

ELEMENTS INSCRIBED IN THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

CULTURAL SPACE OF BOYSUN

“Cultural Space of Boysun” is one of the first 19 candidates nominated by UNESCO in the 2001 List of “Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”. As a result of the adoption of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, it was transferred to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.

Boysun District is a mountainous area in the northern part of the border of Kashkadarya region with Surkhandarya, where the indigenous population consists of Uzbeks and Tajiks. The distinctive feature of the district is that it is far from the rest of the population and the lifestyle, therefore mentality and traditions have been preserved well.

Boysun district is divided into seven villages (Avlod, Boysun, Rabot, Sayrob, Darband, Machay, Korgoncha) and the town of Boysun. Each village is composed of 4 to 19 parts, with a total of 56 villages. The population of the district is more than 90 thousand people. The district area is 3.72 thousand square kilometers, and 72.6 percent of the population lives in rural areas.

Usually the elements proposed for inclusion in the “Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” should apply to one or more of the five domains of intangible cultural heritage. In the Cultural Space of Boysun, there are elements related to all these areas. In particular, there are preserved

knowledge and skills related to oral traditions and forms of self-manifestation, art, traditions, ceremonies, festivals, knowledge of natural and handmade world crafts, and traditional craftsmanship.

In connection with the recognition of the Cultural Space of Boysun by UNESCO, expeditions to the area were organized, the elements of the intangible cultural heritage were thoroughly studied, documented, archived and published in a number of printed editions.

Historical monuments and archaeological findings in Boysun were investigated by E.Rtveladze, L.Sverchkov, V.Makrobordov, I.Tokhtaev, A.Sagdullayev and others, which are reflected in scientific articles and collections published by them.

Traditional lifestyle of the Boysun community (A.Ashirov, A.Kayumov), Boysun folk calendar (M.Juraev), Boysun performance games and celebrations, Celebration of Navruz (I.Abdurakhimov), Boysun’s musical heritage, Boysun music and musical instruments, Boysun rituals and ceremonial music (R.A.Abdullayev), Boysun traditional embroidery (A.Khakimov), carpet making, Boysun’s weaved carpets, textile (E.F.Gul), Boysun ceramics (A.Khakimov, S.Alieva), crafts, wood carving, Chests (S.Alieva), Folk Architecture (L.I.Rempel) were studied by well-known archaeologists, ethnographers, folklorists, art critics and musicians.





As a result of recognizing the cultural space of Boysun as one of the most unique intangible cultural heritage objects in the world, starting from 2001, the 5th open Folklore Festival “Boysun bahori” was held. Folklore festivals were attended by foreign experts, folk groups and performers from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, folklore ethnographic teams, national wrestlers, horsemen and chess masters, designers from all regions of Uzbekistan. The Center for the Applied Arts was established in Boysun district, where the activities of the Boysun Folklore and Ethnographic Ensemble and “Quralay” Children’s Ensemble were also animated. The “Surkhon Dancing School” manual was published on the basis of dance movements in the Boysun area and it was based on the introduction of another (Surkhon dance school) dance school in the territory of Uzbekistan (Ferghana — Tashkent, Khorezm and Bukhara).

It would be wrong to say that the traditions, rituals and holidays kept in the Boysun

district are different from traditions, rituals and holidays in other parts of the country. However, the observance of these customs, ceremonies, and celebration of the holidays preserves more and more traditions, and increases the interest in their study. For example, the rules that are accepted as family rituals, from the birth of a child to the marriage contract, are strictly adhered to.

Ancient musical instruments of Boysun cannot be found in other parts of the world. There are such musical instruments peculiar to Boysun as *sibizga*, *changqobiz*, *chopon nay*, *spool nay* (*shillovuq*, *shipillak*), *ghajir nay*, *qovoq soz*, *dombira*, *dutor*, *doyira*, *dap*, *urnay*. Old dance movements have also been preserved in Boysun. Every dance has its specific movements that have names. Combat dances and rules of their performance which have been forgotten in other places are preserved in Boysun. Local people are well aware of the famous dancers on dance. The passionate interest of ordinary people in art can strike at anybody. It is



possible to enjoy great folk music, dance, and performances of folk music, dance and singing during holidays, festivals and weddings

Every house in Boysun is comparable to a museum of people. The “exhibits” are distinguished by the fact that they are prepared not for demonstration, but for household use. Traditional crafts such as textiles, carpets, felt printing, ceramics, leather processing, embroidery, woodcarving, gold embroidery,

stone carving, knife making, shoemaking, ironwork, preparing musical instruments are preserved in the cultural space.

The samples of human’s knowledge about nature and the universe are well-preserved. Traditional (ancient) methods of treatment are transmitted from generation to generation. A person who came here for the first time can be astonished by the local people’s knowledge of nature.