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HISTORICAL DISTINCTIONS OF MENTALITY PROGRESS IN UZBEK CIVIC SOCIETY

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In the 19th century in western oriental studies the concept of “under-development” and stagnation of an oriental society was widely spread.

Its essence had been formulated by the prominent orientalist academician V. V. Bartold: “Progress is a characteristic distinction of the West and stagnation is a feature characteristic to the East this is a common opinion widely spread and against which the representatives of oriental scientific studies have to wage a slow and difficult struggle”.¹ From this view point the entire civic society of Central Asian countries, and Uzbekistan, in particular, had been regarded. Thus, it should be noted, that in the published travel notes, essays, special studies of numerous Russian and West-European travelers, diplomats, military officers, publicists, and orientalist such as E. K. Meyendorf, N. V. Khanykov, G. Vamberi, D. N. Logofet, V. Krestovsky, G. Arandarenko M. N. Venyukov and others, there were described many facts obviously contradicting to this concept. Apart from adherence to the common stand-point such position of official Russian oriental studies served to justify the expansion policy pursued by tsarist Russia in Central Asia which, as to their mind, had to bring enlightenment and progress to their “backward peoples”.

Negative assessment of the state of society in Central Asian region had remained in Soviet historiography as well. It became especially

¹ Bartold B. B. Teokraticeskaya ideya i svetskaya vlast v musulmanskom gosudarstve. Soch. T. VI. S. 303.

firm in the 1920s while in official administrative bodies of the Soviet state that point of view dominated which neglected availability great cultural heritage of the peoples in Central Asia, as it did not meet the standards of proletarian culture. That standpoint dominated up to the beginning of the 1990s. Only after Uzbekistan gained independence the society became conscious of significance of depth and greatness of cultural and spiritual heritage of ancestors in its spiritual development, and the society became conscious of necessity of its rehabilitation.

Out of the arguments advanced by the adherents to the concept of “backwardness and stagnation of the oriental society” and Uzbekistan society, being its constituent, was that called as traditionalism. That mistake had been caused by the lack of understanding or, most probably, by unwillingness to penetrate into the core of their inner relations. Actually, traditionalism had been their specific feature and, as it was considered, therefore, the source of patriarchal character and stagnation.

But nobody wanted to recognize that at the same time traditionalism was the source of generations succession, the power which preserved all the society achievements both in the industrial and cultural and spiritual-and-moral spheres. Owing to the succession of compiled experience craftsmanship, architecture, ornamental design, calligraphy, poetry, music, and etc. had survived. Moreover, and should be emphasized, traditionalism never excluded the scope of creative development of the content within the framework of the form. The compiled experience not merely passed and became traditional but passed every successful findings to reveal, advance and decorate a traditional form found by the skilled masters – *ustoz*. It was due to the tradition that new findings should have been passed to the following generation and the reflection of bright ideas of a certain creator gave their successors an impetus to new achievements.

It should be marked, that despite the traditionalism being the platform of labor for such a broad segment of regional population, who possessed knowledge and labor skills, as craftsmen, architects (*me'mors*), engineers (*mukhandises*), builders (*gildors*), decorators and others, they all had not form corporate and cast exclusiveness in the Uzbekistan society. Any trade was open for those wanting to master it and know the secrets of a craft.

It was especially shown in arrangement of artisans life style. Joint into traditional professional corporations under the strict rules of «risola» regulated their labor and life style they elaborated set by centuries reliable form of passing knowledge and skills through the system of apprenticeship. Anyone who wanted to obtain profession could be admitted to a master as an apprentice. Trade (craft) in Central Asia mainly bearded a family character, but a skilled master (usto) not always kept preserving in his family. To the end that his business went on and developed very often he passed his professional secrets and hints to his most talented apprentice. Handicraft industry is not a hardened form. It had its own specificity in development characterized by split specialization of individual items as well as in division of labor when making a single item. Artisans were prompt in response to meet new consumers demands of various layers and groups of population. High-quality and highly artistic goods of Central Asian artisans were well-known in world markets. Khivinian and Bukharian carpets and jewelry were in great demand. Chust knives and sculp-caps, Bukharian golden-embroidered articles, Khivinian ceramics, silk fabrics and others. They admired by the skill of Central Asian ustos at the all-Russia exhibition in Peterburg where two thousand of items were exhibited and were awarded 11 medals and 42 special awards; in 1878 and in 1900 at world exhibitions in Paris; in 1888 at the International exhibition in Copenhagen; in 1893 at the world exhibition in Chicago and many others.

Traditionalism never prevented Uzbek skilled masters from revealing their creative individuality. In their work within the framework of tradition they applied different materials, color of decoration, variants and motifs of compositions. History of world culture has involved the names of prominent gypsum carving (ganch) masters Usto-Shirin Muradov, Usto-Kuli Djalilov, Shamsutdin Gafurov, Usto-Nazrulla Yadgarov, Abdulla Boltayev, wood painting masters Alimdjan Kasymdjanov, Yakub Gafurov, stone and wood carving masters Suleyman Khodjaev, Usto Akhmedov, Usto Palvanov, Ziyo Karimov, Maksud Kasymov and many others.

The role of traditionalism was great in resolving by many generations of masters complex regional constructive problems, and in the first turn, the problem is construction of monumental buildings in the

conditions of high earthquake prone zone. Empirically found suitable solution then passed by inheritance and tradition prescribed to strictly follow them. But on the other hand, buildings erected many centuries ago were sound and stood up to earthquakes, produced no setting and salt on its walls. According to contemporaries the architecture of such traditional cult constructions as mosques and mausoleums was notable for its special variety of lay-out, volumetric and space design and facing and decorating materials. It was variety of Bukhara Mosques (there were over 300 of them) that struck the traveler Ye.K.Meyendorf, visited that city in 1820². Even nowadays scientists have been surprised by architectural and building findings in such old masters' constructions as Sultan Sandjar Mausoleum in old Merv, minarets in Djar Kurgan, Kunya-Urgench, Bukhara, Khiva, Khodja Akhmad Yassavi, Mausoleum, the Samanids' Mausoleum in Bukhara, the portal and walls of Ulughbek madrasa, Shakh-i-Zinda mausoleums, Tomb of Timur – Gur-Emir in Samarkand, Bayan-Kuli-khan in the vicinity of Bukhara and many other architectural monuments.

Despite the predomination of hand labor and the lowest technical level the craftsmanship of Uzbek artisans and builders not decayed but even advanced and promoted, Based on traditionalism, as a famous art historian and archeologist L. I. Rempel stated: "As if it accumulated energy, craftsmen's skills, was polished by centuries in order to give new springs and come into bright blossom".³

The same words could be said of orient literature and music. The novelty made its way into the shell of traditional topics, plots and even compositional structures, and then adopted and secured by the following generations. As an example can serve the traditions of "Khamsa" creation, a bouquet of five poems linked by an idea topically into a unified whole. The history of their creation has shown that in these traditional works the novelty of their authors revealed in ability to allegorically and symbolically reflect the concrete problems of their times, and in ability to treat traditional subjects in accordance with the spirits of time.

² Meyendorf Ye.K. Puteshestvie iz Orenburga v Bukharu. M. 1975. S. 99.

³ Rempel L. I. Dalyokoe i blizkoe. Stranitsy zhizni, byta, stroitelnogo dela, remesla i iskusstva Staroi Bukhary. Tashkent, 1981. S. 216.

In the process of history evolution of Uzbekistan civic society, apart from traditionalism the specific peculiarities were gradually formed in social relations shaping their own moral and spiritual criteria, moral and ethic norms and life-pattern standards.

Islam played an enormous role in their shaping, preserving and strengthening, it being the organizer of law, social, cultural, moral and spiritual spheres of life of all layers and groups of Muslims. Religious beliefs were not only outward form of social life but reveling of national self-consciousness. The Europeans who visited the region or worked there in the 19th-beginning of the 20th centuries especially stated such features of mentality of its society as religiosity, good behavior, goodwill, benevolence, good manners, aptitude to avoid conflicts, love to labor, steadfastness to misfortune and hospitality.

Turkestan explorer N. P. Ostroumov wrote that in the region “religiousness represents the main characteristic of up-bringing and is maintained by primary education broadly spread among the population, distinguished by religious and moral trend, and honesty, abstinence and moderateness make up the natural features of their patriarchal way of life. All these virtues are of much importance as to their favorable impact on the life of contemporaries as well as on the life of future generations”.⁴

The Europeans visited Turkestan observed unusual diligence of its people. Agronomist V. I. Yuferev, worked in Turkestan in the early 20th century, wrote “for many years of fight with nature indigenous population had elaborated specific skills to carry on management at high intensive level, special psychology and specific vision of labor as the main condition to obtain wealth”.⁵ The tillers labor was especially honored. A prominent ethnographer V. I. Massalsky wrote: “The Turkestan tiller is deeply devoted to its primordial occupation, which local population regards as one of the most honorable labor branches. According to their views tillage is the best human occupation for doing it he can easily preserve his morals, and the tiller's hands fruits feed equally the rich and poor, and weak and strong, and small and great. According to Sharia the

⁴ Ostroumov N. P. Sarty. Etnograficheskie materily. Izd. 2., Tashkent, 1896. S. 82.

⁵ Yuferev V. I. Khlopkovodstvo v Turkestane. Leningrad, 1925. S. 9.

farmers who live exclusively by tillage and cultivation of land are called “the noblest of the noble”.⁶

Millennia experience of generations has elaborated in local tillers who lived under conditions characterized by permanent deficiency of irrigated lands extraordinary liking for hard work, ability to define maximum adjusted terms for flood to come, watering, as well as sowing time for different crops, use proper rotation of crops, which, as Russian agronomists working there in the beginning of the 20th century observed, “well over lapped with scientifically developed rotation of crops applied in the practice of European agriculture”.⁷

Worship of and great respect were given to, the labor of creators-dekhkans (peasants) artisans, ornamentalists, scribes or calligraphers have historically elaborated in Uzbekistan society highly moral culture of behavior of its members. No street passer-by ever allows himself to pass a slice of bread leaving it to lie on the road. He is certain to pick it up and put it aside but not on the ground and in some elevated place. This great respect both to making-a-living bread and to labor of a dekhkan who grew it, remains in our society nowadays. And in the 19th century such was the treatment with a piece of paper containing written letters on it, as embodiment of a calligrapher's or scribe's labor honored by everybody.

Extensive social charity was also a traditional aspect of interrelations in Uzbekistan civic society. It was represented, first of all, in establishment of vakf property according to religious or moral beliefs of any member of society. They served to both religious and educative and charitable aims. The society greatly respected to property turned to vakf. Notsoever it was liable to sell, mortgage or alienation. The dekhkans who got rich on vakf lands, enjoyed tax concessions, only institutions having been granted vakf received vakf interests. Significant vakf donations in favor of madrasa were characteristic to the Central Asian region. For example, 33 madrasa of high type possessed vakf property of 2 mln 815 thousand tanga or 422 255 gold roubles. Those money were given to

⁶ Rossiya. Polnoe geograficheskoe opisanie. T. 19. Turkestanski kray. Sostavil knyaz V. I. Massalski. SPb., 1913. S. 416.

⁷ Shakhnazarov A. I. Selskoe khozyaistvo v Turkestane. Tashkent, 1908. S. 112.

construction of madrasa, teachers wages, scholarship for successful students having low income and charitable purposes⁸. Rendering support the needy and unfortunate was characteristic to all strata of a society irrespective of their social status and wealth. It was an unwritten law of community, integral part of its mentality. Thus from annual budget of Fergana dekhkan's family with an average income 40 kopeks, rather significant amount in that period, was allocated to give alms to beggars.⁹ Well-known ethnographer and expert in way of life in Turkestan V. P. Nalivkin stated "aspiration to render help the needy and distressed was a characteristic feature of Central Asians, giving sadaka (alms) and kafarat (alms given for conscience' sake) were the most common affairs. If someone wished to carry out a great charitable donation, first of all, he addressed to mosques and schools".¹⁰ The cause was respectfully stressed by a traveler E. K. Meiendorf: "Setting up a school is regarded as a pious matter and financial support to school children from poor families to be a duty".¹¹

Charitable funds donated for building of hospitals, orphanages, Russian-and-native and new-methodical schools, roads, bridges, public libraries and many others. A merchant-millioner Murkomil Mirmuminbayev from Andijan engaged in wide-spread charitable activities as especially emphasized by his contemporaries.¹² Charitable actions of well-to-do community members had also a broad educational tendency. The Tashkent merchant Seid-Gani-bai from a large trade house owned by the Seidazimbaevs in December 1884 opened in his house the first Russian-indigenous school.¹³ In 1906 in Chikimchan makhalla located in the old part of Tashkent a famous merchant Gulyam-Khasan

⁸ Ostroumov N.P. Vvedenie v kurs islamovedeniya. Tashkent. 1914 P.167

⁹ Yuferev V. I. Khlopkovodstvo v Turkestane. Leningrad, 1925. S. 155.

¹⁰ Nalivkin V. P. Polozhenie vakufnogo dela v Turkestanskom krae do i posle yego zavoevaniya. // Yezhegodnik Ferganskoi oblasti. T. III. Novi Margilan, 1904. S. 220

¹¹ Meyendorf Ye. K. Puteshestvie iz Orenburga v Bukharu. M., 1975. S. 152

¹² TsGA RUz, f. I-19, op.4, d. 178

¹³ Ostroumov N. P. Sarty. Etnograficheskie materily. Izd. 2., Tashkent, 1896. S. 177.

Arifdjanov opened a lithography to print and sell books at low prices.¹⁴ In May 1908 in the old part of Samarkand a Muslim public library was opened by local merchants on their own money.¹⁵ In 1913 in Tashkent a merchant Mukhammad-khan-padshi Khodjaev opened a bookshop "Maktab" where text-books at reasonable prices were available.¹⁶ The positive effect of this activity was quite significant. As Mary Kholdsvort stated, "even the west scholars who reluctantly admitted the education level of Orient Society had to recognize the fact that books and brochures were in greater demand in Turkistan in the 19th through early 20th centuries than it was usually thought".¹⁷

A distinctive characteristic of Uzbekistan civic society elaborated in the course of its historic advancement was the lack of clearly outlined antagonistic relationships between different social groups in spite of their discrepancy in social status and material wealth. To great surprise of the Europeans they were unavailable, first and foremost, among the dekhkans making the bulk of population in kray. In 1907 "Turkestan agriculture" magazine observed that in Uzbek kishlak "agrarian and economic relations are not complicated by class enmity..., the call for "land and freedom" in the sense of demands for giving additional land plots and political liberation is strange to the major mass of population". It was the lack of keen social antagonism among the dekhkans that failed to cause broad agrarian movement in 1917. The reason of this was in distinctive interrelations and life-pattern peculiarities historically formed in Uzbek rural community. In contradistinction to Russian landlords who lived separately from peasants, in Turkestan rich dekhkans and bais lived side-by-side, and did not differ from ordinary dekhkans according to way of life, cultural level and religious believes. According to Americal scholar A. Park "they lived on the land and kept close contacts with their

¹⁴ Chabrov G. N. Iz istorii poligrafii i izdaniya literatury na mestnykh yazykakh v dorevoluzionnom Turkestane (1868–1917) // Trudy SAGU. Vyp. 57. Tashkent, 1954. S. 80.

¹⁵ TsGA RUz, f. I-461, op.1, d. 1920, l. 2.

¹⁶ Ibid. d. 1315, l. 331.

¹⁷ Mari Holsworth. Turkestan in the Nineteenth Century. A Brif History of the Khanates of Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva. – Issued by the Central Asian Research Center in association with St. Antony's College (Oxford) Soviet Affairs Study Group. 1959. P. 37.

tenants. Islam created spiritual and social ties among landowners and dekhkans more close than those existing among rural Christian population. Local villages had no open sores, which the Soviet regime could name as a virus of class struggle”.¹⁸

The consolidation of dekhkans was encouraged by rural community associations which had exclusively firm roots as they were founded on vitally important productive interests. In the region where since hoar antiquity the fanning had been founded on artificial irrigation, the community links were of vital importance and necessity. Farming of this type required collaborative work of village-mates for construction and cleaning of irrigation systems, providing irrigation, simultaneous start of agricultural activities on the dates specially calculated by honored old-aged people, elaboration of unified crops rotations, etc. Pastures, meadows, forage and forests were in communal use. By virtue of tradition all members of a rural community were interconnected by collective guarantee as for each kishlak (village) a certain tax rate was ascertained in general and the community determined rates of payment for each household. The same principle was observed in compulsory work maintenance.

There had been no social tension, and, therefore no destabilized tendencies in the midst of various strata of the Uzbek urban population. A great role to play had the neighboring community associations (makhalla) represented an integral and traditional part of townsmen's mode of life. Families with different property status resided there side-by-side, and property status had no impact on their relationships. Makhalla united all the households through common interests and duties, participation in common activities, having meals together, performance of rites and ritual ceremonies and so on.

Traditional social organization of makhalla had many positive properties. It gave birth to harmonious ethic system based on democratic foundations, remarkable laws of mutual assistance, hospitality, reverence for elders, particular love to and care for children and old-aged.

It was strengthened by such customs as “khashar” – a collective help to a relative, neighbor or village-mate in building or repairing of

¹⁸ Park A. Bolshevizm in Turkestan. Columbia University Press. New York. 1957. P. 293.

house, working in the field and garden and others; existence of a “right of a neighbor” according to which one could sell his household to a stranger only after the neighbors had refused to buy it.

Both city makhalla and rural community established among their members the sense of being protected as every one could expect not only concern and moral support but also direct material aid. The commune firmly preserved the traditions of collectivism and cooperation, despite the fact that it existed in terms of unequal property status of its members. Communal traditions defined significantly those demands the society expected from its members' behavior. “To these traditions, - a famous ethnographer O. A. Sukhareva stated, - were obliged the nations of Central Asia by having a strict, formed by centuries etiquette regulating interrelations among people and “affixing a seal” of a well-bred man to each resident of Central Asia”.¹⁹ These life-pattern peculiarities of urban and rural communes turned into a characteristic feature of national culture and psychology of Uzbekistan population despite of any political and ideological persecutions and obstacles.

Therefore, witness of contemporaries and scholars' studies have revealed that Uzbekistan civic society during its evolution in the framework of traditionalism had not regressed but on the contrary perfected in its inner content. Moral and ethic norms and spiritual and morality principles being formed faithfully to traditions played in this society a creative role and represented a factor softening the tension, advanced favorable interrelations among its members, being its mental peculiarity.

¹⁹ Sukhareva O. A. Kvartalnaya obschina pozdnefeodalnogo goroda Bukhary (v svyazi s istoriyey kvartalov). M., 1976. S. 339.