

## TRADITIONAL THEATRE

### Traditional drama

Tajik traditional theatre has its root deep in the history springing out from the esoteric, animistic, and totemic worldview and perceptions of forbearers of Tajiks. Certain elements of the traditional theatre of Tajiks have been also recovered by the archeologists as depicted on various material culture objects including artistic works. The high-developed period of the traditional theater found its print also in medieval miniatures paintings.



Tajik folk theatrical plays similar to other nation's folk theater had no real authors. Authors and actors in folk theatre were those from among the populace with natural acting skills and talent such as clowns and comedians for whom this was their day job. The core style on traditional theatre was improvisations and word-play skill, which again had its roots in folk compositions comprising the elements of social and cultural activities and themes. Theatrical performances included variety of formats for instance impressions (animals, certain people), dance imitating animals, puppet show, anecdote telling etc.

Traditional dram provided a context for people to showcase their natural talents and exercise their singing, story telling, joking and dancing abilities as means of earning as well as performing in front of public. The occasions when traditional theatres performed also was closely connected with the local traditional events such as weddings, festivals or any public events such as market fairs. Accordingly the traditional theatre was not bound to a building but was held under open air in streets, gardens and people's yards. Theatrical performances included many nonverbal acts such as gestures and other humorous forms of bodily language.

The characters performed in dramas were inspired by both mythology and real life situations; such as judges- were portrayed as greedy and unjust or mullah was always hypocrite where peasant and farmers as just and people seeking justice and kindness despite being subject to harshness of life. Many dramas displayed the real struggle of ordinary people against class distinctions

and social unfairness. In traditional drama plays representatives of a various vocations and classes were incorporated to represent their daily life for example the dramas «Arzankori» drama about an oat-sower farmer; «Karbosbofi» drama about cotton fabric weaver, «Devonabozi» drama about a mentally challenged wise person. In these dramas the main figures were either praised or criticized. In «Karbosbofi» play a weaver is criticized for taking advantage of his suppliers and also claiming other people's goods for his own benefit.

The role of the clowns in traditional drama was significant as through their jokes people were entertained and received mental

relief from their hard life. The depiction of unjust people and criticism of such through the drama was a sort of comfort to those subject to injustice. As such traditional drama projected the deep emotional and realistic conditions of ordinary people. These dramas were also instrumental in educating people to take the best examples portrayed and not to follow those criticized.

Traditional theatres in Tajikistan ceased in mid twentieth century after the development and establishment of a professional theatre. The only surviving elements of the traditional folk theatre survive in forms of special joking events during the weddings or cultural events particularly among the rural population.

