



**ETHNOGRAPHY OF NUROTA DISTRICT**

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**Abstact**

The people of Nurata have a rich cultural heritage with a centuries-old history, which is clearly reflected in their national values, traditions and rituals. The role of the family in Nurata region is very important. Family values have been strengthened, especially by religious and cultural traditions. The following article discusses this in detail.

**Аннотация**

Нуратинский народ обладает богатым культурным наследием с многовековой историей, которая ярко отражена в его национальных ценностях, традициях и обрядах. Роль семьи в Нуратинском районе очень важна. Семейные ценности укрепились, особенно религиозные и культурные традиции. В следующей статье это обсуждается подробно.

**Key words:** traditions, ceremonies, national values, religion, family and society, national food, "khudayi", farming.

**Ключевые слова:** традиции, обряды, национальные ценности, религия, семья и общество, национальная еда, «худаи», земледелие.

In the ancient past, Nurota was one of the settlements of Sugdiyona, one of the historical and cultural regions of Central Asia. The mountains of the Nurota range are very rich and fertile, blocking the oasis from the hot wind blowing from Kyzylkum. In the past, Sugdiyana was entered from two sides. One was the Temur gate near Jizzakh (Ilonotti in some sources), and the other was Nur.

The people of Nurota slaughter sheep and cattle and clean the place where the blood has been spilled and purify it by lighting a fire. Also, the people of Nurota pay special attention to keeping the land, water, floor, room, body, clothes, and food clean.

Another well-preserved ritual in Nurota is "the mushkulkushod". The essence of this ceremony is to promote hard work and honesty. During this ceremony, the table is set and a black lamp is lit. Bread and raisins are placed on the table. The history of Nowruz, which is considered a national holiday of the peoples of Central Asia, is also a traditional Zoroastrian New Year holiday that existed before Islam. Scholars such as





Beruni, Omar Khayyam, Mahmoud Kashghari wrote down valuable information about the antiquity of Nowruz.<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of the year was considered the beginning of the year when the sun entered the constellation Hamal and the equinox. According to the old solar year, it coincided with the beginning of the month of Farvardin, March 21, the time of the equinox of day and night, the beginning of the day, revival in nature, and the beginning of spring.

Sumalak is the most traditional dish of Nowruz, and it is said that while sumalak is being cooked, "the siymalak", thirty angels, came. Nowruz was celebrated in Nurota's castle square-ballroom from a long time ago, Nurota Bey watched the celebration from the castle. Because from this place, wheat was planted in the fields. Among the pre-Islamic holidays of the people of Nurota, the "Sayli Guli Surkh" holiday, dedicated to the beautiful gift of nature - the flower, held in the spring season, during Nowruz, held a special place. On this holiday, everything is decorated with flowers. Artisans of the city displayed their goods on stalls around the fountain and near the market place. In the wedding hall behind the castle, the Navruz "Guli surkh" procession was held. The girls and boys had a holiday on the hill called "Kohi dokhtaran" beyond the ballroom.

Even now, the people of Nurota make incense to ward off evil spirits and evil spirits. It is usually made on eve days, before wedding ceremonies, before spring and autumn plowing, and it is distributed by baking buzmuk (scalloped) in layers. They believe that the smell of heated oil chases away the danger caused by humans and demons from the house and calls the ghost of their ancestors, who are the guardians of generations.

Beruni also mentions this in his book "Memorials left from ancient peoples". German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche travels to Iran at the end of the 19th century. He meets the Zoroastrians living in the city of Yazd and gets to know their traditions. When the philosopher returns to his country, he brings with him the swastika, the religious symbol of the Zoroastrians, which resembles the joined sign with the ends turned up, and explains to his countrymen that this is the sign of a superior race. After the introduction of Islam to Central Asia and Iran, some of the Zoroastrians who did not want to accept Islam moved to India...

Forty pieces of this swastika, a religious symbol of Zoroastrians, are drawn

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<sup>1</sup> Mukhammadzhanov A. History of irrigation of Kuyi Zarafshan valley. Tashkent: Fan. 1972. p 48





around the mihrab of the mosque built on the banks of the spring in Nurota. Here is a comment. Perhaps the place of the mosque was first a Zoroastrian camp, and later it was converted into a mosque during the Islamic era. The fact that there is a "chillakhona" (chikhil - forty) on the front of the mosque's mihrab is a sign that there were special healers in the presence of the firemen. Because in all parts of "Avesta", in particular, in Vendidad, there are still valuable tips about the classification of diseases, methods of treating patients, medicinal plants, medical practice, doctors, their duties and responsibilities.

Another ancient custom widely spread among our people is the custom of keeping three corners, long amulets and "radnoma", which are hung around the neck or sewn on clothes. Now this custom has been combined with Islamic customs. In addition, wearing glasses on ears, clothes, hats is one of the customs of our ancestors who lived before Islam. Nurota people pay attention to pets, especially dogs. Almost every household has one or two dogs.

The ancient inhabitants of Nurota believed that it is possible to influence nature with the help of certain things through various methods and achieve the desired goals in this way. For example, spring wheat and autumn wheat have been planted in Nurota since ancient times. In some years, there was little rainfall, and in a dry year, there was no crop. During these years, the people of Nurota collected flour from each house and cooked "kochi", and after eating it, they washed the dishes from the bowl and believed that it would rain. Folk songs and rituals related to agriculture have been preserved in Nurota.<sup>2</sup>

We wanted to reflect on the views of the local Uzbek and Tajik people living in the villages of the middle oasis of Nurota, about their historical experiences and rituals related to farming. As well as other peoples of Central Asia, the inhabitants of Nurota oasis started their spring agricultural work, according to the local calendar ("Lunar" (lunar calendar), which has survived to this day among the local people), from the time when the sun has passed from the sign of the fish (hut) to the constellation of the lower (hamal) stars. According to the current calendar, it started from March 22 to April 21. The first month in the farmers' calendar is long, and the grass is full of farming. That's why it's called "Hamal comes, working comes". Farmers, gardeners, and herdsmen have widely used folk beliefs, proverbs, and sayings about the unique climate, weather, and other characteristics They make drawings for the beginning of the year to be good. In all the villages of the Nurota oasis, before the spring work,

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<sup>2</sup> Suyunov S. Study of Nurota Korizas // Uzbekistan - in ancient and medieval times. Samarkand: 1992. 96 pages.





“Khudayi” is performed near the mosque or the graves.

This ceremony is often held at the beginning of March under the leadership of old farmers, herdsman, and elders. Previously, milk or wheat food products were collected from families according to the capacity of each household, but later money was also collected. With the collected money, a calf or a sheep was bought from the market, slaughtered for sacrifice, and the meat was cooked into halim (this situation was observed mainly in Nurota and nearby areas). Before preparing the food, the men of the village divided into three or four groups and cleaned the village ditches. At lunchtime, when everyone gathered, the food prepared for the “khudayi” was eaten.

For some reasons, food was sent to their homes as a gift. After lunch, the village priest recited verses from the Koran, and the elders prayed to God for a prosperous and blessed year, and for a bountiful harvest in agriculture. That's why the saying "If you plow land, plow autumn, if you don't plow autumn, plow a hundred", they have a great meaning. If you plow the land in the fall, the land will rest from the snow and rain and will be well-nourished and gentle, ready for planting in the spring. One more thing to say here is that the spring plowing season started at the end of March.

With this, the peasants performed ceremonies related to the spring plowing and planting of seeds in the field, such as "Ploughing the Field", "Shokhmoylar", "Ekin Sayli", "Kosh Oshi". Rituals are often considered lucky and auspicious. On Nowruz days, on the eve of plowing the land, they cook dishes such as khalma, ghurke, suzma, and perform customs. Those who anoint the kings of the oxen with oil say that the old men will make the oxen king strong, and the oxen themselves will be tireless. In some villages of Nurota, during the drought years, farmers held various auspicious ceremonies and performed various rituals. In general, the ceremonies known as "Kosh izdzh", "Kosh moylar", "Kosh oshi" are the first working day of the peasants in the new year, and they tried to welcome them as joyfully as possible. This is a form of Zoroastrian belief that the way the new year is greeted, the same mood will accompany the whole year.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, the traditional farming rituals of the local people of Nurota, Josh, Kushtamali, Toz, Chuya, Oqula, Soykechar villages, which are among the large villages of Nurota oasis, indicate that they have a unique culture. The national traditions related to agriculture reflect not only farming traditions, lifestyle, ethnic

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<sup>3</sup> Shavkat Ismailzadeh. Pages from the history of Nurota. - T.: Uzdavmatbuotli publishing house, 2010. 117- 34 pages.





history, traditions, religious beliefs, but also the long-standing farming, animal husbandry, and horticulture cultures of our people. It is a gratifying thing that generations inherit various traditions and paintings from our great ancestors.

Weddings are considered one of the greatest ceremonies of the people of Nurota, and these weddings take place in a special spirit. People of Nurota have traditions related to wedding ceremonies. In particular, like other regions of our country, going to a wedding with a camel has become a custom and tradition. Since ancient times, the Uzbek people have gone to weddings with camels. "Toyona" means to go to a wedding with a gift to the host of the wedding. In some of our regions, the custom is called koshan (adding) instead of filling. Relatives, friends, brothers and sisters, individually, sometimes in groups, as a team, as well as representatives of the workplace and employees can bring various gifts to the house where the wedding is taking place<sup>4</sup>.

In ancient times, making a "toyona" was an example of bringing an ox or sheep to a wedding. Its amount also depended on the financial capabilities, economic and material status of the wedding owner and the wedding party, and, of course, the time. Marriage has been a symbol of purity since ancient times, and it is not for nothing that girls' virginity is compared to clear water and valued. Marriage originated thousands of years ago on the basis of life requirements and life experiences. Over time, it has become one of the conditions of family strength, a high symbol of the Eastern culture of life.

Traditional customs and rituals are not only joy and happiness, but also consist of magic-like pictures aimed at a specific goal. For example, the customs of many weddings include wrapping the gods in white, nine tartars, offering such and such sidra sarpo to the bride and groom, godfather and relatives, the number of breads on the table, burning incense, turning the bride around the fire, placing a boy on the groom's lap, and the bride and groom. Scatter money and sweets on them such as looking into a mirror and eating an egg, although they have lost their essence, are rituals that have been performed for a certain magical purpose since ancient times. After the people of Nurota give a big soup to the people, the marriage feast is held separately with the participation of the people and relatives.

A wedding ceremony is always a wonderful family celebration, which is a symbol of joy, youth, beauty, good hope for the future and good dreams. This very

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<sup>4</sup> Rashidov S.R. "Place names and clans in Kattakorgan district". Journal of universal scientific research. ISSN (E): 2181-4570, 2023.





beautiful ceremony is performed with all kinds of folk art, singing and dancing. In fact, it is a ceremony that has passed the test of centuries, its essence is deeply thought out, it is celebrated on a national basis, it has been improved and continuously enriched in every era.

The ritual of bringing down the bride is especially interesting at Nurota weddings. Since our ancient ancestors worshiped fire, the bridegroom brought the bride, who came on horseback, led by her uncle, from the horse, circled three times around the big bonfire lit in front of the gate, and then brought her inside. With this, our ancestors cleansed the new family from various genders and evil eyes in the fire.

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