
Preserving Cultural Heritage as a Key Factor in Ensuring International Tourism

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Annotation: This article discusses the role of tangible cultural heritage in preserving and shaping the tourism system in New Uzbekistan. It also highlights the importance of cultural heritage in the development of tourism within our country.

Keywords: Tangible cultural heritage, international tourism, “Lazgi”, history, national values, tradition, museum.

Tangible cultural heritage is an important link between the past and the future, representing the valuable legacy of various peoples. Similarly, the tangible cultural heritage of the Uzbek people has been nurtured and enriched over centuries by our ancestors, contributing to the nation's invaluable wealth and playing a crucial role in advancing democratic reforms and the development of a civil society. In this regard, tangible cultural heritage not only nurtures and elevates individuals but also enhances the beauty of nature and life.

In our country, the center of ongoing broad-ranging reforms primarily aims to secure the well-being, rights, and freedoms of individuals. It is possible to ensure the benefits of citizens through the establishment of a secure and conducive environment for mutual respect, compassion, responsibility, and a supportive atmosphere.

The social and economic development of Uzbekistan is seen as a convenient medium for fostering social and economic sustainability, improving international and intercultural relations, and promoting the principles of justice and rule of law. International recognition of Uzbekistan's efforts in these areas is growing.

In this context, Uzbekistan's state policy prioritizes respecting the equal rights of citizens, social justice, legal certainty, national and cultural values, traditions, and customs, promoting mutual respect for these values.

Since the years of independence, Uzbekistan has adopted special laws and state programs aimed at preserving the cultural heritage. These legislative documents safeguard Uzbekistan's cultural heritage and provide a foundation for passing it on to future generations. State programs focus on both preserving cultural heritage and enhancing international cooperation.

Central Asian nations aspire to the lofty ideals of hospitality, reverence for bread, humanism, international cooperation, and religious tolerance, among other values. These values are integral to their spiritual world and are manifested in practical activities. (1)

Central Asian peoples are closely bound by a shared history, a unique heritage. Values such as hospitality, reverence for bread, philanthropy, international cooperation, religious tolerance, and more are the components of their spiritual world and are ingrained in their practical endeavors. (2)

From 1993 to 2020, Uzbekistan included 5 tangible cultural heritage objects and 8 intangible

cultural heritage elements in UNESCO's World Heritage List. Furthermore, a plan has been established to include more than 10 tangible cultural heritage objects and 5 intangible cultural heritage elements by 2030.

As of today, Uzbekistan has proposed 7 nominations to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. These include "Shashmaqom", "Navruz", "Katta Ashula", "Askia", "Pilaf" culture and traditions, and "Khorezm dance - Lazgi."(3)

Lazgi dance is considered a beautiful art form that reflects our nation's ancient history, rich cultural heritage, and spirituality. "Lazgi" is a very ancient music genre, and many researchers have conducted scholarly studies on it.

The word "Lazgi" is believed to convey the meaning of "trembling" or "vibrating." "Lazgi" manifests the inherent rhythm of existence through rhythmic movements that synchronize with its rapid pace and subtle signals.

About the art and culture of Khorezm, especially the Lazgi art, initial information can be found in the works of Herodotus in "Histories," the holy book "Avesta" of Zoroastrianism, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's "Memories of Ancient Peoples," and Mahmud Zamakhshari's "Introduction to the Science of Eloquence." In these works, details about the emergence and development of dances, as well as their connection to traditions and customs among different peoples, are provided.

Sergei Tolstov has written a series of works related to certain aspects of Lazgi dance art. In these works, a wealth of historical and philosophical information about Lazgi is presented.

In the formation of Lazgi dance, Khorezm's harsh climate played its role. In particular, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni emphasized in his work "Chronology of Ancient Nations" that Khorezm experienced only 40 days of warmth, with the remaining months being relatively cool and cold. Foreign historians, who visited Khorezm, such as Ibn Fadlan and Abu Mansur al-Sa'ali, also mentioned the region's cool climate in their works (for example, "Journey to the Volga" and "The Virtuous People of the Era").

As a result, some specialists point out that the term "larzidan" from Persian-Farsi, which means "to shiver" or "tremble," is indicative of the name of this dance. In ancient Sanskrit, "lasya" means "dance," and "lasaka" means "dancer."

During the era of the Shurolars, some scholars even claimed that Lazgi dance was derived from the dances of the Lezgins in the Caucasus. Our history has attempted to link its antiquity to this narrative. Historical sources, in fact, provide evidence to the contrary. Historians like Jaloliddin Manguberdi, who captured Tiflis in 1225, mentioned that some of the soldiers who conquered the Caucasus saw the Lezgins dancing in a military context (4).

In our country, special attention is being paid to the preservation, development, and promotion of national culture, especially intangible cultural heritage. As evidence of this, on September 29, 2020, a presidential decree was issued to organize and hold the "Lazgi" International Dance Festival every two years starting from 2022. Additionally, the President's initiative to establish the Lazgi Academy contributes to enhancing the cultural attractiveness of our country.

Furthermore, on September 5, 2021, the ballet "Lazgi - Dance of Love and Heart" was premiered at the Alisher Navoi State Academic Grand Theater in our country. This work was staged by Raul Raymondo Rebek, a graduate of the Berlin National Opera and Ballet School and the Chief Ballet Master of the Dortmund Theatre, NRW Junior Ballet Dortmund.

The ballet's author is Saida Mirziyeva, the project leader is Gayane Umerova, scenography by Yoko Seyama, costume design by Frol Burimskiy, musical arrangement and composition by Davidson Jacksonello, and advisors include Gavharhonim Matyoqubova, Gulnora Musayeva,

and the Theater's Chief Ballet Master, Guli Hamroeva.

This premiere took place under the auspices of UNESCO, receiving high praise and recognition from the professional community. Through this work, "Lazgi" has preserved and showcased its national spirit and characteristics while embracing a rich and diverse artistic style. As a modern ballet, it has opened a new page in the world of art by bringing different cultures closer.

With its delicate and enchanting movements that captivate the heart, "Lazgi" has created sublime scenes and elevated dreams filled with inspiration and love. The complete scenic harmony of "Lazgi" has been witnessed by the global audience. It stands as Uzbekistan's new creative miracle, expanding the horizons of national dance and ballet art. Uzbek ballet now stands tall as a symbol of artistic excellence.

This creative group has harmoniously combined tradition and modernity, uniting Uzbek national melodies with the symphonic mastery of the European Symphony School to create exquisite international masterpieces (5).

The tangible and intangible cultural heritage of our regions is considered the conductor of tourist destination culture. In the contemporary world, tourism plays a crucial social and cultural role in promoting intercultural understanding, respecting cultural values, and preserving and enhancing them. Tourism activities contribute to identifying and safeguarding the tangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Today, the field of tourism has become one of the most important economic sectors. In this regard, many countries around the world are working to further develop this sector, creating the necessary infrastructure up to international standards and implementing various initiatives to attract and accommodate tourists.

In sources, tourism-related issues have been studied by various scholars, and specific definitions have been given. Russian expert Y.V. Kolotova describes historical-cultural tourism as "the socio-cultural environment that is associated with the traditions, customs, and specific features of housing, which has absorbed all the capabilities of the country, as well as the social-cultural environment related to the characteristics of the household" (6). G. Karpov and L. Khorovalars consider historical and cultural tourism as places that "attract people to places of cultural interest, museums, historical sites, art galleries, music and drama theaters, concert venues, performing arts, classical heritage, as well as areas of traditional residence, innovative creative workshops of local residents, and innovative artistic houses" (7).

Utilizing the tangible cultural heritage in tourism not only enhances the attractiveness of tourist destinations but also contributes to the protection, preservation, and promotion of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, it can be stated that international friendship and cooperation are crucial elements of our nation's security and prosperity. Ensuring intercultural respect and religious tolerance is an integral part of Uzbekistan's modern state development strategy. The nations living within our country, their traditions, and the cultural and civilizational heritage of the Islamic religion have been deeply studied from various angles. The main goal is to deepen the understanding of interethnic relations, cultural exchanges, and to bring to light the historical values of these relations in the context of today's conditions. This, in turn, provides an opportunity to protect and nurture the national interests of Uzbekistan and to shape the spiritually mature generation that will safeguard and advance the national interests of the country.

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