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**TRADITIONAL FARMING IN THE ECONOMIC CULTURE OF THE UZBEK PEOPLE:  
ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE SURKHAN OASIS  
(HISTORICAL AND ETHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS)**

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**ТРАДИЦИОННОЕ ЗЕМЛЕДЕЛИЕ В ХОЗЯЙСТВЕННОЙ КУЛЬТУРЕ УЗБЕКОВ:  
НА ПРИМЕРЕ СУРХАНСКОГО ОАЗИСА  
(ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ И ЭТНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ)**

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*Abstract.* This article is devoted to learning long traditions of Surkhan valley agriculture. It was proved by ethnographical field materials and archive documents in this article that Surkhan valley was surrounded by mountains covering 3 sides, only southern side was open to Amu-Darya, and this geographical position was very comfortable for agriculture. It was scientifically determined that Surkhan valley was not only high-tempered area, but also very convenient land with sunny weather. New kinds of the crops of Surkhan valley agriculture were augmented according to local position at the period of Bukhara emirate. Creating special kinds of land products and cereals suitable for valley climate were written based on archive sources. Changes happening on sowing crops in the valley influencing political, economic and ethnographical processes resulted by Bukhara emirate's being dependent to Russian empire were given based on scientific literature, archive materials, and statistics. As well as stretching cotton-growing lands, traditions of agriculture, and transformation processes were analyzed by many historical-ethnographical sources for this time.

*Аннотация.* Данная статья посвящена изучению традиционной земледельческой культуры Сурханского оазиса, вековых традиций, характерных именно для оазиса. В статье доказывается, что Сурханский оазис географически окружен с трех сторон разновысотными горами и открыт только с южно-амударьинской стороны, удобной для земледелия. Научно установлено, что географическое положение оазиса создало уникальный климат, и помимо того, что это страна с самой высокой температурой, также важно количество солнечных дней. В период Бухарского эмирата были выведены новые сорта сельскохозяйственных культур Сурханского оазиса в соответствии с местными условиями. На основе источников и архивных документов представлено создание специальных сортов зерна и зернопродуктов, подходящих для климата региона. На основе научной литературы и архивных материалов показаны изменения в возделывании сельскохозяйственных культур в оазисе под влиянием политических, экономических и межэтнических процессов, происходивших в результате включения Бухарского эмирата в состав России. Также на основе архивных документов проанализировано расширение посевных площадей хлопчатника в этот период. Развитие традиционной земледельческой культуры в оазисе, традиции земледелия и процессы

трансформации в них проанализированы на основе многих историко-этнографических источников и литературы.

*Keywords:* agriculture, cultivation, oases.

*Ключевые слова:* сельское хозяйство, агротехника, оазисы.

Surkhan valley is a land where created special school for agriculture for the past time. As the president of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev said: “Surkhan valley is famous for its productive soil, experienced peasant who can take good harvest from land in a year” [1].

Agriculture was developed based on long experience and phonological science of our ancestors in our country. Ethnocultural traditions, using land and water based on traditional agriculture, and methods of getting good harvest were collected in this article. And that`s why it is necessary to learn ethnoterritorial features of local agriculture created by our ancestors` experience historically and ethnologically.

Surkhan valley is also land in which its geographical position and climate are very convenient for agriculture in Central Asia for a long time. According to archeological sources, Surkhan valley was the mainland for agriculture, and Jarkuton destination came into existence and developed at the Bronze Age there [2-4]. As well as Tokharistan agriculture was very famous in Middle Ages, and peasants of this land firmed secrets of agriculture. That`s why it is very important to learn traditional agriculture of Surkhan valley.

Natural-geographical and climate position are the main features in the development of types of agriculture such as farming economy. Surkhan valley is situated near river oasis, deserts, uplands, hills and mountains, and mountainous land Sherabad also belongs to this valley [5, 36]. The valley is bordered with Afghanistan through Amu-Darya in the south, with Turkmanistan by Kuhitang mountains in the west, Kashkadarya in the northern-west, with Tadjikistan Republic by Bobotog` and Hisar mountains in the west, and northern-west. Northern parts of the valley were almost surrounded by mountains.

The valley is extended 200 km distance from northern-east towards southern-west, and its width is more than 145 kilometers [6, 31]. The plain called Surkhan-Sherabad is in the middle of the valley. The height of this plain is different such as, southern part is about 300 m, middle part is 400-450m, northern and northern-western part is 700 meters high [7, 31].

There are many rivers and irrigation ditches in the valley. For instance, length of Surkhandarya is 169 km, and it was appeared by joining Tupalang darya and Karatag darya and flows into Amudarya. Firstly, this river was called Tupalang, then it was named as a right tributary of Surkhandarya [18, 4]. The length of Tupalang Darya is 124 km.

Name of Tupalang darya is changed to Saryjuy darya when it passes near Sayjuy town. When it comes to Saryasia its name is changed to Saryasia darya [17]. Population of Yurchy and Saryjuy watered their agriculture crops from this Darya at the beginning of XIX-XX centuries.

Sherabad Darya is the last tributary of Amudarya at the territory of the valley. The length of this darya is 186 km, and it begins from the top mountains of Baysun, it is appeared by joining Iyrgayly and Kyzysay rivers. Name of the river is Machaydarya on mountainous part, and from Machay village its names are Sherabad darya and Karasuv darya [32]. Sherabaddarya didn`t flow into Amudarya constantly, its water is divided into small aryks and supported the villages of Sherabad with water. It flows into Amudarya during precipitation. Besides these rivers there were many constant tributaries and little rivers which divided into local irrigating branches in Surkhandarya. For example, length of Karatag Darya which the left tributary of Surkhandarya is 95 km. Sangardak

Darya which is wide right tributary of Surkhandarya is 114 km. Sangardakdarya also begins with tributaries which flow between two mountains. Water of this Darya didn't always reach to Surkhan, it divided into aryks and irrigated lands of Yoorchy beklik [17].

The second large tributary of Surkhandarya is Khujaipok (also called Qarluqdarya) and its length is 97 km. It is situated 3500 m from sea level and begins from Khudjaboozbarok mountains [32]. The rivers mentioned above are the main rivers of the valley and are still being used by the population.

Householding traditions which formed in different historical-ethnographical zones of Uzbekistan was learned. Agriculture that was the main branch for a long time in economy of Uzbeks and its peculiarities were given based on scientific materials in this article. Territory of Uzbekistan is divided into 3 types based on scientific literature: that is, 1) irrigating agriculture; 2) gardening, mountain agriculture with breeding; 3) desert agriculture and summer pasture breeding. This division was also written in I. Jabborov's works [9].

According to scientific sources and researches Surkhan valley is divided into 3 parts based on natural-geographical position: mountainous, irrigating lands (near rivers) and desert lands [12]. First mountainous area is large land of the zone. It consists of the lands of northern-western parts of Baysun and Denau, and mountainous area of Sherabad, Saryasia and Uzun. Especially non-irrigating sowings are planted in these lands.

Second irrigating zones are middle and bottom part of Sherabaddarya, south-eastern parts of Denau and Saryasia and sideways of Surkhandarya. Population of this area were busy with irrigating agriculture.

Third part is in desert lands that are lands in Guzor-Baysun deserts, Sherabad-Kyzyryk deserts, and near Bobotog' mountains.

Indeed if we observe the long history, this valley was known for arable farming and peasants took good harvest from cereal crops and this was given in the book "Bakhr al-asrarfymanakyb al-akhayir" by Makhmud ibn Valy who was from Balkh and lived in XVII century [22, 35]. Valley peasants not only paid attention to irrigating lands, but also non-irrigating lands. This is because of convenient geographical places for non-irrigating farming. 0° temperature that is long winter period wasn't seen off on mountainous areas of the valley. Only 120-127 winter days continued on 2000-meter height, and 160-170 days on 3000-meter height. It is noticeable that our ancestors knew when to plant barley and wheat. Planted wheat stalks grew on October and covered with snow on November. Planted seed became stronger under the ground whole winter. It developed and gave good harvest from non-irrigating land at the beginning of spring. Such favorable temperature helped to plant seeds in the non-irrigating lands [5, 23]. Besides that, spring came to valley mountains at the beginning of March, and this was one month before than northern mountains. And that's why gathering of air temperature during vegetation period and heat regime gave opportunity for non-irrigating agriculture. Besides this annual raining amount was also upper for non-irrigating agriculture. Annual raining amount on Nurota mountains was 400-450 mm, and on Khisor mountains it was 600-1200 mm [10, 18-19]. According to historical sources, arable farming was the main branch of agriculture of the emirate of Bukhara in XVI–XVIII centuries. Full information about more than 20 kinds of grain crops and their harvest was given on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chapters of "Agrotechnics collection". N.V.Khanykov who was in Bukhara in XIX century wrote: "5 kinds of cereal crops are planted in Bukhara.

They are wheat, sorochynsky wheat, barley, millet and sorghum" [15]. Many kinds of wheat, "white wheat", "black wheat", "stork wheat" and as well unfrosty "khivit" and local "cameltooth" which were met in the countries of Chosh and Khovat, at the top of Tupalang river were planted in Surkhan valley [16]. Shakhrisabs was on the first place in planting cereal crops at the period of Bukhara emirate, and Surkhan valley was on the second place [7, 18]. The wheat which was planted

on non-irrigating lands were much more expensive than the wheat planted on irrigating land, and price of the wheat rose up to 2-3 soums before the harvest [25]. Non-irrigating lands were near mountains and 90% of people were busy with non-irrigating farming in the valley [33]. Non-irrigating agriculture was extended on north-western parts of Baysun, Denau, and mountainous areas of Sherabad, Sariosiyo, Uzun and Kukhitang and Khisor [37].

A. A. Symyonov, K. Mirzev, N. A. Kyslyakov, A. Madjlysov, I. O. Hidoyatov, G. U. Astanova, K. Z. Hakimova did researches about land and water relations of west-eastern areas of Bukhara emirate. Land-occupying relations, private, rent, paying lands, contracts of land trading, population's necessity for land were written in this article.

Agriculture, breeding and craftsmanship were developed in Sherabad, Baysun and Denau bekliks where situated in Surkhan valley which belongs to Bukhara emirate at the end of XIX century and at the beginning of XX century. The population planted grapes, apple, jyda, apricot, pomegranate, cherry, nut, almond, mulberry, quince, plum, peach, as well as watermelon, melon, carrot, sugar. Farming was done consequence of snow and rain on non-irrigating lands, and especially wheat, barley, pea, flax, water-melon, melon were planted. There were 2 terms in non-irrigating lands: spring term and autumn one. Tiramoi wheat and barley were planted in September and October. Before splashing the seed, the land was ploughed, if the land needed resting, it was ploughed in spring. Ploughing process was done when the soil was wet and soft. After 2-3 time ploughing, the seed was splashed. Experienced peasants splashed the seed. 5 or 7 pieces of seed were splashed into every point of the land on irrigating lands. Half amount of the seed was sprinkled into non-irrigating land than irrigating one. If the seed was sprinkled thickly, it might be indigent by cloud-steamy warmth. In this situation wheat spikes were hollow or they were blazed. After splashing the seed, heavy harrowing process was done this is not only for covering the seed, but also for saving land moisture. Tiramoi wheat gave good harvest, and the bread made from it was very delicious meal<sup>1</sup>.

Spring savings were sowed after ploughing the ground repeatedly in non-irrigating lands. Spring — wheat grain was weaker than autumn – wheat one, and it was considered as a cold meal.

Useless grass was not grown on spring fields and it wasn't spread out as autumn wheat, according to expeditions on field barley seed which mowed at the beginning of May from irrigating fields of Sherabad beklik was brought and planted on the mountainous lands of Baysun beklik in May at the same year. Non-irrigating field was ploughed mostly in spring and it was hollowed till autumn, and sometimes till next spring 90-100 puds harvest may have been taken from 3 puds seed from each 10 meters because of local food, ploughing the ground and convenient weather condition. So, people had enough harvest from working on non-irrigating fields [30].

The peasants of the valley were not only good at planting cereal crops but also they had long traditions on gardening. Dr. Yavorsky who was in Sherabad town in 1880 gave information about tasty melons, water-melons and other fruitful gardens [6]. Russian official who lived in Termez at the beginning of XX century wrote about convenient weather condition of Surkhan valley for gardening [26, 2].

Sangardak village which was 1700 meters high from sea was also good place for gardening. As spring came people of Sangardak left the village for their gardening places. They built their gardening places in sloping areas and near streams. Such kinds of gardens were named Totumdara, Navxoonak, Khudjaipesh, Okkon, Tovkon, Bogkhoibolo, Chologon, Yusuf, Teerak, Big Lake, Little Lake, Abzayeed, Archamozor. Especially apple trees were planted in the gardens of Bukhara emirate. N. V. Khanykov wrote about 8 types of apples in the gardens of Bukhara. They are: *talkhysyb* — a large round; *jay* — little yellow, delicious; *hoji-khoni*—middle size, white; *rakhsh* — white and red;

<sup>1</sup> Notes on field. Baysun region. Khomkon village. 2004.

*sybytoorsh* — especially 3 types, yellow; *mooshkyn-syb*-middle size, fragrant yellow; *makh-toby*-middle size, white; *syby-soorkh*-red, not so big [14].

There were more than ten types of apples in Sangardak gardens. And they were *Khoonbony* (early-ripening), *javpazak* (ripes during barley-ripening period), *kyrmyzak* (early-ripening), *boorivoy* (summer), *khosakampyr* (red), *samarkandy* (winter). There also were several kinds of olmurut. For example: *khusaynymuroot*, *toshmuroot*, *yovoyimuroot*, *toortmuroot*, *chilgymurootyozmuroot* and soon. People took good harvest from apples. One apple tree might have given 350-400 kilos of apples<sup>2</sup>.

Pomegranates of Tarokly and Kushtegirmon in Sherabad and Dashnobod village in Denau were known not only in Bukhara emirate but also in Central Asia. N. Maev wrote such information about pomegranates of Dashnobod: “Dashnobod is a big and rich village famous for its delicious pomegranates. These pomegranates were spread in Bukhara emirate too. Only big and tasty pomegranates of Shakhrisabs can be equal to these pomegranates” [20]. Viticulture was also main branch of gardening in Bukhara emirate. And several kinds of grapes were planted in Surkhan valley too. They were: *Khoosayny*, *white kyshmysh*, *black kyshmysh*, *nahol*, *black bakhtiyory*, *allaky*, *toypy*, *sooltony*, *avak*, *shoovoorgony*, *kampyrgrape*, *byshkadok*, *sopydak*, *red Surkhan*, *gov Surkhan*, *white gov Surkhan*, *chylgy*, *otbagrysurkhak*, *myldyrgrape*, *heartdove*, *ishvoi*, *sabzak*, *kanyorug*, *tuyatysh*, *obaky*, *kelinbarmoq* and others<sup>3</sup>.

There were many fir — trees and pistachio plants on Bobotog mountains in Denau and Baysun [28]. Pistachio was the main income source of the population, and pistachio plant gave good harvest. Tradesmen bought every funt pistachio for 7 coins and sold it expensively to Russian markets, 1 funt pistachio was sold from 60 coins to 1 rouble in Odessa [35].

Surkhan valley was famous for its sweet apricots [21]. The apricot “boozrook-khony” that was planted in Salovot village was more delicious than other kinds of apricots. And this apricot was curative for heart and vein illnesses [8].

N. Khanykov wrote about apricots such ideas: “Apricots were dried and sent to Russia, at the beginning of the term 1 *botmon* apricot was sold for 8 coins, at the end of the term every *botmon* was sold for 4 coins. And in Russia it was sold for 15 coins at the beginning of the term, and 1 golden coin at the end of the term” [14]. Vegetables such as onion, turnip, carrot, and field fruits: melon, watermelon, cucumber, pumpkin, and technic sowings, such as tobacco and cotton were planted in the valley [29]. After the aggression of Russian Empire potato, cabbage, tomato were also planted.

After planting these sowings, tax was demanded from those vegetables too [27, 33]. There were more than 10 types of melon in Surkhan valley: *olapuchok*, *whitenovot*, *kukcha*, *burikalla*, *emiry*, *zarkokyl*, *chapcha*, *otkalla*, *tyrysh*, *kundalangtoor*. *Olapuchok* and white novot melons were sent to Bukhara emirate palace [19]. *Olapuchok* melon was brought from Talymaron. Makhmud ibn Valy who lived in XVII century wrote about melons of Termiz and Denau [22]. And the melon “*kukcha*” were planted in Sherabad beklik. This was not only tasty melon, but also it kept its shape and taste for a long time [24]. The melons were planted in Sherabad were sent not only to Bukhara but also Russia.

In conclusion, continuing traditions in agriculture in Surkhan valley is the best way to future development.

Central Asia, which is Surkhan valley was the area where agriculture developed. Archeological sources shows that this land was destination of irrigating agriculture.

Special features of agriculture of the valley was saved during Bukhara emirate time. We may see it in planting seeds, cultivation, irrigation, and taking care them.

<sup>2</sup> Notes on field. Sariosiyo region, Sangardak village, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Notes on field. Sherabad region Zarabag village, 2000.

Because of great experience population of Surkhan valley took good harvest in agriculture based on traditions of their ancestors. So, this is the nation who saved and developed the traditions and bring to young generation.

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