

Historical Formation of The Samarkand School of Epistle-Writing and The Place of Bakhshi Performance Traditions

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Abstract: This article analyzes the historical formation of the Samarkand school of epic poetry, its main features and traditions of Bakhshi performance. The place of epic poetry in folk oral culture, the repertoire and performance styles of Samarkand Bakhshi are studied from a scientific and theoretical point of view. The article also highlights the importance of the Samarkand school of epic poetry as a cultural heritage, its current state and the issues of passing it on to future generations. This study serves to enrich scientific views on the preservation and development of traditional Bakhshi art.

Keywords: Samarkand school of epic poetry, bakhshi performance, folk oral art, epic art, repertoire, performing traditions, cultural heritage, traditional art, bakhshi style, history of epic poetry.

Introduction: Uzbek folk oral art has a long history, and the art of epic poetry occupies a special place in its structure. Epic poetry plays an important role in preserving the cultural and spiritual heritage of our people and passing it on to future generations. Uzbek epic poetry traditions have regional characteristics, and the Khorezm, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya and Samarkand epic poetry schools are distinguished by their unique performing style and forms of expression.

The Samarkand epic poetry school is distinguished by its rich history, unique performing style and accomplished bakhshis. The art of epic poetry has been formed in this region for centuries, and it is of great importance not only as an example of folk oral art, but also as a means of understanding national identity, preserving historical memory, and as an educational tool. Epic poems performed by Samarkand bakhshis reflect the historical and cultural life, traditions, and hopes of the people.

This article studies the history of the formation of the Samarkand school of epic poetry, its outstanding representatives, performing traditions, and genre features from a scientific and theoretical point of view. It also analyzes the specific features of bakhshi performance, the traditional epic repertoire, and its significance today. At the same time, it also highlights

the urgent issues of preserving and passing on this cultural heritage to future generations.

Folk oral art plays a great role in the improvement of the lifestyle of our people, and over the centuries it has accumulated a rich spiritual heritage, making a worthy contribution to the education of the younger generation. Epics, an important area of folk oral art, have very deep historical roots, have been created for centuries and sung in various socio-economic conditions. The first epics appeared in Greece, where they sang about the courage of legendary heroes and the miracles of the gods. Homer's "Iliad", "Odyssey", Abulkasim Firdawsi's "Shahnama", Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy" (written between 1307 and 1321, published in 1472 and consisting of three parts: the first is "Hell", the second is "Purgatory", also called "A'rof", which is the interval between hell and heaven, knowledge and goodness, and the third is "Heaven") are ancient examples of the epic genre. Epics, according to their essence, are divided into heroic ("Alpomish", "Farhod and Shirin"), adventure detective ("Sab'ai sayyor"), romantic-romantic ("Tohir and Zuhra", "Leyli and Majnun"), war epic ("Yusuf and Ahmad", "Saddi Iskandari"), historical-memoir ("Shaybaniynoma", "Jizzakh uprising"), philosophical ("Khayrat ul-abror"), fantastic-allegorical ("Lison uttayr"), didactic ("Kutadgu

bilig") types. While heroic epics describe the fate of the people and society, romantic-romantic epics focus on the adventures of lovers. In historical-memoir or historical-biographical epics, historical figures are symbolized and exaggerated. In general, idealization and exaggerated imagery prevail in epics, and they often feature various legends, myths, stories, giants, fairies, Khizr, dragons, magical horses (Boychibor in "Alpomish"), and magic.

Folk epics are performed by bakhshi, dostonchi, and folk poets to the accompaniment of dutar, dombira, and other folk instruments. Although folklore epics and written literature epics are similar in form and style, written literature epics differ in the writer's unique perception and assessment of the world and the way, method, and style of expressing his thoughts, ideas, and dreams. Although most of Navoi's epics, including "Layli and Majnun" and "Saddi Iskandariy", were based on folklore themes, the poet radically recreated them based on his own aesthetic views and artistic intentions. The content of the epics was heroic, warlike, historical, romantic, and everyday life. Bakhshi poets played an important role in the performance of epics. The meaning of the word bakshi is explained as follows: in Mongolian and Buryat, baksha, bag'sha means teacher, enlightener; in Sanskrit, bhikshu means monk, dervish. In Uzbekistan, an artist who sings, recites, and passes down songs and epics from memory. The word bakshi is sometimes used in the sense of a shaman, and in general, epic singers and epic tellers are called yuzbashi, saqi, sannovchi, jirov. Bakshis are mainly divided into two categories - performing and creative bakshis. While performing bakshis mainly sing the epics they learned from their teacher with slight changes, creative bakshis also create new epics based on the oral epic tradition. Such bakshis are also called poet bakshis, for example, Ergash poet, Fazil poet, Polkan poet, Abdullah poet, Khidir poet, etc. Bakshis sing epics and songs accompanied by instruments such as kobiz, dombira, dutar. Khorezm bakshis perform epics mainly with dutar, partly with strings, and are accompanied by singers on gijjak and bolamo. Strict rules and regulations are observed in singing epics and training students. During the Mongol invasion, Buddhist Qalandars, office workers who compiled various documents based on the Uyghur alphabet, surgeons among the Mongols, secretaries in the Chigatai ulus, the Golden Horde, Kazan and Crimean khanates, senior officials who conducted accounting work for military units in the Babirya state and paid them salaries, people who kept accounts of funds (expenses) for the construction of administrative buildings in the Bukhara emirate, and tribal elders among the Turkmen were also called bakshis.

The center of bakhshi art in Uzbek folklore, in addition to major epic schools such as Boysun, Bulungur, Nurota, Narpay, Kurgan, Khorezm, Shahrisabz, Sherabad, Chiroqchi, Qamay, Piskent, Kulbuqon, Uzbek-lakai and other such centers are also known. They differ from each other in their repertoire, style, certain creative principles and methods of performance. Heroic epics reflect the courageous struggle of the people against their own free invaders, one of such heroic epics was the epic "Alpomish".

The epic series about the courage of one of the people's favorite heroes, Goroglu, is widespread among the Uzbek, Tajik, Kazakh, Turkmen, Karakalpak, Tatar, Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Turkish peoples. Battle epics describe the courage of the heroes of the work in historical and legendary wars. "Jangnomai Abo Muslim", "Jangnomai Amir Hamza", Firdavsi's "Shahnama", "Jangnomai Jamshid", "Khushang", "Tumaris" and others were among them. The repertoire of the Bakhshis also includes epics based on past events and incidents, the activities of historical figures, in which historical truth and myth, real sources and artistic fabric are intertwined. Epics such as "Jizzakh Uprising" and "Mardikor", created at the beginning of the 20th century on historical themes, reflected the events of the popular uprisings that swept across Turkestan in 1916. The largest part of Uzbek folk epics is made up of romantic epics. Their plots are extremely similar, usually the hero falls in love with a beautiful girl and sets off on a journey, experiences amazing events, overcomes difficulties and achieves his goal. Love conflicts and adventurous stories such as "Kuntug'mish" are included in such epics. The epics "Sakhbqiron", "Orzugul", and "Erali and Sherali" reflect events related to the daily life of the people.

Among the epics, there were also book epics that arose as a result of the processing of classical poetry samples in folk oral creativity, that is, they had a written literary source, that is, they were created under the influence of written literature. These included the epics "Farhod and Shirin", "Leyli and Majnun", "Bahrom and Gulandom", created based on the works of Alisher Navoi, "Yusuf and Zulaykho", "Rustami Doston", "Malikai Dilorom". Epic writing was widely developed in the Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya oases, in Khorezm and in the Samarkand region. During this period, the repertoire of the bakshis who sang epics included more than 150 folk epics. Among the people, such epic singers as Yuldashbulbul, Ergash Jumanbulbul oglu, Fozil Yuldash oglu, Ilolkan, Islam the poet, Berdi bakhshi, Bola bakhshi, Ahmad bakhshi were famous. The poet Polkan, who had an extraordinary memory, knew more than seventy epics by heart. The fact that each epic contained from two to three thousand lines

to ten to fifteen, even twenty thousand verses, testified to the great potential, strong memory, ability to memorize and remember, and creative power of the folk bakhshis. Fazil Yuldash oglu could recite 60 epics, Ergash Jumanbulbul oglu 50 epics, while some of the bakhshis only recited epics, while others composed epics themselves.

Special evenings were organized to listen to epics, and weddings and festivities did not pass without bakhshis, and the listeners sat down on the net and listened attentively to the bakhshi. Talented dostonists could sing a doston in two or three nights, because the volume of the doston required two or three nights of continuous performance. Among the bakhshis, Shernazar Berdinazar oglu could sing a doston for seven nights. The bakhshis who attended the dostoning nights competed with each other in their talent, eloquence, and skill in playing the instrument. Schools of dostoning with their own traditions were formed in the region. Large dostoning schools such as Bulungur, Narpay, Kurgan, Khorezm, Shahrisabz, and Sherabad were especially famous. They differed from each other in their repertoire, style, specific creative principles, and performance methods.

A study of the work of folk bakhshis confirms that among the doston they performed, there were also works on religious themes. Such bakhshis were forced to sing doston secretly until the years of our independence. Various pressures in the Mustabid regime led to a relative decrease in the number of bakhshis. In addition to telling epics, they were also engaged in duokhan. Thus, centers where folk epics were sung with special skill were called schools by the name of this area. Currently, Uzbek folklore studies have identified such poetic epic schools as Bulungur, Kurgan, Shahrisabz, Qamay, Sherabad, southern Tajikistan, Khorezm, as excellent centers of bakhshi art. Of these, the Bulungur epic school, to which Fazil Yoldash oglu belonged, was the one where the most heroic epics were sung in an artistically perfect manner. It is not for nothing that the Fazil Yoldash oglu version of the heroic epic "Alpomish", of which several versions and dozens of variants were created, is accepted as the highest and most artistically perfect example in the Kungir version. Amin Bakhshi, noted by Professor Hodi Zarifov, was also a representative of this school. In ancient times, such bakhshis as Muhammad the poet, Sultanmurod Suyar, Rahimbulbul made a worthy contribution to the fame of this school with their works and performances. They performed epics such as "Alpomish", "Oysuluv", "Hasankhan", "Chambil qamal" with special skill. Another school that made a name for itself in Samarkand epic poetry is called Kurgan epic poetry. The ancestors and descendants of the Ergash

poets are representatives of this school. As noted in the previous pages, the owners of this school told epics in a loving way. Unlike others, in the Kurgan school, women named Sultan kampir, Tilla kampir also mastered the art of bakhshi. In addition to them, the work of the poets Yodgor, Buran bakhshi, Jassaq bakhshi, and Polkan developed in the manner formed in this school. The performance of the epics "The Birth of Goroglu", "Ravshan", "Kuntugmish", and "Dalli" was typical of representatives of this school.

Another school is called Shahrisabz. This school produced such creative bakhshis as Khidir, Ernazar, and Abdulla. The epics of the Goroglu series, especially the epic "Malikai Ayyor", were widespread in this school.

The Narpay epic school also contributed to the development of the Uzbek epic with a number of bakhshis and epics. In Narpay epic, the names of Islam, Nurmon Abduvoy oglu, who were educated by Rajab, are mentioned with special respect. Islam was able to combine the traditions of the Kurgan and Shahrisabz schools in his work.

Representatives of this school performed more epics such as "Orzugul", "Sahibqiron", and "Gulmirakhon".

Creators such as Shernazar Beknazar oglu, Umir Safar oglu, and Ahmad bakhshi were artists belonging to the Sherabad school of epic poetry. The epics of the Goroglu series also occupy a special place in their work. Representatives of this school especially performed the epics of the Malla savdogar and Ollonazar Olchinbek artistically. The names of such figures as Haybat Shamol oglu and Kunduz soki, who lived in southern Tajikistan, are mentioned with respect among Uzbek bakhshis. These bakhshis also performed the epics of the Goroglu series in their own unique way. Khorezm epic poetry is distinguished by its musicality, the performance of the epic in a chorus, and the accompaniment of several musical instruments in the performance of the epic. At ancient festivals and weddings, 3-4 bakhshis were called, and each bakhshi was given a separate circle. At the end of the festival, the circle of people around the skilled bakhshi increased, and there was no one left around the low-level bakhshi. This custom forced the artist to constantly work on himself and master the art of performance. In addition, Muhammad Rahimkhan (Feruz), who ruled Khorezm for more than 40 years, annually held an examination of bakhshi and singers and personally gave them the right to recite doston. Amad bakhshi, Bola bakhshi (Kurbannazar Abdullaev), Boltavoi bakhshi, Kadir sozchi, Murod bakhshi, Ruzimbek bakhshi, Otakhon bakhshi worked in this school and performed such doston as "Bozirgon", "Oshiq gharib va Shohsanam", "Qirq ming", "Oshiq Mahmud" in a performance reminiscent of a large

concert program.

Folk epics are classified into several types, depending on their different performances in different regions of our country, methods of performance, interpretation of events, and even the fact that one region has separate schools, as well as their content. According to the observations of prominent scholars V. M. Zhirmunsky, H. T. Zarifov, M. Saidov, T. Mirzaev, B. Sarimsakov, when dividing folk epics into types, it is more appropriate to pay attention to their content and the character of the heroes. However, despite the fact that the classifications made by each of the mentioned scholars differ to some extent, they can be called as follows:

1. Heroic epics ("Alpomish").
2. Love-romantic epics ("Ravshan", "Kuntug'mish").
3. Battle epics ("Yakka Ahmad").
4. Book epics ("Sayyod and Hamro", "Oshiq Gharib and Shohsanam").
5. Historical ("Oysuluv").

The basis for the classification is explained by the main essence of the events described in the epics. For example, in the epic "Alpomish" there are also love stories, battle scenes, and historical information. However, the central idea of the work is the courage and heroism in uniting the people who were separated for a certain reason. Or in the epic "Ravshan", signs of courage and heroism are also found. However, the main idea of the epic is devoted to describing Ravshan's journey to express her love for Zulhumor.

The heroic epic is considered a separate stage in the history of folk oral art. Its famous examples are the works of the Greeks "Odyssey" and "Iliad". The Kyrgyz people's "Manas" is also an example of such a stage. Such works reflect the journeys of the people's children for the liberation of their homeland, the unification of the people, and their battles with an enemy superior in number and strength. An example of the heroic epic is the Uzbek epic "Alpomish". It expresses the ideas of the formation of national traditions in our country, the fight against external enemies, the preservation of national unity, and the protection of independent life. A significant part of the epics in the repertoire of our people's Bakhshis are romance epics. "Roman" is borrowed from the French language and meant a kind of epic. However, later, after the novel in fiction developed separately as a genre, it began to give the concept of works that reflect love and adventure in a textured manner. When we talk about romance epics, we think of folk epics that depict love and adventure. The plot begins with the lover learning about his beloved. Later, the hero embarks on a journey full of

love adventures. On this path, various interesting and amazing life scenes occur. There are one-on-one battles with enemies. The development of events in the epic develops in this way, and in the end, the lover achieves his dream. Such epics as "Ravshan" and "Kuntug'mish" can be included among such epics.

Battle epics, on the other hand, are works rich in plot development and battle scenes. Bakhshis performed such epics relatively rarely. In such epics, more attention is paid to depicting the hero's bravery. Works such as "Yusuf and Ahmad", "Alibek and Bolibek", "Kyrq ming" are among them.

Book epics appeared mainly in later works of our historical life. Having become acquainted with the interesting and instructive stories in the epics created by the representatives of our written literature, the Bakhshis created their own versions (variants) based on them. As a result, book epics emerged as a result of the interaction of written and oral creativity. Epics such as "Sayyod and Hamro", "Oshiq Gharib and Shohsanam", "Vomiq and Uzro" in oral creativity are examples of works of this method.

CONCLUSION

The Samarkand school of epic poetry, with its unique performance styles and rich repertoire, constitutes an important part of Uzbek folk oral creativity. This article analyzes the history of the formation of this school, the stages of its development and the specific features of Bakhshi performance. The results of the study show that the performance style of the Samarkand Bakhshis is closely related to the cultural life and traditional art of the region, and has been developing for centuries.

The art of epic poetry is not only a cultural heritage, but also plays an important role in the upbringing of the younger generation, in the formation of national values. However, as a result of modern technologies and globalization processes, the traditional art of Bakhshi poetry is under threat of extinction. Therefore, the preservation of this cultural wealth, its popularization and transmission to future generations remains one of the urgent issues of today.

In the future, an extensive scientific and theoretical study of the performing traditions of the Samarkand school of epic poetry, the collection, analysis and publication of the texts of Bakhshi epic poems are important tasks. Also, in order to convey the art of epic poetry to the younger generation, it is necessary to implement measures such as establishing special courses in educational institutions and establishing Bakhshi schools. At the same time, widespread promotion of the art of epic poetry using media and digital technologies will serve its development.

In general, the Samarkand school of epic poetry is an invaluable part of folk oral art, and its traditions, preserved for centuries, should be constantly respected as an integral part of our national culture.

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