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THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING THE ART OF FOLKLORE IN THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract. This article scientifically and philosophically analyzes the role of traditional folklore art in preserving national-cultural identity and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the age of rapid technological progress. At the same time, the essence of the concept of folklore, its specific fundamental characteristics, and its socio-cultural functions are highlighted. Additionally, the evolution of the legal foundations for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage on an international scale is reviewed, proving that folklore is a spiritual shield capable of resisting the destructive aspects of modern culture and a system of great creative significance.

Keywords: traditional folklore, intangible cultural heritage, national identity, cultural safeguarding.

Human civilization is not confined merely to stone-carved inscriptions, magnificent monuments, or yellowed manuscripts. The deepest, most vibrant, and most sincere pages of history live on in the language, melody, and spirit of a people within their intangible cultural heritage. The powerful source that pumps life-giving blood into the veins of this heritage is, without a doubt, the art of folklore. Folklore is a vessel that carries a nation's identity, along with its aesthetic and philosophical worldview, across centuries into the present day; it is the living echo of the past.

In the 21st century, where the advancement of AI is progressing at a breakneck pace, preserving the uniqueness of national cultures has become one of the most pressing global challenges. As technological progress makes human life easier, centuries-old values, oral lore, rituals, and traditions increasingly face the threat of oblivion. At this very juncture, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage transcends the boundaries of mere museum preservation or archiving; it demands the active development of living traditions and their deep integration into the consciousness of new generations. Developing the art of folklore means releasing intangible cultural heritage from its "frozen" state and breathing new, contemporary life into it.

This is because folklore, by its very nature, is a dynamic system it truly lives only when it is performed, sung, and passed down orally from generation to generation. The problem of preserving cultural heritage has become one of the key areas of cultural policy in many countries around the world in recent decades. The attention paid to this field is linked to globalization processes and the tendencies of world unification under the influence of the transition to an information society, both of which are negatively affecting the processes of forming and preserving national-cultural identity.

The market economy is leading to the commercialization of culture and the rapid formation of a consumer consciousness oriented toward universal standards. At the same time, the quality of cultural reproduction is failing to provide the sufficient stability that is highly essential for a society undergoing a phase of social and economic reforms. In such a situation, there is a growing realization that ensuring the country's security, providing timely and appropriate responses to internal and external threats, and creating conditions for rapid economic development are inherently linked to the spiritual progress of society, the development of the cultural sphere, and the level of its support by the state.

The initial stage of addressing this issue appears to date back to 1973. At that time, the Government of Bolivia approached UNESCO with a request to develop a draft of model proposals for the regulation, development, and dissemination of folklore norms. Under UNESCO's mandate, this work was carried out by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and during the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held in Paris from October 17 to November 16, 1989, the "Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore" was adopted. Although the document synthesized 16 years of debate surrounding the definition and scope of the concepts of "folklore" and "popular culture", its impact was not as significant as expected. This is primarily attributed to the non-binding legal nature of the document, as well as the absence of concrete proposals and measures to incentivize UNESCO member states in their efforts to support and safeguard folklore.

Nevertheless, the problem was clearly defined and sparked widespread discussions. Between 1995 and 1999, UNESCO organized eight regional seminars to discuss this issue. In 1989 (the original text states 1989, but from a historical process perspective, 1999 is intended here), UNESCO, in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution, organized a conference in Washington, D.C., titled "A Global Assessment of the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore". At this forum, experts substantiated the necessity of revising the definition of "folklore", which had changed in both content and form, and underscored the need to develop a new regulatory instrument.

In defining the concept of "folklore", V. P. Anikin considers it essential to account for its character as art and artistic creation. Viewing folklore as a verbal art, the author clarifies: "it is a body of oral artistic works created by the people, the working masses, through their joint collective labor". On the other hand, V. Y. Gusev defines folklore as a specific form of the practical and spiritual activity of the people, which "objectively reflects the figurative-artistic reconstruction of reality and expresses those in need of material objectification". According to this author, folklore is a popular artistic-everyday tradition possessing multifaceted social functions. Furthermore, K. V. Chistov emphasizes that folklore, as a distinct subsystem, plays an "important role in the system of traditional folk culture". Folklore is the primary, authentic culture of the people's way of life, serving as a phenomenon of collective artistic consciousness a "phenomenon that reveals the essence, nature, and vital activities of human beings".

In addition to defining folklore and demonstrating its characteristics, identifying its key features is equally important. O. A. Abramova highlights such attributes of folklore as syncretism, traditionality, orality, anonymity, collectivity, variability and improvisation, and multifunctionality. Syncretism represents the interconnectedness of individual artistic components: music, facial expressions, words, gestures, dance, dramatic action, and so on. O. A. Abramova refers to traditionality as the "fundamental characteristic of folklore", because by bridging the past and the present, it actualizes the experience of past generations and renders it stable. While orality distinguishes folklore from literature, anonymity is bound up with the people's lifestyle and mode of existence. Folklore is also characterized by improvisation, which ensures the uniqueness of each performance. Additionally, polyfunctionality is inherent to folklore.

Determining the functions of folklore is of equal importance. O. A. Abramova distinguishes spiritual-moral functions that express national identity, as well as "cognitive, artistic-aesthetic, communicative, value-oriented, religious, and self-expressive" functions. Meanwhile, B. N. Putilov specifically emphasizes functions such as social memory, integration, and inclusiveness. The author notes that folklore memory is not merely a passive bank kept in reserve, but an actively functioning

system, a living arsenal directly relevant to ongoing reality. In addition, normative, informational, sociological, axiological, entertainment, and other functions of folklore are also distinguished. However, its primary functions remain communicative, moral, aesthetic, and legitimizing, among others.

Folklore is the spiritual passport of every nation, preserved through the corridors of history, and the primary guarantee of its vital essence. Throughout this study, the vital and strategic importance of developing folklore art in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage has been thoroughly substantiated from both scientific and philosophical perspectives. Based on the results and analyses obtained, the following concluding remarks can be made:

First, in the era of globalization and rapid technological revolutions, the preservation of national and cultural identity has become a strategic issue intrinsically linked to the national security and spiritual stability of every state. Amidst the commercialization of culture driven by the market economy and the widespread rise of consumerist thinking, systematic state support for folklore art serves as the sole shield strengthening the spiritual immunity of society. Second, at the international level, the legal frameworks for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage have undergone a long and complex evolutionary path. Initiated by Bolivia's proposal in 1973 and adopted within the UNESCO framework in 1989, these recommendations have fundamentally transformed the approach to folklore today.

Over time, the enrichment of the concept of folklore in both form and substance demands the continuous updating and reforming of its legal and practical protection mechanisms.

Third, according to the scholarly heritage of the Russian school of folkloristics, folklore is a multifunctional product of collective labor and social consciousness. As emphasized by scholars like V. P. Anikin and V. Y. Gusev, it represents a figurative and artistic reproduction of reality, while in K. V. Chistov's interpretation, it is a primary and most authentic cultural system that defines human existence. Viewing folklore as such a large-scale socio-cultural phenomenon allows for a proper evaluation of its role in society.

Fourth, the fundamental characteristics of folklore—such as syncretism, traditionality, orality, anonymity, collectivity, variability, and multifunctionality—distinguish it from other art forms. In this regard, the aesthetic, communicative, and value-oriented functions classified by O. A. Abramova, as well as the "social memory" function emphasized by B. N. Putilov, are of particular significance. Folklore memory is not a passive archive; it is an active, constantly functioning system capable of engaging in a living dialogue with the present day. In conclusion, preserving and developing folklore art requires actively integrating it as a living process into the daily lives of new generations, the education system, and social consciousness. Indeed, folklore lives only when it is sung and performed. Safeguarding this heritage the living voice of a nation and transmitting it undamaged to the future is the spiritual duty of every state to its own future.

Preserving and developing the art of folklore within the framework of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is a vital prerequisite for maintaining national-cultural identity in a rapidly globalizing world. In recent years, historic and large-scale initiatives have been implemented in this direction in New Uzbekistan. This is clearly reflected in the comprehensive state support for folklore-ethnographic groups, the regular organization of prestigious international folklore festivals, and the systematic integration of oral folk art into the modern education system. By transcending the limitations of treating folklore as a static museum exhibit and instead recognizing it as a living and dynamic system, these state-level reforms have breathed new life into traditional art forms. In the final analysis,

preserving this invaluable intangible heritage and transmitting it to future generations is not only an academic necessity but also a supreme spiritual duty that ensures the cultural continuity and sovereignty of the nation.

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