

THE HISTORY OF UZBEKISTAN. THE PAST OF UZBEKISTAN IN BRIEF. MAIN DATES AND EVENTS

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Annotation. Uzbekistan's cultural heritage is a rich and diverse tapestry that reflects the country's long and storied history. Situated at the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road trade route, Uzbekistan has been a melting pot of different cultures and civilizations for centuries. This unique blend of influences can be seen in the country's art, architecture, music, and cuisine. One of the most iconic aspects of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage is its stunning architecture, particularly the historic cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. These cities are home to magnificent mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums that showcase the intricate tilework, domes, and minarets that are characteristic of Islamic architecture in the region. These architectural marvels are a testament to the country's rich history and the influence of various empires that have ruled over the region.

Key words: Central Asia, Modern Uzbekistan, Bactria, Sogdiana, Soviet union, historical heritage, society, cultural heritage, civilization, Silk Road, Samarkand, Bukhara

Uzbekistan, located in Central Asia, has a rich history dating back to ancient times. The region has been home to various civilizations, each leaving behind a unique cultural heritage. The early civilizations of Uzbekistan played a significant role in shaping the region's history and influencing its development. One of the earliest civilizations in Uzbekistan was the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC), which flourished in the Bronze Age around 2200-1700 BC. This complex was located in the northern part of present-day Afghanistan and southern Uzbekistan, and it was known for its advanced urban planning, sophisticated irrigation systems, and intricate pottery. The BMAC civilization had extensive trade networks with neighboring regions, which contributed to its prosperity and cultural exchange.

Another prominent early civilization in Uzbekistan was the Sogdian civilization, which thrived along the Silk Road from the 6th to the 11th centuries AD. The Sogdians were known for their expertise in trade and commerce, as well as their contributions to

art, literature, and religion. They built thriving cities, such as Samarkand and Bukhara, which became important centers of culture and learning in Central Asia. The Sogdians also played a crucial role in facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, and technologies between East and West along the Silk Road. The Bactrians Civilization was one of the earliest known civilizations in Central Asia, with its heartland located in what is now modern-day Uzbekistan. This civilization thrived around 2500-2000 BCE, making it one of the oldest known civilizations in the region. The Bactrians were known for their advanced agricultural practices, trade networks, and urban settlements. They were also skilled in the production of bronze and pottery, as evidenced by the artifacts and archaeological remains found in the region. The Bactrians were a highly organized society with a well-developed social structure. They built impressive cities with sophisticated architecture, including defensive walls and large palaces. The Bactrians were also known for their advanced irrigation systems, which allowed them to cultivate the fertile lands of the region and support a growing population. Trade played a significant role in the Bactrians' economy, with goods such as precious metals, textiles, and agricultural products being exchanged with neighboring civilizations. The decline of the Bactrians Civilization is still a topic of debate among historians and archaeologists. Some theories suggest that environmental factors, such as climate change or natural disasters, may have played a role in the civilization's downfall. Others believe that invasions from neighboring tribes or internal conflicts may have contributed to the collapse of the Bactrians. Despite its eventual decline, the legacy of the Bactrians Civilization can still be seen in the archaeological sites and artifacts that have been unearthed in Uzbekistan, providing valuable insights into the early history of the region. The Sogdians were an ancient civilization that thrived in what is now modern-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The Sogdians were known for their advanced trade networks, which connected East and West along the legendary Silk Road. They were skilled merchants and traders, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures between different civilizations. The Sogdians were also known for their expertise in agriculture, particularly in the cultivation of fruits, grains, and textiles. The Sogdians were a highly influential civilization in Central Asia, and their culture played a significant role in shaping the region's history. They were known for their artistry, particularly in the fields of painting, sculpture, and ceramics. The Sogdians were also skilled in the production of luxury goods such as silk, spices, and precious metals. They were known for their intricate designs and craftsmanship, which were highly sought after by other civilizations. The Sogdians were also known for their religious practices, which were a blend of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Nestorian Christianity. They built temples, shrines, and monasteries to worship their deities and practice their rituals. The Sogdians were a diverse and multicultural civilization, which allowed them to be more tolerant and accepting of different beliefs and practices. Their

legacy continues to be felt in modern-day Uzbekistan, where their influence can still be seen in the region's art, architecture, and culture.

The legacy of early civilizations in Uzbekistan is rich and diverse, with evidence of ancient settlements and cultural advancements dating back thousands of years. One of the most notable legacies left behind by early civilizations in Uzbekistan is the architectural marvels of cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. These cities were once thriving centers of trade, culture, and learning, and their well-preserved mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums stand as a testament to the skill and craftsmanship of the ancient builders. In addition to their impressive architecture, the early civilizations of Uzbekistan also made significant contributions to the arts and sciences. The region was a center of learning and innovation, with scholars and scientists from around the world coming to study and exchange ideas. The famous Silk Road, which passed through Uzbekistan, facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures, leading to a thriving intellectual and artistic scene. The legacy of these early civilizations can be seen in the intricate pottery, textiles, and metalwork that have been unearthed by archaeologists. Furthermore, the early civilizations of Uzbekistan also left behind a legacy of religious diversity and tolerance. The region has been home to a mix of different cultures and faiths, including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. This diversity is reflected in the architecture and art of Uzbekistan, with mosques, churches, and temples coexisting peacefully side by side. The legacy of religious tolerance and coexistence in Uzbekistan continues to be an important aspect of the country's cultural heritage, and serves as a reminder of the importance of unity and understanding in a diverse society.

A concrete example of collectivization of agriculture in Uzbekistan under Soviet rule would be the establishment of large kolkhozes (collective farms) where individual farmers were required to work together on shared land and resources. This policy aimed to increase agricultural output and efficiency, but also resulted in the loss of traditional farming practices and the forced relocation of many rural families. Another example would be the construction of new schools and universities in Uzbekistan during Soviet rule, which aimed to increase literacy rates and promote socialist ideology among the population. This investment in education led to improvements in literacy rates, but also led to the suppression of Uzbek cultural and religious practices as the Soviet government sought to promote a uniform Soviet identity.

Concrete examples of Soviet policies in Uzbekistan include:

1. Collectivization of agriculture: Uzbek farmers were forced to join collective farms, where they had to give up their individual land and livestock and work for the state. This led to resistance and protests among the farming population.
2. Promotion of education and literacy: Soviet government established schools and universities in Uzbekistan to increase education levels among the population. This

resulted in higher literacy rates, but also led to the spread of Soviet ideology and prioritization of Russian language and history.

3. Industrialization: The Soviet government established factories and infrastructure projects in Uzbekistan, leading to the growth of urban centers and migration of people from rural areas to cities for work. This brought economic development but also caused environmental degradation and social disruptions. These examples illustrate the impact of Soviet rule on Uzbekistan, including changes to the economy, society, and education system. The establishment of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in 1924, which solidified Uzbekistan's status as a constituent republic within the Soviet Union and paved the way for Soviet policies and ideologies to be implemented in the region. The forced collectivization of agriculture in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which resulted in widespread resistance among Uzbek farmers and led to famine and hardship as farmers struggled to meet production quotas imposed by the Soviet authorities. The suppression of Uzbek cultural and religious practices in favor of Soviet ideologies, including strict censorship and control over media, education, and cultural institutions, which marginalized Uzbek language, literature, and folklore and led to the persecution of religious leaders and practices.

Uzbekistan's path to independence can be traced back to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. After nearly 70 years of being part of the Soviet empire, Uzbekistan declared its independence on August 31, 1991. This monumental event came after a period of political turmoil and uncertainty, as the Soviet Union began to disintegrate and various republics sought their autonomy. Uzbekistan's independence marked the beginning of a new era for the country, as it embarked on a journey towards establishing its own national identity and political system. Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan has undergone significant political and economic changes. One of the key political developments in modern Uzbekistan is the transition from a one-party system to a more pluralistic political landscape. President Islam Karimov, who ruled the country for over two decades, established a strong authoritarian regime. However, his death in 2016 paved the way for new leadership under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who has initiated a series of reforms aimed at opening up the political system and improving human rights in the country.

Concrete examples of the cultural and social changes in modern Uzbekistan include:

- The government's support for traditional arts and crafts, such as the revival of weaving and pottery techniques.
- The popularity of traditional music and dance festivals, drawing both local and international audiences.
- The incorporation of modern technology in traditional practices, such as using social media to promote traditional clothing designs.

- The emergence of fusion cuisines combining Uzbek flavors with international influences, reflecting the country's openness to outside cultures.

- Women's empowerment initiatives, such as programs to increase female representation in politics and encourage women to pursue higher education and enter the workforce.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan is a country rich in cultural heritage, with a history that dates back thousands of years. From the ancient cities of Samarkand and Bukhara to the traditional crafts and music that have been passed down through generations, Uzbekistan's cultural heritage is both diverse and vibrant. One of the key aspects of preserving this heritage is ensuring that historical sites and artifacts are protected and maintained for future generations to enjoy.

The preservation of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage is a multifaceted effort that involves a combination of government initiatives, community involvement, and international cooperation. The Uzbek government has designated numerous historical sites and monuments as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as the Registan Square in Samarkand and the Historic Centre of Bukhara. These designations help to raise awareness of the importance of preserving these cultural treasures and provide funding for their conservation and restoration. In addition to government efforts, local communities and organizations play a crucial role in preserving Uzbekistan's cultural heritage. Many traditional crafts, such as ceramics, silk weaving, and embroidery, are still practiced by artisans in Uzbekistan today. By supporting these artisans and promoting their work, the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan is kept alive and passed down to future generations. International organizations also play a key role in the preservation of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage, providing expertise and funding for conservation projects and helping to promote awareness of the country's rich history and traditions on a global scale.

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