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Spiritual and Cultural Development of Uzbekistan in the Years of Independence

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ABSTRACT

During the period of independence, fundamental changes took place in the field of culture and art, and the legal framework of the cultural sphere was created. The cultural life of Uzbekistan after independence is one of the main pillars of the country's processes of renewal, self-awareness, national revival and modernization.

Keywords:

Culture, modernization, art, theater, cinema, ideology, Renaissance

Relevance of the topic. During the years of independence, as in all areas of social life, fundamental changes occurred in cultural life. Broad opportunities were created for the development of national culture, both in form and content. Also, the spheres of culture and art in our country during the period of independence had the opportunity to develop based on national values and modern trends. Despite the fact that Uzbekistan has not yet gained its independence, special attention was paid to the spirituality, culture, art, and national values of our people. After all, the first President of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, emphasized: "Our main task in the field of spirituality is to consistently continue the noble work we began during the years of independence, such as restoring our national values, understanding our identity, forming a national idea and ideology, and restoring the place and respect for our sacred religion in our spiritual life, raising them to a new level, and strengthening their influence." During the period of independence, a lot of work was done in this regard in our country. First of all, the legal basis of the industry was created. In addition, our government created favorable conditions for the development of these industries. More than

34 years have passed since our independence was gained. The changes and innovations that have occurred in the field of culture and art during this past period now require a historical assessment. Because the significance of the work carried out in our republic in the past period determines the need for their historical study. Culture and art are always an indicator of the level of political, economic and social development of a country. Therefore, the historical study of the development of culture and art in Uzbekistan is of particular relevance, and this issue was taken as the relevance of the topic. In studying this topic, first of all, the main source basis and literature of the work was the work of Islam Karimov, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, who referred to a number of works and speeches, in which he gave assessments of historical processes, in particular, his thoughts on the socio-economic situation, spiritual and cultural life of today's Uzbekistan, and his instructions on restoring historical memory during the years of independence, strengthening the spiritual foundations of the life of the nation, society, and the growing generation, and his rational thoughts on the necessity and importance of their implementation¹. A number of speeches

¹ Каримов. И.А. Юксак маънавият – енгилмас куч.-Т.: Маънавият, 2008. –Б. 15.

and works by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, were also used². Since Uzbekistan gained independence on August 31, 1991, cultural life has entered a period of fundamental change. Independence has created ample opportunities for the restoration of national values, the objective study of history, and the development of art and culture. The 1990s witnessed unprecedented changes in the spiritual and cultural life of Uzbekistan. The declaration of the country's independence brought an end to nearly 130 years of Russian imperial colonialism and the hegemony of Bolshevik-Communist ideology. It must be particularly emphasized that independence, first and foremost, cast off the shackles binding our people. Subjugation in the spiritual and educational spheres—and the deprivation of the right to determine one's own cultural policy—act as barriers to the socio-political, economic, and spiritual-ideological progress of any nation. "Material and economic reforms are one thing," said Islam Karimov, the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan; "they can be accomplished. But spiritual reforms—freeing oneself from the grip of servitude and subservience, standing tall with dignity, reviving the traditions of our ancestors, and proving oneself a worthy successor to them—there is no task in this world more arduous yet more honorable than this."³

Reforms in the sphere of culture were carried out in the following areas:

1.Revival of national values — the restoration of the celebration of Navruz (1992), and state programs for studying the legacies of Imam Bukhari, Baha-ud-Din Naqshband, and Alisher Navoi.

2.Policy on spirituality and enlightenment — establishment of the "Spirituality and

Enlightenment" Center (1994) and the development of new concepts focused on spiritual upbringing.

3.Strengthening of national identity — National symbols: adoption of the flag, coat of arms, and anthem (1991–1992).

4.Transformation of cultural infrastructure — the revitalization of the activities of theaters, museums, palaces of art, and libraries. These processes strengthened the foundation of Uzbekistan's cultural development as a new, sovereign state.

The political, economic, and cultural changes taking place in our society as a result of independence are also influencing the art of theater. In particular, our government has focused on the development of the cultural sphere since the very early days of independence. In this regard, Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-360, dated March 9, 1992, titled "On Measures to Further Improve the Organizational Structure and Activities of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan," was issued by our first President, I.A. Karimov. Subsequently, following the issuance of Decree No. PF-3491 dated September 27, 2004, "On the Establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Sports Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan," the system for managing and organizing the spheres of culture and sports underwent a fundamental transformation. This decree sets out the objectives of comprehensively addressing issues related to the development of culture and sports; creating conditions for nurturing physically healthy, spiritually rich, and well-rounded individuals; instilling a love for sports and a healthy lifestyle; more fully meeting the cultural and aesthetic needs of the population; and improving the management of the culture and sports sectors while enhancing

² Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг "Ўзбекистон Республикасини янада ривожлантириш бўйича Ҳаракатлар стратегияси тўғрисида"ги Фармони//Ўзбекистон Республикаси қонун ҳужжатлари тўплами, 2017 й., 6-сон, 70- модда); Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президенти Ш.М.Мирзиёевнинг БМТ Бош Ассамблеяси 72 сессиясидаги нутқи. // Халқ сўзи-Тошкент, 2017 йил, 19 сентябрь; Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг "Ёшларга оид давлат сиёсати самарадорлигини ошириш ва Ўзбекистон ёшлар

иттифоқи фаолиятини қўллаб-қувватлаши тўғрисида"ги ПФ-5106-сонли Фармон; Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг 2022 йил 28 январдаги —2022-2026 йилларга мўлжалланган Янги Ўзбекистоннинг тараққиёт стратегияси тўғрисида" ги ПФ-60-сон Фармони // www.lex.uz

³ Каримов И. Ўзбекистон: миллий истиқлол, иқтисод, сиёсат, мафкура. I жилд. –Т.; 1996. –Б 202.

the coordination of state policy implementation in these areas.

Under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the "Third Renaissance" concept—aimed at fostering a new era of cultural and intellectual awakening based on the synergy of culture, science, education, and innovation—was established as a goal within the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. In recent years, several programs have been implemented to fully restore cultural heritage. Cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Shakhrisabz underwent restoration in cooperation with UNESCO. Policies aimed at fostering a culture of reading were pursued; between 2017 and 2024, projects such as "Promotion of Book Products" and "Modern Information-Library System" were carried out. Concurrently, significant attention was paid to cultural development within the framework of the "New Uzbekistan" concept. The operations of the Ministry of Culture were reorganized, and new mechanisms to support creative professionals were developed. As a result of these programs, the process of modernization proceeded rapidly across all sectors of cultural life. In the recent past, various outreach and awareness-raising activities have been conducted among the public with the aim of reviving national values, traditions, and customs, and further enriching our national heritage. Additionally, measures have been outlined for the protection and preservation of intangible cultural heritage assets. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 7, 2010, "On Approving the State Program for the Protection, Preservation, Promotion, and Utilization of Intangible Cultural Heritage Objects for 2010–2020," played a significant role in this regard. Particular attention was paid to ensuring the high-quality and effective implementation of the tasks outlined in the program. In accordance with the tasks outlined in the program, excursions to historical monuments, museums, and exhibition

halls were organized for young people to familiarize them with cultural heritage sites and the construction projects undertaken during the years of independence. Under the banner of "Studying the Scientific Heritage of Our Venerable Ancestors," the concept of the unparalleled significance of the legacies left by our country's great scholars and thinkers was instilled in the minds of the youth through documentary films and video materials showcasing the efforts made to study and preserve the scientific, literary, and cultural heritage of our forebears. The consistent promotion of such initiatives among the youth has laid the foundation for instilling in them a sense of responsibility for safeguarding our national treasures, studying the heritage of our ancestors and passing it on to future generations, as well as protecting, preserving, promoting, and utilizing elements of intangible cultural heritage. After all, our ancestors demonstrated immense dedication to ensure that our national heritage was preserved and handed down to us, even during perilous times.

During the period of independence, policies regarding art, literature, and culture were also effectively implemented. In particular, art and literature—serving as a spiritual and cultural mirror of society—underwent significant development during the years of independence. In the realm of literature, writers such as Erkin Vohidov, Abdulla Oripov, Xurshid Davron, and Omon Matjon reflected the ideals of national awakening. Poetic and epic works celebrating independence emerged. In the visual arts, national traditions blended with modern trends, and the school of painting expanded. The state provided support for the development of musical genres such as estrada (popular music), maqom, and folklore. International events like the "Maqom Festival" and "Bakhshi Art" were launched in 2018. These developments laid the groundwork for the renewal of Uzbekistan's cultural identity⁴.

Reforms aimed at preserving and restoring cultural heritage did not stop there. As a

⁴ Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг "Ўзбекистон Республикасини янада ривожлантириш бўйича Ҳаракатлар стратегияси тўғрисида"ги

Фармони//Ўзбекистон Республикаси қонун ҳужжатлари тўплами, 2017 й., 6-сон, 70- модда);

significant center of world civilization, Uzbekistan possesses a vast tangible and intangible heritage. Major initiatives undertaken since independence include the restoration of over 800 historical monuments, the inclusion of the historic centers of four cities in the UNESCO list, the modernization of the National Archival Fund, and the adoption of the "Meros" (Heritage) state program. The approach to cultural heritage completely abandoned the ideological constraints of the Soviet era and became grounded in principles of scientific objectivity. During the years of independence, cultural institutions underwent fundamental modernization:

1. New buildings were constructed for national and regional theaters.
2. The National Library of Uzbekistan has created a digitized collection.
3. Projects such as the "Culture Caravan" and "Culture and Art Schools" have been launched.
4. Modern "Culture Centers" have been established in the regions.

These processes created a modern infrastructure for cultural life and increased the opportunities to engage the general public in cultural activities.

Conclusion. In short, the developments in the fields of theater, cinema, and music in our republic during the years of independence can be viewed as a reflection of the reforms implemented by the government and the social changes occurring within society. The transformations in these sectors can be regarded as a sign of shifts in the spiritual and aesthetic spirit of society, as well as a defining factor in the results of the work carried out in this area since independence.

While acknowledging the extensive work undertaken to develop these sectors since independence—and the many achievements noted above—it is also necessary to point out that a number of unresolved problems and shortcomings remain. However, based on the vigorous efforts made to date and the results achieved, we can confidently state that these issues will be resolved in the near future.

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