# STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF KARAKALPAK NATIONAL DANCE ART

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**Summary.** This article analyzes the formation and stages of development of Karakalpak national dance art, as well as its significance today. It highlights the role of national dances in reflecting folk customs, traditions, and spiritual values. The article also provides information about the development of Karakalpak dance as a stage art, its integration with professional choreography, and the creative activities of renowned ballet masters. The research findings reveal important aspects of preserving and developing national dance art.

**Keywords:** Karakalpak dance, national dance, choreography, folklore, ballet master, cultural heritage.

The Karakalpak people primarily originated in the Khorezm valleys, where their culture developed in the region they inhabit today. A study of folklore sources shows that our people have been closely connected with art and culture since ancient times. At various celebrations and weddings, jirov and bakhshi performers demonstrated their artistic skills, while young men and women danced to the accompanying melodies and songs, creating a unique atmosphere for those gathered. Our people, who have always enjoyed entertainment and festivities, have shown particular interest in the art of dance.

The Karakalpak people have carefully preserved the art of dance, which depicts the beauty of the world and inspires the human soul with a unique spirit. Through the master-apprentice tradition, people learned by observing one another, enriching and developing the art over time. The preservation of the fundamental roots of our cultural heritage has been made possible, in part, through these artistic practices. When the word Karakalpak is mentioned, we envision our courageous ancestors who demonstrated extraordinary bravery in establishing our nation and strengthening our peoplehood. Although they were a nomadic people, they astonished others with their unity, determination, and fearlessness. Having lived in Central Asia and Eastern Europe since ancient times, the Karakalpak people have made a significant contribution to the development of world culture. Karakalpak art and culture preserve traces of longstanding connections with the Aral Sea region, Central Asia, Southern Siberia, the Volga-Ural territories, the North Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and the countries of the Middle East. Throughout history, peoples migrated from east to west several times through the Aral Sea region, which lay along the Silk Road. Professor S. P. Tolstov noted that the ancestors of the Karakalpak people had renewed their moral and cultural heritage over the centuries through their migrations and settlements along the Aral Sea coast. This is one of the sources of our people's authentic national identity and incomparable cultural wealth. Through numerous customs and invaluable forms of art inherited from our ancestors, we have continued to preserve our national identity wherever we go. At the same time, Karakalpak culture and art possess distinctive characteristics that are not replicated in other peoples' traditions. These characteristics emerged through the preservation of fundamental traditional forms and their subsequent development under various external and internal economic, cultural, aesthetic, religious, and other influences. Since ancient times, the Karakalpak people have been passionate about beautiful art and have appreciated meaningful conversations and artistic expression. They have always respected and supported those working in the arts. Looking back at the lives of our ancestors, we can see that their joyful moments were accompanied by national melodies, the performances of bakhshi and jirov artists, the singing of romantic and heroic epics, and the remarkable performances of skilled dancers.

Performers presented their art to the public through movements synchronized with melodies, facial expressions, and national costumes adorned with colourful patterns, earning the admiration and respect of audiences.The earliest dances of the ancient Karakalpaks took the form of rhythmic pantomime. These performances included movements depicting the diligence of farmers, the actions of early hunters, natural phenomena, animals, birds, the ferocity of predators, and the origins of nature. Performers used facial expressions and coordinated hand and foot movements to accompany music. As our social life developed, dance, one of the branches of artistic expression, gradually became richer, while its movements, themes, and storylines changed. Over time, dances depicting work processes evolved into staged performances that portrayed everyday life in new ways and provided people with spiritual strength, joy, and pleasure. For

example, the Uzbeks developed dances such as “Paxta” and “Pilla”; the Russians created “Ip yigiruvchi”; the Azerbaijanis developed “Uzum teruvchi qiz”; and the Karakalpaks created dances such as “Baliqchilar”, “Ilme sulton”, and “Kiyiz bosish”. Karakalpak folk dance has travelled a long historical path. The dances created over centuries and passed down through the performance skills of folk dancers represent valuable treasures of cultural heritage. The Karakalpaks' lively songs, national melodies, the spirited and courageous performances of male dancers, and the modesty, delicate movements, and graceful gestures of female dancers have always attracted audiences and brought them great pleasure. The foundations of modern choreography, recognized for its distinctive national character, began to take shape in Karakalpakstan during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly between 1920 and 1940. During 1925–1930, Sho‘raxonli Xo‘ja baliq, known by the nickname Laqabli, his associate O‘temurat masxaraboz, and O‘temuratov's daughter Xonim O‘temuratova were considered among the famous dancers of that period. Later, Yo‘ldosh Sharipov, a source of pride for the Karakalpak people, became known throughout Uzbekistan for his exceptional talent in performing the “Lazgi” dance. Uzbek dance masters made a significant contribution to the widespread development of this art in our region, leaving a lasting impression on the public and inspiring many of our compatriots to pursue this profession. In the spring of 1934, the Bukhara Theatre visited our republic. On its return journey, in order to provide practical assistance to the Karakalpak Theatre, R. Fayziyev and the ballet master and actress X. Fayziyeva remained in Turtkul for a two-year period. That same year, R. Fayziyev successfully staged the musical drama “Halima” by the playwright and composer G‘ulom Zafariy at our theatre. X.Fayziyeva staged the dances for the production as its ballet master. According to Amaniyaz Juzimbetov, during their two years of work, they taught young women and men dozens of different dances.In 1939, the leaders of our republic invited specialists from Tashkent to prepare for the Decade of Karakalpak Literature and Fine Arts in the city. Among those dedicated professionals was the ballet master Ali Fayzulla Ibragimov. He taught the young men and women selected from among the local population dance techniques and characteristic movements drawn from the dances of Eastern countries. Ali staged the dances “Ayqulash”, “Botirlar o‘yini”, “Qizlar raqsi”, “Shagala”, “Kiyiz bosish”, “Qiz quvonchi”, and the Uyghur dance “Qashqar raqsi”. The staged dances successfully passed the evaluation of a commission that included specialists such as N. Davqorayev, J. Shamuratov, S. Xojaniyazov, and T. Allanazarov, who possessed an in-depth understanding of the Karakalpak people's way of life, customs, and traditions. Ali Ibragimov also staged the dances for the musical drama “Alpomish”, which was presented to the public on 7 November 1942. By decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Uzbekistan, ballet master Ali Ardobus Ibragimov was awarded the honorary title of Honoured Artist of UzbekistanOn 3 May 1945, a ceremonial evening was held to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the creative career of the ballet master and teacher. During the event, choreographers performed “Vostochnaya plastika”, the Tatar dance “Apipa”, the Tajik dance “Leyla”, and the Karakalpak dance “Patriotlar”, as well as solo dances created by the ballet master himself. The ballet ensemble included eleven girls and thirteen boys. Among the theatre dancers who participated were Yo‘ldosh Sharipov, Saodat Otajonova, Rimma Adikova, O‘roqboy Abuov, Danil Yakubov, Jumaboy Sarikulov, Galina Bortnyak, and others. Between 1944 and 1946, six-month and three-year ballet studios were established alongside the Karakalpak State Musical Drama and Comedy Theatre. The person discussed here, Ali Fayzulla Ibragimov, led these studios. He selected talented and enthusiastic young people with an aptitude for dance from all districts and cities of the republic. At the studio, Ali Fayzulla Ibragimov the productions he staged with expressive characters reflecting the Karakalpak people's honesty, courage, and strength of spirit. He skilfully taught dancers the musical drama dances from “Alpomish”, the Uyghur dance “Qashqar raqsi”, and stage scenes from B. Asafyev's ballet “The Fountain of Bakhchisarai”, bringing them to the stage. In mid-1945, the Karakalpak State Philharmonic was established on the basis of the Chimbay collective-farm theatre. Its initial artistic staff included singer Xo‘jaboy Jumaboyev, laparchi Tilevbika Axmedova, dancers Zulayho Saparova and Orazgul Allambergenova, and other skilled performers. Today, Ali Fayzulla Ibragimov and Lizaxonim Petrosova are still recognized as dedicated artists who played a major role in shaping Karakalpak dance and elevating it to new levels of development. Between 1956 and 1959, Elizabetta Artyomovna Petrosova (Lizaxonim) made a significant contribution to the development of Karakalpak stage dance. Taking into account the psychological characteristics of the people, the aesthetic beauty of their customs, and their ethnic way of life, Lizaxonim enriched the dances with features reflecting the national character of the Karakalpak people and brought them to the stage. Thus, over three years, Karakalpak dance travelled a considerable distance, developing from simple early dances that illustratively depicted everyday life into performances that revealed the beauty of human existence. The modern character of these dances demonstrates the versatility and skill of the specialists who developed them. Their modernity lies not only in the accurate representation of mechanical work

processes but also in the expression of human freedom, spiritual inspiration, and feelings of joy. During the early years of her career, Petrosova created a number of original dances. Her works can be divided into four categories:

Labour dances.

Imitative dances depicting the animal world and natural environment.

Traditional dances reflecting folk dances, customs, and festive ceremonies.

Lyrical dances expressing the inner emotional world of human beings. She staged mass dances, duets, and solo performances, as well as dances for performers in song-and-dance ensembles and dances for dramatic and musical productions. Her work also included the staging of various choreographic compositions for performances and celebrations. People's Artist of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, teacher-choreographer, ballet master, and mentor Po'lat Madreymov was a talented artist who thoroughly understood the people's history, rich folklore, and traditions. He searched for dance movements and choreographic expressions that reflected the character and national colour of the Karakalpak people.

He frequently met with distinguished historians, literary scholars, and visual artists. He conducted research using books about Karakalpak national crafts, the origins and names of national patterns, and the patterns used on men's and women's clothing. He repeatedly listened to the melodies composed by different composers and continuously studied folk songs. As a result of these studies, he staged a number of solo dances, duets, mass dances, and choreographic suites rich in national character. These included "Uchrashuv", "Nozli", "Yigitlar", "Chavandozlar", "Lazzat", "Jilva", "Jondan qizlar", "Orol yigitlari", "Dali yigit", "Go'zallar", "Noma boshi", and "Olti qiz". Many of his dances became genuine classical works of Karakalpak choreography. Po'lat Madreymov described the creation of the dance "Olti qiz" as follows: "When I heard the melody for the dance 'Olti qiz', based on a poem by the great poet Berdaq, the sequence of the story immediately took shape before my eyes. I imagined the girls taking measured steps with grace and modesty, moving as though walking on the surface of water. Their bodies would curve and bend, their arms would float gently through the air, and their movements would express their playful and graceful nature. Their heads would tilt rhythmically, while their shoulders would move softly and alternately. The little bells attached to the decorative buttons on their chests would ring in harmony with the rhythm of their steps. Through their glances and gestures, the girls would communicate with one another. This was the dance 'Olti qiz' that I intended to stage," he said. No one can deny the historical contribution of the ballet masters who helped establish, revive, and develop dance art in Karakalpakstan. Nevertheless, Po'lat Madreymov differed significantly from other ballet masters. He consistently and systematically introduced innovations into his work. As a highly qualified specialist and skilled dancer, he demanded the highest standards of performance from every member of the ensemble and succeeded in achieving them. Moreover, he was not merely a dancer or ballet master. He had extensive knowledge of music, painting, women's jewellery, national costumes inherited from ancestors, household objects used in traditional life, folk customs, and children's folk dances. He was also familiar with acting and directing techniques, making him a truly versatile ballet master. Therefore, in every performance he staged, he carefully incorporated the most distinctive features of national identity, much like a jeweller placing a perfectly suited gemstone into a ring. Gifted, energetic, and dedicated to his profession, teacher-choreographer and skilled ballet master Po'lat Madreymov has devoted his entire life and creative work to the development of Karakalpak dance. The number of dancers distinguished by their natural talent in song and artistic dance ensembles gradually increased. Among the early performers who became widely known for their contributions to the performing arts were People's Artists of Karakalpakstan Orazgul Allambergenova, Rayma Adikova, Zulayxa Saparova, Yo'ldosh Rahmatullayev, Suluvxon Mambetova, Anvar Rustamov, and Gulshat Otaboyeva. Later, People's Artists and Honoured Artists of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, including Quvvatboy Abdreymov, Bayram Murodov, Oringul Murodova, Ilich Xo'jametov, Kenges Isayev, and Bozorboy Nodirov, also began their cultural careers as ballet artists or dancers. In the Republic of Karakalpakstan, alongside professional dance, the number of amateur folk dance ensembles and choreography groups continued to increase. Between 1965 and 1970, ensembles such as "Amudaryo to'lqini" folklore and ethnographic ensemble, "Qirq qiz" estrada ensemble, and "Gulzor" professional ensemble were established.

In 1976, the folk ensemble "Hurliman" was founded, followed in 1977 by the folk ensemble "Oruvlar" and the amateur ensemble "To'maris". Beginning in 1982, dance ensembles such as "Amu gullari", "Jayna", and "Oyquloq" were established within the choreography departments of children's art and music schools. Thanks to independence, appreciation for dance art, an enduring legacy of our national values and an inexhaustible treasure of our culture, has continued to grow. Today, it is essential to train

dance performers, ballet master-teachers, and cultural professionals who can meet contemporary requirements. These specialists must possess professional knowledge and practical skills in the arts and master high standards of stage culture. The national values of the Karakalpak people, along with the customs and traditions inherited from our ancestors, are preserved and taught through established educational methods. In particular, the history and distinctive techniques of Karakalpak dance, together with the harmony between dance movements and national costumes, allow our rich cultural heritage to be passed from generation to generation through staged performances that communicate the history and identity of the people.

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**Rezyume**. Ushbu maqolada Qoraqalpoq milliy raqs san’atining shakllanishi, rivojlanish bosqichlari va bugungi kundagi ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Milliy raqslarning xalq urf-odatlari, an’analari va ma’naviy qadriyatlarini aks ettirishdagi o‘rni yoritiladi. Shuningdek, Qoraqalpoq raqs san’atining sahna ko‘rinishiga olib chiqilishi, professional xoreografiya bilan uyg‘unlashuvi hamda taniqli baletmeysterlarning ijodiy faoliyati haqida ma’lumot beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari milliy raqs san’atini asrash va rivojlantirishning muhim jihatlarini ochib beradi.

**Резюме.** В данной статье анализируется становление, этапы развития и современное значение каракалпакского национального танцевального искусства. Освещается роль национальных танцев в отражении народных обычаев, традиций и духовных ценностей. Также будет представлена информация о выходе каракалпакского танцевального искусства на сцену, его сочетании с профессиональной хореографией и творческой деятельности известных балетмейстеров. Результаты исследования раскрывают важные аспекты сохранения и развития национального танцевального искусства.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** Qoraqalpoq raqsi, milliy raqs, xoreografiya, folklor, baletmeyster, madaniy meros.

**Ключевые слова:** Каракалпакский танец, национальный танец, хореография, фольклор, балетмейстер, культурное наследие.