

## ASKIYA

Askiya (in Arabic — “azkiya”, literally means “witty”, “resourceful”) is an original genre of folk-spectacular art, and oral folk creativity, which evolved and became widespread in the Ferghana Valley and Tashkent region. As a result of continuous evolution it achieved the level of art. And it is exactly the peoples living in the above-mentioned regions, who actively participated in askiya performances. In Askiya two or more people compete on quirk. So that the words being said did not touch one’s personality, the performer should be very careful. Daily and stage types of askiya exist.

According to historical written sources Askiya was widespread in XV–XVII centuries. Writer and scientist of the XVIth

century Zayniddin Vosify wrote in his book that there was the most talented askiya performer Mavlono Abdulvose Munshiy. Information on Askiya also was given by Alisher Navoiy, Zakhiriddin Mukhammad Bobur and Khondamir.

Daily askiya is the base of the stage askiya: it can start at any place where people gather. In this type, if one of the people uses one word connected to the current condition and situation in another meaning, other people start to reply him and in this way askiya continues.

On stage askiya is usually performed in people’s rites, weddings and in other ceremonies. Having evolved in Uzbekistan’s







Fergana valley and Tashkent region, askiya became the type of art. Apart from traditional *payrovs* (themes) such as “*O’xshatdim*”, “*Bo’lasizmi*”, “*Gulmisiz, Rayxonmisiz*”, “*Bedana*”, “*Xapsana*”, “*Qofiya*”, “*Bilganlar, Bilmaganlar*”, “*Laqab*”, it is possible to observe the usage of the contemporary ones, such as “*Pakhta*”, “*Oila*”, “*Kino*”, “*Dorbozlik*”, “*Ashula*”, “*Futbol*”, etc. In *payrov* one topic should be discussed thoroughly and deeply. The *askiyachi* (askiya performer) or team that retreats from the topic loses the competition.

Famous askiya performers, such as Dehqon yuzboshi Shernazarov, Yarashqul Ostanqulov, Yusuf qiziq Shakarjonov, Ijrokombuva, Ghoibota Toshmatov, Tursunbuva Aminov, Abdulhay Masum Qozoqov and others contributed hugely to bring askiya to the level of onstage art.

Traditions associated with askiya are nowadays preserved and promoted by groups of askiyachi. These are Kokand Club of Askiya fans (led by Joraxon Pulatov and Akromjon Akbarov), askiya groups in Margilon (led by Mamasiddiq Shirayev), Khonobod (led by Muhiddin Sultonov), Asaka (led by Jumavoy Khurramov) and Korasu (led by Qahramon Abduvohidov). In order to safeguard and promote askiya art the following measures are undertaken: organization of competitions and festivals of askiya performers; preparation of TV programs; production of films, holding of “Askiya evenings” (In Tashkent, Margilon and Khonobod); publication of books and collections; carrying out scientific studies, etc. It bears mentioning that askiya art was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2014.

