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Revitalization of the Heritage of Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is one of the regions in the world where world civilization has been developing for millennia. Such kingdoms as Bactria, Soghdia, and Khwarazm, contemporaries of Hellenistic Greece, Rome, and Achmenid Iran, were established in the territory of Uzbekistan. The Great Silk Road went through it, connecting East and West.

In the late Hellenistic period, a great kingdom known in history as the Kushan empire was formed in the south of Uzbekistan. The monuments of that time, represented by large settlements with a territory of tens of hectares, survived until the present in Surkhandarya, Kahkadarya, Samarqand, Bukhara, and other regions. They have been thoroughly studied by archaeologists, historians of art, and architects from Uzbekistan, and in the last ten years by numerous international scholars in Japan, France, Germany, and elsewhere. The ancient objects and works of art found at excavations in Dalverzin-tepe and other sites have been exhibited in many countries.

The history of these legendary cities and monuments, thanks to the achievements of science, is beginning to come to light. Among the remarkable discoveries of recent years are the magnificent palace of the Khwarazm kings with a great number of festive halls (3rd century); numerous castles, keshik (6th – 8th century); mural paintings; a palace at Varahsha, the residence of the Bukhara kings, whose halls were decorated with splendid carved stucco and murals; the palace of the Afrasiab kings also with mural painting; and the palace of the Termez kings.

The cities and settlements of Uzbekistan continued their development in the 9th and 10th century. They were active in trade, especially the cities located on the caravan routes from the Middle East to the Far East and India. Their monumental buildings were constructed in baked, not adobe, brick. The outer covering on the domes dominated the exterior architecture. The layers of baked bricks were also designed with ornaments. The famous Samanid mausoleum (11th – 12th century) is an example of this technique and is rightly considered to be the pearl of Central Asian architecture.

Thanks to the Silk Road, the cities of Uzbekistan of the 11th and 12th centuries were constantly in the process of economic development and expansion. A great number of buildings were constructed. Bazaars became the centers of urban life and trade. Caravanserais, warehouses, and baths were located in close proximity to each other. Minarets were erected next to mosques. A high level of skill was developed in the ornamental arts - in

carving on wood, alabaster, and clay, and in epigraphic decoration of buildings.

The zenith in the development of urban life and architecture in Uzbekistan was reached in Samarqand during the reign of Timur and his successors. The Timurid dynasty constructed the Great Bibi-Khanum mosque, the magnificent Gur-Amir mausoleum sparkling with colorful glazed tiles, and the mausoleums of the Shahi-Zinda necropolis. Significant monuments were also erected outside Samarqand: the architectural complex of Khwajah Ahmad Yassavi in Turkestan; the splendid Aq-Sarai palace, and memorial complexes in Shahrisabz; and numerous buildings in Herat and other Central Asian cities.

Our great cultural heritage was mentioned by the president of Uzbekistan in a speech at the opening of the first session of the legislature (Oliy Mazlis): "The conservation and restoration of the unique historic monuments created by the Uzbek people and belonging to the national property is a very important part of our spiritual program. This national treasure has been inherited from our ancestors. That is why we must also take care of it and preserve it and hand it down to future generations."

When Uzbekistan became an independent republic, the preservation of its history and culture became part of state policy. Legislation on the "Protection and exploitation of monuments of history and culture" was enacted. These regulations deal with all matters of protection, restoration, conservation, and exploitation. Uzbekistan became a member of UNESCO. The monuments of the historic district in Khiva (1990), and the historic center in Bukhara (1993), are included in the list of the International World Cultural Heritage. During the last few years considerable sums of money, much more than in previous years, have been invested in restoration projects.

In 1994 Uzbekistan celebrated the 600th anniversary of the birth of Mirza Ulugh Beg, the great scholar, astronomer, and mathematician, whose contributions to knowledge are invaluable. The organization for the protection of the monuments of Uzbekistan celebrated the event with extensive restoration and renovation of all architectural monuments connected with the name of Ulugh Beg. Two years later, the government of the republic decreed 1996 to be the "Year of Timur" in honor of the 660th anniversary of the birth of that great statesman and military leader, sponsor of science and culture, and supporter of the development of the Great Silk Road. In Samarqand and Shahrisabz, the birthplace of Timur, extensive restoration, conservation, and landscaping were undertaken at the monuments of Timur himself and the Timurid dynasty. In 1997, Uzbekistan celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of Bukhara and Khiva. All of these were supported by the Resolution of the 28th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, and the last two were celebrated worldwide.

More than seven thousand monuments are now registered as under state protection, including 2,500 architectural monuments and more than 2,700 archaeological sites. Ten cities are included in the list of cities with concen-

trations of important architectural monuments, including Samarqand, Bukhara, Khiva, Shahrisabz, Tashkent, and Kokand.

The government of the Republic of Uzbekistan also passed an important measure to protect monuments and the environment by naming part of Khiva city a state Architectural Reserve. The territory of the reserve follows the boundary of the existing walls, including all complexes and buildings which have value as historic, artistic, and architectural objects. Following the success in Khiva, historic architectural reserves were also announced in the historic centers of Samarqand and Bukhara. Today the territory of the Bukhara Reserve covers about 200 hectares and contains a hundred and twenty-three architectural monuments. Twenty monuments are used as museums, fifty monuments are set up for tourists, and another fifty are used as workshops for craftsmen. The Uzbektamirshinoslik Institute, the only scientific center in all Central Asia, eleven production workshops, and the "Kadriat" restoration workshop, which restores and conserves old paintings are located there. A measure of the high level of restoration work in the old city of Bukhara was the receipt, in November 1995, of the prestigious international Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

State inspectors in all regions of the republic are in charge of monitoring the physical condition of the architectural monuments, the appropriateness of their use, and the quality of restoration and renovation works. The area of the restoration work includes almost all regions of Uzbekistan, even the distant regions of the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic. Today, reconstruction has changed from dealing in terms of a single monument to the reconstruction of whole architectural ensembles and historical centers of ancient cities. Thanks to these measures, many monuments have been saved and have become tourist attractions, such as the Registan ensemble, the royal necropolis of Shah-i Zinda, the Bibi Khanum architectural complex, the Amir Timur mausoleum complex, the Rukhabad complex, and Imam Bukhari memorial in Samarqand; the Kalian minaret and mosque, Mir Arab madrasa, Labi Hauz ensemble, Ulug Beg and Abdulaziz Khan madrasas, Citori I Mokhi Hosa suburban ensemble, and the Bahauddin complex in Bukhara; the architectural monuments of Ichan-Kala in Khiva (Kunja Ark, madrasa, and the mosque of Muhammad Amin Khan, Islam Khwajah minaret, Tash-Khauli palace, Juma mosque), Khudoyar Khan palace and Dakhmai Shahan necropolis in Kokand; Dorus Saodat ensemble, Dorus Tilovat, and the famous palace of Timur in Shahrisabz; and the memorial of Khakim al-Termezi in Termez.

When establishing master plans, monuments of history and culture are considered to be the central objects not only in the large ancient cities, but also in smaller settlements. Because of the dynamic development of contemporary urban life, it is essential to establish detailed master plans for the ancient cities of Uzbekistan. Plans have been made for Bukhara, Samarqand, Khiva, Shahrisabz, and Tashkent, where the borders of protected zones have been identified and areas of controlled construction and protected landscape marked. Similar projects are expected to be formulated for the protection of other cities of Uzbekistan that have

concentrations of monuments. All these plans have become a reality thanks to the intellectual contribution of scholars and the mastery of the republic's craftsmen.

Two thousand seven hundred archaeological sites are also located in the territory of Uzbekistan, and they are no less valuable than the architectural monuments. Among them are the ancient capital of Soghdia, Afrasiab, the capital of the Kushan empire, Dalverzin-tepe, ancient Khalchayan, Nesef, Kanka, and many others known from the historic sources and more recently from archaeological finds that have astonished scholars of art and history. Unfortunately, the conservation of adobe construction still remains a problem, and we are appealing to all interested countries to contribute resources towards a solution.

We also have problems involving the methods of conservation and restoration of the monuments, use of some construction materials, recession of subsoil water, structure of the monuments, and the manufacture and use of ancient construction and decorative materials. This international conference will, we hope, encourage cooperation and the contribution of participants to the conservation and revitalization of these precious monuments which belong to the whole world. We encourage other countries to participate in the revitalization of the monuments of Uzbekistan.