decorated with patterns and materials that protect the young against danger from the spirit world and from misfortune. Amulets were sewn onto children's clothing, including their caps, to safeguard against capricious, ill-natured forces and sicknesses. The triangle (*doga* or *tumar*) was believed to be a particularly powerful amulet against the malevolent spirits (*jinn*). Appliquéd fabric *doga* often held protective materials such as salt, coal or verses from the Koran.

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Boy's amulet

Ok-jaj

mid 20th century, Central Asia

silver, gilt, carnelian

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.923

In Turkmen society, the ram is the most frequently worshipped domestic animal. Boys were protected by amulets which often incorporated the form of ram's horns in their design, because it was believed that evil spirits never assumed the form of a ram and therefore the shape of curved ram's horns protected the wearer from demons. This style of amulet, with paired ram's horn terminals, was sewn to the back of a boy's garment or collar, perhaps as one of a pair. Bells on chains originally may have hung from the horns.

TURKMEN people

Child's shirt

Kurta

20th century, Central Asia

cotton, wool (thread), silk (thread), silk (brocade and velvet); appliqué, embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.830

Red and blue were colours attributed with magical properties, making them suitable for garments worn by precious children. The shirt, constructed from scraps of white cotton, is beautifully embroidered in red and blue wool and silk, and has been repaired several times. The round appliquéd emblems may represent the sun.

TURKMEN people

Cradle fan

20th century, Central Asia

cotton, cotton (thread), wool (thread), silk (velvet), glass (beads); appliqué, embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.831

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Child's cap

20th century, north Afghanistan

silk, silk (thread), cotton (lining); embroidery

Purchased with funds donated by Vivien Knowles, 2012

2012.364

This exquisitely embroidered small cap is topped with a small cloth-wrapped amulet or talisman. Its contents may include materials that increase the power or good fortune of the wearer (talismans) or those that preserve the wearer from malicious forces (amulets). They include paper inscribed with Islamic prayers, charcoal, salt, camel hair, boars' tusks, or seeds from propitious plants.

TURKMEN people

Child's tunic

Kurte

20th century, Central Asia

cotton, silk, silk (thread), cowries, silver (pendant),
carnelian, metal (plaques and thimbles), glass (beads),
plastic (thimbles), metallic thread; appliqué, embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.828

TEKKE TURKMEN people

Child's cap

20th century, Turkmenistan

silk, silk (thread), metal (plaques), cotton (lining);
embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.818

Caps were an integral part of Central Asian costume worn by all ages and classes, except elderly women. Children's caps were embellished with protective elements ranging from owl feathers, blue beads and cloth triangles to metal plaques (thought to reflect malevolent influences) and black and white threads (representing snakes), as seen on this example.

YOMUT TURKMEN people

Child's collar

Kirlik

20th century, Turkmenistan
cotton, wool; appliqué

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.833

Children's garments were sewn by the child's mother and often incorporated patchwork (*caroq*) decoration. Patchworking was not only a thrifty way of using scraps of fabric taken from worn-out clothes and household textiles, but was also believed to repel malevolent forces (*jinns*) who were reputedly confused by intricate patchwork patterns. The collar or bib (*kirlik*) was worn by young Turkmen children and this example is decorated with repeated appliquéd fabric triangles, a powerful defensive motif employed in a characteristic Yomut Turkmen fashion.

TURKMEN people

Child's tunic

Kurte

20th century, Central Asia

wool, cotton, silk, metal (plaques), silver (pendant), carnelian, plastic (button), glass (beads); appliqué, embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.829

Turkmen children wore tunics (*kurte*) from the time they could walk until about the age of five, when they adopted clothing similar to that worn by adults. The open-sided *kurte* was made by the child's mother and incorporated decoration that defended the child against malign forces (*jinn*). Decorative forms included embroidered and appliquéd triangles, stripes and other complex patterns, blue beads, reflective metal plaques and buttons, and dangling tassels and fringes with added materials that made a noise to repel the *jinn*. Unfinished hems ensured the child would continue to grow and the mother would bear more children.

CHODOR TURKMEN people

Child's cap

20th century, Central Asia
cotton, silk (thread); embroidery

Purchased, NGV Asian Art Acquisition Fund
with the assistance of Graham and Vivien Knowles,
Charles Goode AC and Cornelia Goode, 2013

2013.816