



MUSEUMS - A FOUNDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE NATION

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Abstract

This article examines the history of the formation of the Bukhara State Museum-Reserve, its rich cultural heritage, and its role in preserving and promoting the art of gold embroidery. The study analyzes the museum’s early development, the process of collecting scientific and ethnographic materials, and the features of traditional Bukhara garments. Particular attention is given to the importance of museums in educating the younger generation in the spirit of respect for national heritage.

Keywords: Bukhara, museum-reserve, cultural heritage, gold embroidery, ethnography, traditional clothing, Great Silk Road.

Introduction

Since ancient times, Bukhara — the pearl of Central Asia — has been located at the crossroads of trade routes connecting the East and the West. Among the main commodities traded along these caravan routes were, without a doubt, silk fabrics — goods directly associated with the very name of the “Silk Road.” Prior to the introduction of Islam into Central Asia, Zoroastrianism — the worship of fire — was widespread in Bukhara. This is confirmed by numerous archaeological findings discovered throughout the oasis. It is well known that during this period in Central Asia, the walls of palaces such as Varakhsha, Afrosiab, and Bolaliktepa were adorned with large-scale mural paintings.

During the medieval period, Bukhara became one of the major trade, handicraft, and administrative centers of the region of Mawarannahr (Transoxiana). The ancient international trade route — the “Great Silk Road,” which linked the



countries of the Near and Middle East with India and China — passed precisely through this city.

Although Bukhara’s past is extraordinarily rich and fascinating, full of historical and evolutionary events, many pages of its glorious history have not been fully preserved. In particular, written sources provide only fragmentary information about the city’s remote antiquity.

The statement by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. M. Mirziyoyev - “Educating young people who are highly spiritual, possess modern knowledge and professional skills, and have an independent mindset in the spirit of national and universal values is one of our most important tasks” — is by no means accidental¹. Studying the history of our country, which has a long and glorious past, and drawing the right conclusions from it, is today considered the duty of every young generation.

In Bukhara Region, there are 660 cultural heritage sites. Most of them consist of archaeological sites, works of monumental art, and architectural monuments. These cultural heritage objects represent the invaluable wealth of our people, and preserving them and passing them on intact to future generations is the sacred duty of us all. Regional museums play an exceptionally important role in fulfilling this task.

The Bukhara State Museum-Reserve has been operating since 1922². According to its first director, A. Pulatov: “The museum has just been established, but enriching it with exhibits and transforming it into a truly modern museum is the task of the new generation”³.

From March 1, 1927, work began on organizing exhibitions for the museum. Three departments were established: archaeology, ethnography, and natural history. The ethnography department was primarily based on the traditional clothing and gold embroidery (zardozi) items of the local population of the Bukhara oasis dating from the 19th–20th centuries⁴.

¹ Мирзиёев Ш.М. Миллий тараққиёт йўлимизни қатъият билан давом эттириб, янги босқичга кўтарамиз. 1-том. – Т.: Ўзбекистон, 2017 Б-89

² Ниязова М.И. Из истории деятельности Бухарского музея//Из истории культурного наследия Бухара № 2.С-38, Церемония открытия в Бухаре первого музея// Бухоро ахбори 112-сон. 1922 йил 23 ноябрь.

³ Пулатова М. Асрлардан гувоҳлик бериб. // Бухоронома 2002 й 18.05. -с.4

⁴ Болтаев А.Х. Бухоро музейи-тарихий ўлкашунослик маркази сифатида. Бухоро 2018й Б-11



In 1931, one of the museum exhibitions located in six rooms on the first floor of the Kukaldosh madrasa was dedicated to samples of Bukhara's gold embroidery art. It featured exhibits of national garments from the Bukhara oasis decorated with traditional gold embroidery. Starting from that year, museum researchers were assigned to conduct scientific research in the field of local studies (regional ethnography). They collected and studied artifacts related to the history of the region. During this scientific work, not only material objects were gathered but also valuable information concerning the ethnic history and ethnography of the people⁵. As a result, the museum's collection significantly expanded, including gold-embroidered garments, clothing, and various types of local fabrics — some of which were donated by volunteers, while others were purchased. Based on the collected materials, scholarly articles were published in national and international academic journals and media outlets⁶.

The main Inventory Book (Reception Book) of the Bukhara State Museum-Reserve is distinguished by the uniqueness of the materials it records. It is precisely in this book that all items accepted as museum exhibits are systematically registered in chronological order.

Today, after more than a century of activity, the museum possesses extensive collections in archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy, fine and applied arts, manuscripts and archival documents, daily life and ethnography, drawing, painting, and sculpture. All of these are displayed in numerous permanent and temporary exhibitions, reflecting the rich historical and cultural heritage of Bukhara.

Particularly noteworthy are the traditional garments presented in these exhibitions. Clothing embodies traditions that trace back to ancient ethnic history, expressing elements of social relations, spiritual, religious, and aesthetic values. It reflects the material conditions of the people, their sense of beauty, ideals of elegance, distinctive features of household management, and aspects of family life. Moreover, garments reveal information about the time and place in which a person lived, as well as the joyous or sorrowful events of their life. Traditional national

⁵ Ниязова М.И. Женский головной убор в обрядах Бухары (по коллекциям Бухарского Государственного музея-заповедника) //Музей. Традиции. Этничность XX – XXI вв. Материалы международной научной конференции, посвященной 100-летию Российского этнографического музея. СПб-Кишинев, с. 140-142

⁶ Carmel L., Niyazova M.I. Textile Arts in Transoxiana //History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Development in contrast: from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Volume V. UNESCO. P.666-679



attire, in particular, demonstrates the deep influence of cultural customs, with its main forms and elements evolving and crystallizing over the course of centuries.

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