



THE ROLE OF HISTORICAL MEMORY, CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND NATIONAL VALUES IN YOUTH EDUCATION DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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Annotation: This article analyzes the significance of historical memory, national heritage, and values in the education of younger generations during the years of independence in Uzbekistan. In this period, significant attention has been focused on instilling national pride in youth and fostering respect for national values. The article highlights methods for strengthening stability, social solidarity, and national pride through reviving and embedding national heritage in the minds of the youth. On this basis, it explores modern approaches to applying historical memory and national values in youth education, while also examining state youth policy and issues related to national identity during the years of independence.

Keywords: years of independence, youth education, historical memory, national pride, cultural heritage, national values, youth policy

INTRODUCTION

Since gaining independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has made significant efforts to restore historical memory and national values, preserve and enrich its cultural heritage, and introduce it to the global community. Uzbekistan has long been home to a people with deep national values, historical memory, and an ancient culture. Today, it is essential to pass these national traditions and values on to the younger generation, helping them understand the history, customs, and national cultural heritage of their homeland.

Looking back at recent history, during the Soviet era, there was little encouragement to study and appreciate this spiritual heritage or to seek historical truth. Sources that did not serve the dominant ideology were kept as distant as

possible from the people. Only after achieving national independence did Uzbekistan have the opportunity to impartially evaluate past events and examine them with greater depth. A nation cannot fully understand its identity without knowing its true history. As the first President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, rightly stated, “A person with historical memory is a person with willpower.” [3] The lessons of history teach individuals vigilance, strengthen their determination, and encourage them to look toward the future with greater clarity.

Historical memory is an unparalleled force that awakens a sense of confidence in building a great future by helping people understand their identity and recognize their national and cultural values. Today, the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of the Uzbek people, passed down through generations, is increasingly attracting the attention of the global community. On this matter, our first President, Islam Karimov, remarked, “Of course, the spirituality of any nation or people cannot be imagined apart from its history, unique customs, religions, and living values.

In recent years, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has introduced innovative systems regarding the preservation and development of national cultural heritage, emphasizing their implementation in daily life. These efforts have been repeatedly highlighted as crucial for the spiritual development of youth during the years of independence. Indeed, Uzbekistan takes pride in its ancient cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, and Shahrissabz—some of which are as old as Ancient Rome and Babylon—and the historical and cultural monuments preserved within them. Thousands of architectural and historical landmarks from various civilizations and states have been preserved in Uzbekistan, many of which, specifically over 4,000, are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites [5]. During the independence era, extensive restoration and preservation efforts have been undertaken to safeguard and pass on this invaluable heritage to future generations. For example, significant restoration work has been carried out on the Ak-Saray historical monument in Shahrissabz,

located in the Kashkadarya region. Numerous measures have been implemented to restore the architectural landmarks of Shahrisabz and draw public attention to them.

As is well known, Kesh, now Shahrisabz, is the birthplace of the great statesman Amir Temur (Tamerlane). Once surrounded by lush gardens, Shahrisabz was one of the most beautiful cities in Central Asia during his reign. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the city boasted numerous remarkable structures, the most notable being the Ak-Saray. The Ak-Saray is one of the largest and most unique architectural monuments of the 14th and 15th centuries. This ancient structure, built during the time of Amir Temur and the Timurids, continues to captivate visitors to Shahrisabz to this day. Many travelers have documented the magnificence of this enduring structure in their diaries since its construction. For instance, in 1403, Ruy González de Clavijo, an ambassador of King Henry III of Castile to the court of Amir Temur [3], made fascinating observations about Shahrisabz and its surroundings.

Ruy González de Clavijo provided a detailed description of the Ak-Saray architectural monument in his work *The History of Great Timur*. He wrote: "...work here had continued for twenty years without a single day's pause, and even now, many craftsmen were still at work. The palace had an exceptionally long corridor and an extraordinarily tall gate. On both the right and left sides of the entrance, brick arches had been constructed and decorated with tiles arranged in various patterns" [4]. The construction of the building coincided with Amir Temur's fourth campaign against Khorezm in 1379. Following the conquest of the city, Amir Temur ordered all able-bodied individuals to be relocated from Khorezm to Movarounnahr, settling them in the city of Kesh (modern-day Shahrisabz). Among those relocated were renowned scholars and craftsmen of various trades. For this reason, Abdurazzoq Samarkandiy noted, "The craftsmen from Khorezm built a magnificent palace, which is now known as Ak-Saray" [4].

During its time, the total height of the Ak-Saray structure was approximately 70 meters, but the surviving portion today stands at 38 meters. Special attention was

given to the inscriptions of religious and philosophical texts on the decorative columns during the architectural adornment of the palace. Many of these inscriptions have been studied, deciphered, and translated in recent research [7].

One notable inscription on the western column of the building reads: "If you doubt our power and strength, look at the buildings we have constructed!" [1]. This proclamation, written on behalf of Amir Temur, not only reflects the might and authority of the ruler but also the creativity, intellectual wealth, and refined taste of the architects who carried out his commands. The Ak-Saray embodies the great achievements of medieval Central Asian, Afghan, and Iranian architects. Studies and observations indicate that during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, palace structures could be classified into two types that became widespread in Afghanistan: the first were reception (official and administrative) buildings, while the second were recreational complexes located outside city limits, serving as retreats.

The Ak-Saray building falls into the category of the first type of palaces, serving as a center for political, administrative, and ideological power. Today, Shahrīsabz and its historical monuments have undergone full reconstruction, transforming the city into a major tourist destination with extensive facilities provided for international visitors. This development has significantly contributed to increasing the flow of tourists. In this context, it is worth recalling the words of our first President, Islam Karimov: "The work we are doing to carefully preserve, restore, and repair every material and spiritual heritage sample on our land is not for display but rather for the sake of our future. With our conscience and hearts as our guide, we aim to ensure that tomorrow, our youth—those who will replace us—can appreciate this invaluable spiritual heritage. We want them to continue the noble work we have started and realize who they are and what great ancestors they descend from."

In conclusion, the effectiveness of the reforms being implemented in our country is closely linked to the comprehensive study of our rich historical and

cultural heritage, which deeply instills national values in the hearts and minds of young people. At the same time, these efforts contribute to fostering a healthy lifestyle by nurturing physical, spiritual, and mental well-being. Today, practical measures are actively being undertaken in our country to preserve and study the nation's rich cultural and spiritual heritage. These efforts aim to promote this heritage to the general public and the international community. Therefore, we, as young people, must strive to be worthy descendants of our ancestors by tirelessly learning about our homeland's history, historical cultural heritage, and national values while continuously improving our knowledge.

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