

The cook's dance

The cook's dance is a form of traditional humorous dance performed either by man or a woman during the wedding or other joyous events. It is performed under the frame drum music or full orchestra accompaniment with a wooden or porcelain plate. The theme of the dance is preparation of certain traditional dishes such as *oši palav* or *oši burida*. This dance incorporates elements of the clown dance, pantomime and circus. In Zarafshon valley the dance is performed by a man wearing traditional costume, white knee length shirt with his waist

tied by a traditional kerchief, square hat and leather socks. In the dance the man makes impression of cooking *oši palav*. The dancer here performs a juggling moves by placing a plate over his head a gradually will lower it into his neck and than upper part of his back. Afterwards he takes the plate in his hands and dances moving the plate up and down on air and makes impression of preparing a food. After the food is ready he sits and puts the plate in his front and mimics eating *palav* by hand. As he «eats» he makes varied motions some humorous and eats



in dancing manner. After he finishes «eating» he takes the plate in his hands and dances.

The female cook's dance, which is common in Rasht and Kulob makes impression of making *oši burida*, a pasta dish. The dancers by means of gestures in the dance mimic the whole process of preparation of this traditional dish, including the various tools that are required in cooking this dish. It begins with a dancer coming to the stage making slow dance and than she will begin the preparation of the noodles by mimicking taking the flour and sifting it making dough and flattening it and than cutting it into noodles. She then sets out dancing to make fire and put

the cauldron to «cook» the dish. The dance is solo but as the «dish» is prepared the dancer will gesture and «call» guests who join her in dancing and «eating» the dish.

Whilst the «dish» is being «cooked» the ladies dance around the oven where the cauldron is and than the dish is served and after being eaten they dance and slowly leave the stage.

These days the cook's dance is included into the main repertoire of the dance groups and performed widely. The men also perform this dance but mainly as the festive *oši palav* is cooked by male cooks they will depict in their dance only pilaf cooking process.

