

The Uzbeks Ethnic Group



The Uzbeks are good at singing and dancing and are passionate with their life. The Kurnuli birds stands for honesty, humility, purity, beauty, and loyalty, and they are also the symbol of kindness, peace, and prosperity.

The environment and population

The Uzbeks has a population of 12 370, who scatter over wide areas of Dining Autonomous Region. They mainly live in Uramqi, Yining, Mulei, Qitai, Tacheng, and Kashi, Hetian, Shache, Yecheng. Yining has the most Uzbek inhabitants.

The Uzbeks are mostly scattered over many areas and are mostly city dwellers, who take on commercial and handicraft business; there are a few living in farming and pastoral area, taking on farming or herding, or both.



The historical origin

The ancestors of the Uzbeks can be traced back to many aboriginal tribes in central Asia, such as Sute, Daxia, Dawan, Sai, Wusun, etc. During the long time of development, they also assimilated several tribes from other cultural entities. In the 14th century, the Golden Tent (Qincha) Khanate, one of the four Khanates under the Mongol Empire, was once highly strong under the regime of Uzbek Khan. Therefore the khanate was also called “Uzbeks Khanate”. In the 15th century, when the Uzbek Khanate fell apart, a number of Uzbeks moved to the Chuhe River Valley, and those who remained were known as the Uzbeks, who later formed the Uzbek ethnic group.

In the 17th century, some of the Uzbek merchants began to settle down in the cities of Xinjiang, and more followed up in early 18th century. And they began to extend their dwelling area from the southern Xinjiang up to the northern Xinjiang. In 1750s, when the Qing Dynasty had reunified Xinjiang, it kept a friendly bond for more than half a century with Haohan Khanate, Xiwa Khanate, and Buhala Khanate, which were made up mainly by Uzbeks. During this time, the Uzbek merchants, in the course of trading in Xinjiang, formed the Uzbeks’ inhabiting zones with different sizes. Some of them had real estate properties and became localized. After the middle of 20th century, farmers and herds, craftsmen, intellectuals, religious professionals, and even some paupers began to move in.

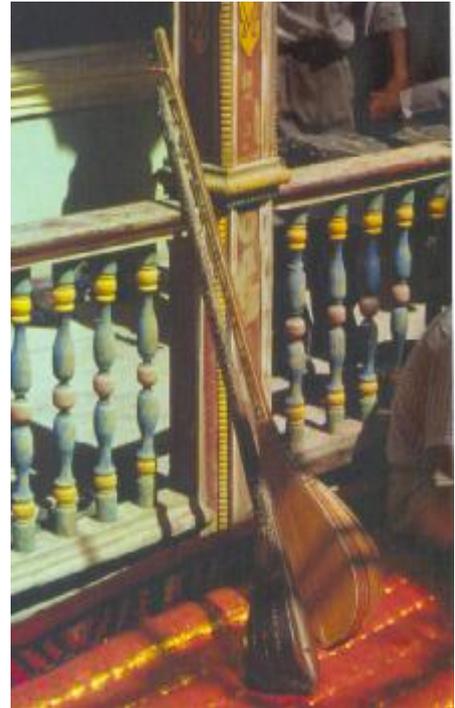
The ethnic appellation and the language

“Uzbek” is what they call themselves, which originated from the Uzbek Khan, one of the rulers under the Mongol Empire in the 14th century. The History of Yuan Dynasty used the term Yuejibie or Yuezubo to address the Uzbeks.

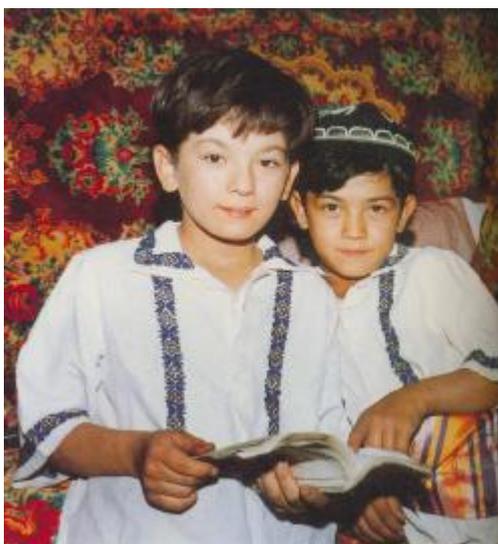
They have their own language and script. The Uzbek, Uygur, and Tatar languages all belong to the Tujue group of the Altaic language family. The languages are very close to each other in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, morphology, and can communicate directly. The script is an alphabetic writing based on the Arabic letters, close to that of the Uygurs.

The architectural features—“Awa” and “Anjiyan wall”

The architecture of the Uzbeks embodies typical style of Central Asia. Those buildings with round tops are called Awan. Some tops are covered with iron sheet for waterproof. The doors and windows are all arched, so are some corridors. The Uzbeks in the southern Xinjiang live in oblong houses built in wood and adobe with the flat roof and slightly gradient slope. The houses have thick walls, with habitable dug in the walls for either decoration or for storage. Houses in the northern Xinjiang are very similar to those of the Uygurs, built in wood and adobe, tall and wide, with mud and straw on the roof. The bricks on the house corners and caves are usually sculpted into many Islamic designs. In pastoral regions, the Uzbeks live in settled houses built with wood and adobe in winters, but in yurts in the rest of the year.



The Uzbeks value decoration in their architecture. Colorful paintings appear on almost every corner of the caisson ceilings, images of flowers, geometric graphics with bright colors and strong contrasts. The door leaves, the top of doorposts, crossbeams, ridge ends, pillars, eaves and window frames are mostly carved with natural-colored wood. In the southern Xinjiang, there still exists a type of wall called “Anjiyan”, which originated from central Asia. The wall is piled up with many layers of mud, which form beautiful striations, looking solid and nice. And it is convenient to build.



The costumes and ornaments — — “Tuoni” and “overshoes”

The Uzbeks wear colored hats with bright embroidery in unique patterns. Senior people wear simple-colored hats. Women often wear scarves on top of their hats. Men wear button-less robes reaching the knee with oblique collars with the right side of the front covering the left. The robe is tied with a triangular embroidered girdle. This kind of clothes is called “Tuoni”. Which are similar to the “Qiapan” of the Uygurs. Women wear broad and pleated dresses without girdles. They wear earrings, fingerings, bracelets and necklaces.

Nowadays, people also wear modern clothes. The Uzbeks in cities especially, wear suits or other formal clothes. The Uzbeks usually wear leather boots and overshoes with low-cut uppers. The overshoes were usually made of leather, mostly rubber now. They take off their overshoes before entering the house, and put them out of the house to avoid taking any dirt into the

room.

The dietetic customs—“Nang”, “milk tea”, and “Naren rice”

The Uzbeks eat beef, mutton, horsemeat, and the milk of these animals, and they have similar taboos with those of other Muslims. Nang (baked bread) and milk are indispensable in everyday meal. Zhuafan (rice eaten with hands) is one of the most common staple foods, which can be specified as Fe’erganna style, Wuyoutima Style, Buhala style, and Posutidumi style according to the different ingredients. It is made with cooked ground meat, pastry pieces, onions, mixed with pepper and yogurt, topped with meat broth. Naren rice is considered the most valuable food and is served only on festivals or for guests. “Michangzi” are also very popular traditional food. The daily meals include meat with potatoes, Zhuarou(meat eaten with hands), roasted stuffed buns, hand pulled noodles, rice and green bean porridge. There are strict regulations for meals. The elders take the seats of honor and the youngsters are to be seated elsewhere at table. One is not to take off his hat at dinner, neither is he to cough, blow his nose or to speak aloud.



The festival customs

—“Rozi Heyt” and “Corban”

Rozi Heyt and Corban are the most important festivals are all closely related to Islam. They are both stately celebrated in similar way as other Islamic peoples. Song-and-dance performances are often held, along with horse race, lamb chasing, wrestling, which create a joyous air.

The religion—Islam

The ancestors of the Uzbeks used to believe in Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, and were all converted to Islam from the time of Uzbek Khan. All the major religious activities are conducted in mosques. They pay attention to the five fundamental courses as “testimony of faith, prayer, fasting during the Ramadan, giving Zakat (support the needy), the pilgrimage to Makkah”.