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THE ROLE OF OXUNJON SAFAROV'S SCHOLARLY VIEWS IN THE THEORETICAL FORMATION OF UZBEK CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

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Annotation: This article discusses the emergence of children's folklore studies and the role of Oxunjon Safarov in its theoretical development. Throughout his life, the scholar collected samples of children's folklore directly from the oral traditions of the people, analyzed them textologically, and published them in various collections. As a result, he enriched the treasury of Uzbek children's folklore with such collections as "Boychechak" (containing 10,580 lines), "Alla-yo alla" (around 3,000 lines), "Chittigul" (2005), which includes about 1,000 games, and "Uzbek Folk Children's Games" (2011), which presents a classification of traditional games.

Keywords: children's folklore, song, game, lullaby, term of endearment, oral creativity, artistic creativity

Children's oral poetic folklore, an important branch of folklore studies, encompasses a long historical period. The mention of children's games such as "yaling'u" and "qarag'uni" in Mahmud Kashgari's work "Divan-u Lughat al-Turk" confirms this view. The scientific and theoretical formation of Uzbek children's folklore corresponds to the second half of the 20th century. The genre composition, genesis, and artistry of children's folklore were significantly enriched by the contributions of Oxunjon Safarov, the founder of the Bukhara school of folklore studies.

Oxunjon Safarov spent nearly half a century collecting materials related to Uzbek children's folklore and compiling them into various collections. It is worth noting that gathering folklore samples requires considerable effort. This demands patience, strong will, sincere relationships with the people, sociability, vigilance, tireless work—in short, great dedication. Oxunjon Safarov embodied these qualities. He strove to collect the oral heritage preserved among the people as quickly as possible, driven by a desire to pass it on to future generations. For many years, together with students from the Faculty of Philology and Pedagogy at Bukhara State University, where he worked, he actively engaged in mass fieldwork, visiting villages one by one. He conducted observations and collected data on children's folklore in Bukhara, Navoi, Samarkand, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, parts of Khorezm, as well as in the Farab district of Turkmenistan and the cities and villages of Chorjoi. As a result, in the 1970s and 1980s, about twenty thousand lines of children's songs and more than a thousand children's games were collected. Collections such as "Boychechak," containing 10,580 lines, "Alla-yo Alla," with nearly 3,000 lines, "Chittigul" (2005) comprising about 1,000 games, and the classification of games in "Uzbek People's Children's Games" (2011) enriched the treasury of Uzbek folklore.

Based on the collected materials, he wrote the section on "Children's Folklore" for the first volume of the three-volume fundamental study "Essays on Uzbek Folklore." A number of samples of Uzbek children's folklore, including alla, aytim-olqish (traditional chants), children's calendar and ceremonial songs, as well as children's games, were translated into Russian and English, and published in collections such as "Two Phases of the Moon" (Tashkent), "Uzbek Folk Songs" (Leningrad), and "Jewels of Uzbek Folk Art" (published in Russian and English).

The "Boychechak" collection was prepared as part of the multi-volume series "Uzbek Folk Creativity" and was extremely rich in content. However, due to the ideological climate of the time

(1984), religious-themed allas were removed from the collection. Instead, labor songs collected by the renowned folklorist Kamol Ochilov from Kashkadarya were included. For this reason, the collection contains two forewords: Kamol Ochilov wrote the foreword for the "Labor Songs" section, and Oxunjon Safarov wrote the foreword titled "If Childhood Sings – The World Shines" for the children's folklore section. In this foreword, Safarov shared valuable thoughts about the antiquity, traditional nature, creators and performers, collection, publication, study history, classification, and types of Uzbek children's folklore. Detailed information about this is provided in the monograph of his eldest student, Professor Darmonoy O'rayeva [G`. Jahongirov, 1975, p. 95].

The collection also includes songs and folklore works gathered at various times from different regions of our republic by H. Zarif, M. Alaviya, Z. Husainova, T. Mirzayev, B. Sarimsoqov, G'. Jahongirov, S. Ro'zimboyev, H. Razzoqov, and others. These materials are preserved under inventory numbers 287, 288, 289, 948, 1138, 1522, 1630, 1636, 1638, 1665, and 1668 in the folklore archive named after H. Zarif.

Flipping through the "Boychechak" collection, one understands the immense richness of Uzbek children's folklore, a coherent artistic system composed of diverse genres. The folklore samples are arranged according to genres and their specific features as follows: 1. Lullabies; 2. Love songs; 3. Seasonal and ceremonial songs; 4. Invocations; 5. Protective chants; 6. Songs inviting to play; 7. Verbal games; 8. Play songs; 9. Various songs; 10. Contests or challenges; 11. Songs from the past in the children's repertoire; 12. Soviet-era songs in the children's repertoire; 13. Long songs; 14. Satirical and humorous songs.

This list is not merely a table of contents but the first scientific classification of the complex phenomenon of children's folklore, reflecting the long-term research of the scholar.

O. Safarov considers children's folklore as a phenomenon consisting of three parts according to its genetic foundations:

1. Poetry of affection. This includes alla, aytim-olqish, lullabies, affectionate songs, and teasing rhymes, emphasizing the leitmotif of affection. He divides these poetic samples into two groups based on their purpose, place, and relation to the child's age. The first group includes lullabies, alla, and ethnographically meaningful aytim-olqish (recited until about age three), while the second group, called love songs, includes affectionate, soothing, teasing, and repeating rhymes (recited until about age 6-7).

2. Children's calendar and ceremonial songs. These songs related to spring, summer, autumn, and winter include some that have transitioned from the adult repertoire to the children's due to socio-political developments. Furthermore, some genres like yalinchoq (lame excuses) and invocations, originally formed based on animistic and totemistic beliefs of our primitive ancestors but having lost their original meaning, are still preserved in children's repertoires.

3. Songs and games that are products of children's own creativity and performance.

O. Safarov emphasizes that the basis of Uzbek children's folklore is formed by games and songs, which should be classified into groups such as domestic children's songs and children's play folklore according to the ratio of words and actions.

The scholar's work in collecting and studying Uzbek children's folklore also influenced researchers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. The following recognition from Kazakh folklorist Kenjekhan Matijanov, who studied Kazakh children's poetic folklore, confirms this: "Dear Oxunjon oga! I have thoroughly studied your research. Your works greatly helped me in writing my study on Kazakh children's folklore" [Sh. Galiyev, 1998, p. 85]. This alone demonstrates the significant impact of O. Safarov's research in the field of children's folklore studies among Turkic peoples.

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