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## **THE REPRESENTATION OF UZBEK PEOPLE'S TRADITIONAL LIFE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN HOUSE MUSEUMS**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the representation of the traditional lifestyle and cultural heritage of the Uzbek people in house museums, using the house museums of Khamza Khakimzoda Niyoziy and Fayzulla Khujayev as examples. The study highlights the role of museum expositions in reconstructing historical periods and their importance in reflecting everyday life, architecture, social relations, and cultural values. It also examines the socio-cultural life of Uzbek society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through museum exhibits. House museums are assessed not only as institutions preserving historical memory but also as significant scientific and cultural sources that promote national heritage.

**Keywords:** House museum, memorial museum, cultural heritage, traditional lifestyle, exhibit, Khamza Khakimzoda Niyoziy, Fayzulla Khujayev, historical environment, architecture, social life.

### **Introduction**

The rich cultural heritage and historical lifestyle of the Uzbek people are currently being studied through various scientific sources, archival documents, and museum expositions. In particular, memorial and house museums play a significant role in vividly presenting historical processes. Through these museums, it is possible to gain a clear understanding of the social life of a particular period, architectural traditions, material culture, and everyday human



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activities. The house museums of historical figures such as Khamza Khakimzoda Niyoziy and Fayzulla Xo'jaev serve as important sources for studying the socio-cultural environment of Uzbek society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The exhibits preserved in these museums reflect not only aspects of personal life but also the overall level of development of society during that period.

Memorial and house museums are of great importance in studying the social life and traditional lifestyle of the Uzbek people. Museum exhibits serve as important sources for accurately reflecting the lifestyle of the population and reconstructing the historical period based on factual evidence.

The expression of the Uzbek people's lifestyle in the late 19th – early 20th centuries is clearly reflected in the exhibits preserved in the house museums of Hamza and Fayzulla Khujaev. The selection of these two figures is explained by the fact that they lived in the same historical period, represented the intellectual class, and played an important role in the development of the nation. One of them was born and raised in the Ferghana Valley, while the other grew up in the Zarafshan oasis. Through these two regions, an attempt was made to analyze similarities and differences in residential architecture, everyday life, and social processes, as well as the influence of the historical period on the lives and destinies of Hamza and Fayzulla Khujaev, and their place in history through the exhibits and concepts of their house museums.

The building of the Hamza House Museum was constructed in the 19th century and consists of a small courtyard and five to six rooms. The house was built using both baked and raw bricks. Its columns, ceiling, and windows are made of wood. The ceilings are decorated with red and green colors, while the columns are adorned with carved patterns.

Upon entering the courtyard through the gate, on the right side, one can see a mulberry tree planted by Hamza's father, Ibn Yamin Niyoz ugli, which is nearly 140 years old [1]. The courtyard contains several trees and a vine trellis. In the inner part of the small courtyard, there is a single-story, low house. Inside the entrance, there are two rooms, and the corridor ceiling is also decorated with green and red colors. An electric light is installed above the entrance door.

On the left side, there is a door leading to the guest room. The doors of the guest room and other rooms in the house are built relatively low. The main reason for



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this design was to ensure that guests would bow slightly when entering, expressing respect toward the homeowners.

The guest room is an essential part of the traditional Uzbek courtyard, serving as the main living space of the head of the family and a place for receiving guests. It is equipped with all necessary items for hospitality. Two types of paranja are displayed in this room. The paranja has a symbolic meaning, indicating Hamza's active participation in the "Khujum" movement for women's emancipation in the 1920s–1930s.

The interior structure of the rooms and the arrangement of unique items provide an insight into Hamza's parents, relatives, and the poet's life. Additionally, this room also served as the working place of Ibn Yamin Niyoz ugli, known in the Ferghana Valley as "Khakimcha tabib," where he received distinguished guests and patients. Khakimcha tabib was one of the enlightened and educated individuals of his time and maintained close relations with respected citizens of the city and literary figures. Therefore, this guest room became a frequent meeting place for many notable and distinguished personalities. The room reflects the atmosphere of the period in which Ibn Yamin lived [2].

Next to the guest room, there is Hamza's private cell (creative workshop), where Khamza Khakimzoda Niyoziy spent a significant part of his life in Kokand engaged in literary work. The items and tools necessary for the creative process have been preserved to this day. The writer's major literary heritage novels, poems, textbooks, short stories, dramas, and musical works—was created precisely in this room.

This room also contains a *khontaxta*, covered with a traditional *suzana* from that period. A plaque and a candlestick are placed on the *khontaxta*. On a nail near the window, there is a garment belonging to Hamza's mother, Jahonbibi.

Since the house belonged to a family of traditional healers, the museum also includes a pharmacy room. In this pharmacy, Khakimcha tabib prepared and stored medicines. The remedies were made from various medicinal plants, minerals, chemical substances, as well as honey and mumiyo, using boiling methods and a mortar and pestle. The tools used for preparing, packaging, and measuring medicines by other traditional healers were simple and hardly differed from ancient instruments. The pharmacy shelves contain items such as a grain



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mill (*objuvoz*), small jugs, glass containers, fabrics, gourds, and mortars. Medicinal herbs were crushed in the mortar and stored in gourds [3].

Adjacent to the pharmacy is the dining room (communal room), which served as a place where family members gathered, conversed, and ate together. In some families, such a room also functioned as a sleeping area; however, in this educated and healer's family, a separate room was allocated for dining. Therefore, most of the furnishings consist of utensils and objects related to eating.

The *kaznok* is a small storage chamber that served as a pantry. It stored food supplies: grain and flour in wooden chests, oil in jars, beans, lentils, and other legumes in sacks, and vegetables in baskets. A ventilation opening in the ceiling ensured air circulation. In one corner of the room, large ceramic jars stored grain products.

The inner courtyard (*ichkari*, Jahonbibi's room) is an important and integral part of the traditional Uzbek house, serving as the main living space where women spent most of their lives. Jakhonbibi, Khamza Khakimzoda's mother, was the mistress of this inner section. She learned the art of traditional medicine from her husband and also treated female patients in this room. At the center of the room is a traditional heating device called a *sandal*, widely used about 100–150 years ago. The room contains large and small shelves, where quilts are stacked and covered with embroidered *so'zana*. The smaller shelves hold bowls, plates, cups, teapots, jugs, and a portrait of Ibn Yamin Niyoz o'g'li. Traditional women's garments and the *paranja* are also hung on the walls [4].

The kitchen is one of the main components of the traditional Uzbek courtyard. Typically, such kitchens consisted of two parts: one for food preparation and another for the hearth area. In the hearth section, there were large and small ovens and a tandoor. The ceiling was built in the "khashtiyak" style—a ventilation system with eight openings that prevented smoke from accumulating. The kitchen contained all necessary utensils for cooking and daily use, including a grain grinder (*keli*). Nearby were a samovar, small clay jars, a metal water jug, an oil container, ladles, a rolling pin, as well as tools for baking bread such as *chakich* and *rapida*. An oil lamp was suspended from the ceiling. Kitchen utensils such as strainers, baskets, and trays were hung on the walls. Additionally, a basket was suspended from the ceiling by a rope, which served as a refrigerator in that period.



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“Achaxon Room” was inhabited by Khamza’s sister, Achaxon Niyozova. Achaxon was fully proficient in both old and new scripts and worked as an otinbibi (female religious educator), teaching girls of the neighborhood in this room. She also engaged in sewing to support her household. A single carpet belonging to Hamza has been preserved in Achaxon’s room to this day. The room contains several shelves; the large shelf typically stores bedding and clothes. On the left side of the large shelf there is a gramophone, and beside it a scarf is hung on the wall. A women’s vest made of silk fabric is also displayed on this side, along with samples of women’s paranja garments.

There are two types of paranja: if the sleeve has no additional elements, it indicates a married woman. If the lower part of the sleeve is vertically attached to the first sleeve, it signifies a widow. On the right side of the large shelf, Achaxon’s dress from that period is hung on the wall. Nearby shelves contain a samovar, tray, and teapot. Other shelves on the right hold plates, bowls, cups, and dishes. At the center of the room, on a table, there is a sewing machine used by Achaxon, which demonstrates the introduction of sewing machines in the early 20th century. Next to the sewing machine are photographs taken in the 1930s: one shows Hamza’s son Abbas together with his aunt Achaxon, and another shows Abbas alone [5].

The preservation of this household as a museum is largely due to the efforts of Achaxon Niyozova and her descendants. This was because Isroiljon died young, Xojaloy passed away in 1919, and Khamza Khakimzoda Niyoziy was killed in 1929. As a result, the responsibility of preserving the household fell to Achaxon. She died in 1948. Khamza’s son Abbasxon (February 1925, Kokand – 1943, Bryansk) also lived in this room for some time with his aunt Achaxon.

The Khamza Khakimzoda Niyoziy house-museum provides extensive information about the social environment of Kokand, the occupations and activities of the household members, their standard of living, and their circle of relatives and friends. The exhibits reflect the distinctive features of an Uzbek family and household. At the same time, the presence of relatively modern equipment for that period shows that the family were progressive representatives of their time.



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In the Goziyon neighborhood of Bukhara city, the Fayzulla Khujaev house-museum also contains a large collection of exhibits related to the traditional lifestyle of the Uzbek people. Residential buildings in Bukhara were divided according to the region's climate conditions into "tobiston" — summer rooms facing north, and "zimiston" — winter rooms facing south or west [6]. This architectural style was also characteristic of the household of the wealthy merchant Ubaydulloxuja.

In the early 20th century, Fayzulla Khujaev's house was entered through an intricately carved gate from Goziyon Street, passing through the entrance hall into the courtyard. The rooms were interconnected through doors leading to a central hall. The high-ceilinged summer room was intended for receiving guests. The interior walls were plastered with clay mixed with straw and decorated with white ornamental patterns [7].

Before entering the inner courtyard, guests were received in a large guest room located near the gate, which also included a small room for servants. Distinguished guests were invited into the inner courtyard. The "Havli durun" — the women's courtyard — was accessed through a narrow passage and a small door. The passage was divided into two directions: the straight path led to the courtyard, while the left door led to the kitchen and servants' quarters. The kitchen was one of the main working spaces for women, where bread was baked in a tandoor and food was cooked over several hearths.

Many rooms were decorated with wall paintings, each featuring a unique composition. The decorative work was executed in separate panels. The main ornamental motif widely used was the depiction of flowers in vases and flowerpots; Bukhara craftsmen decorated entire walls with compositions ranging from small details to large bouquets. The brightness of colors and the refined execution demonstrate the work of highly skilled artisans. Compared to the decorative elements of the reception hall of the Sitorai Mohi-Khosa palace, the wall paintings in these house rooms are notable for being attributed to the famous painter Khasanjon. During the construction of the building, the leading craftsmen of that time—Qori Cho'bin, master Karimjon "Taxta", master Samad, and the painter Hasanjon Umarov participated. The decoration of the rooms and veranda combined various traditional techniques, including the plaster carving styles



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“qirma” and “tobadoni”, the painting style “isfaxoni”, and woodworking styles such as “bag‘dodi” and “ubaydi”. The construction preserved traditional Bukhara architectural forms such as “to‘qqiz bolor” and “o‘n bir bolor” room structures, as well as dakhliz (corridors), madon (small auxiliary rooms), utility buildings, and kitchens.

The winter house exhibition reflects the lifestyle of women of that period: carpets from the 19th century, various household items, and “sandals” (traditional heating systems) are displayed. During long and cold winter nights, women gathered around the sandal, reciting poems by Bedil, Saadi Shirazi, and Mashrab, and spent much of their time engaged in embroidery and receiving guests.

With the arrival of the railway in Central Asia, household goods began to include items that were not native to local traditions but were brought from Europe. Some were produced in factories, others in industrial plants. These items chandeliers, glass lamps, beds, Russian samovars, silver spoons and knives were mainly made in Russia and Germany. Pocket watches, wall clocks, and gramophone records were imported from Poland, France, and Switzerland. The shelves also contained porcelain items from China, Japan, Russia, and Germany, totaling 120 pieces. These featured depictions of flowers, animals, human figures, fruits, and vegetables.

The central part of the second room is arranged as an exhibition interior: the table (xontaxta) is set with sweets, carpets are placed underneath, and a chest, musical instruments, and gramophone records brought from Russia in 1909 are displayed nearby.

The large summer guest room covers an area of 50 m<sup>2</sup>. The second living room occupies 40 m<sup>2</sup>. Doors and windows made in the “Bogdodi” style give the rooms a special elegance. The interiors reflect the everyday life of people in the early 20th century. The architecture of the building shows a combination of local building materials and European styles typical of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The layout of the rooms was designed to reduce heat in summer and protect against cold in winter. The uneven and multi-level structure of the residential complex creates a unique architectural solution. In the corner of the courtyard, there is a 9-meter-deep well used for drinking water and irrigation.



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The large rooms serve as summer reception halls, with plaster latticework installed above the windows. These lattices were designed to improve air circulation during hot summer months. In winter, the rooms were heated using a traditional sandal heating system. The main rooms for both men and women face north, and access to them is via stairs and a raised platform (supa).

In front of these rooms, there is a long veranda supported by 33 wooden beams across two levels, covering an area of 100 m<sup>2</sup>. The veranda is supported by four carved wooden columns. The columns are decorated with intricate wood carvings, geometric patterns, and floral designs, giving the gallery a colorful appearance and reflecting the ceremonial and monumental character of the courtyard.

All courtyards have basements underneath the rooms, which are illuminated and ventilated through door and window openings. These basements are interconnected, allowing access to each courtyard. They were used to store essential household items, Karakul pelts, and goods such as chintz, silk (atlas), wool, cotton, and other materials brought from Russia, Constantinople, Peshawar, and Berlin. The basement under the women's courtyard had a sealed exit to the street and was mainly used by family members during the hottest days.

It is worth noting that today nearly 200 households in Bukhara are included in the UNESCO list. One of such households, the "House of a Wealthy Bukhara Merchant," has been used as the basis for a house-museum. Its scientific concept highlights not only the history of the building, but also the owners' trading activities, providing information about Bukhara's import and export relations, as well as their tragic fate. It is also shown, based on historical maps, that in the early 20th century about 25% of Bukhara's urban population was engaged in handicrafts.

In addition, visitors and foreign tourists are presented with Bukhara traditions such as the cradle ceremony (putting a child in a cradle) and the "Sallabandon" ritual. The museum also features an exhibition of clothing worn by wealthy families in the early 20th century [9].

The Fayzulla Khujaev house-museum leaves a deep and meaningful impression on visitors regarding the cultural life of Bukhara. The preservation of authentic exhibits and the reconstruction of the house in its original environment fully



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comply with the requirements of museum organization, thereby strengthening its status. This museum allows one to gain a complete understanding of the social environment in which F. Khujayev grew up.

In conclusion, in the creation of these two house-museums, approaches typical of house-museum design were applied. The exhibitions present the traditional lifestyle and household items specific to each region, as well as the occupations and activities of the household owners, while also providing information about the role of women in family and social life. During the museum visit, a clear impression is formed of the close connection between the social activities of the poet and musician Khamza and the statesman F. Khujayev and the values and ideas of the period in which they lived. The exhibitions dedicated to these two intellectual figures contribute to illuminating the history of political and cultural processes in Uzbekistan.

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