

FREEDOM, LIBERTY AND IDENTITY IN CHOLPON'S POEMS.

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Annotation: This article discusses the life and work of Abdulhamid Sulaymon, known under the pen name “Cholpon”, one of the prominent representatives of the Jadid movement. Special attention is given to the ideas of freedom, liberty, and identity reflected in his poems.

Keywords: Cholpon, Jadidism, freedom, liberty, national identity, poetry, enlightenment.

Abstract: This article examines the issues of freedom and continuity reflected in the khaeta of Abdulhamid Suleiman, known under the pseudonym "Cholpon", and his lions, one of the legends of the Jadidist movement.

Abdulhamid Sulaymon, known by the pen name “Cholpon,” was born in 1897 in the Qatortarak neighborhood of Andijan. His father, Sulaymon Mulla Muhammad Yunus og‘li (1874–1929), was a bazzaz—a cloth merchant. It can be assumed that the family was relatively well-off.

According to historical sources, Sulaymon Bazzaz was one of the enlightened intellectuals of his time. He wrote poetry under the pseudonym “Rasvo” and even compiled a divan (collection of poems). It is said that he exchanged poetic correspondence with his son, Cholpon. The family home often hosted scholars and learned men of the era, which undoubtedly influenced the young poet’s intellectual and spiritual development.

Abdulhamid Sulaymon (Cholpon) first studied in a traditional old-style maktab (religious school), and later continued his education in the madrasas of Andijan and Tashkent. He also attended a Russian-native school in Andijan, where he was introduced to modern methods of teaching and the Russian language. From an early age, he became acquainted with the press and literary publications, which greatly influenced his worldview.

One of the most significant events that shaped the young poet’s intellectual development was his acquaintance with Zaki Validi (1890–1970), a well-known historian and public figure. In 1912, Zaki Validi published his famous book “The History of the Turks and Tatars”, which quickly gained wide recognition. The book received attention from leading periodicals such as Turk Yurdu (Turkey), Tarjimon (Crimea), and Vaqt (Orenburg). The renowned orientalist V. Bartold invited Validi to St. Petersburg and helped him become a member of the Society of History and Archaeology at Kazan University.

Prominent Turkestanian intellectuals, including Ashurali Zahiri and Yunushoja O‘g‘aliqov, traveled to Bashkortostan to meet Validi personally. The great reformer Mahmudhoja Behbudi even wrote in the press that only Validi could be trusted to write the history of Turkestan and invited him to teach at the madrasas of Samarkand.

At the age of fifteen, Abdulhamid read Validi's book with great enthusiasm and wrote a letter of gratitude to the author, inviting him to visit Andijan. By a stroke of fate, in late 1913 the Kazan University sent Zaki Validi on a scientific expedition to the Fergana Valley. While in Andijan, he visited Abdulhamid's home together with Nazir To'raqulov, a well-known statesman and public figure. This acquaintance grew into a lasting friendship and correspondence that continued until Validi went underground in 1920.

According to the writer V. Yan, who recalled his meeting with the poet while preparing an article about him for the Soviet Encyclopedia, Cholpon's father initially wanted his son to become a mudir (religious scholar). However, after meeting an enlightened intellectual at the madrasa, Abdulhamid's worldview changed completely. From that time on, he developed a passionate interest in literary and political activity and decided to devote himself to the enlightenment of the Uzbek nation. Like many young intellectuals of that era, he was deeply influenced by Abdurauf Fitrat.

Documents from the archives of the former KGB (State Security Service) confirm that Cholpon had a deep admiration for Fitrat. He first learned about Fitrat in absentia as early as 1913, and they met in person for the first time in Samarkand, at the editorial office of the newspaper Hurriyat, where Fitrat worked as editor. From 1919 onward, the two worked closely together and shared the same intellectual and national ideals.

Cholpon's first poems and articles began to appear in print around 1914. The newspaper Sadoyi Turkiston published his poem "To Our Turkestani Brothers" on April 14, 1914, introducing the young poet to its readers as "15-year-old Abdulhamid Effendi, who guides his readers toward enlightenment and knowledge with his youthful heart." The editors expressed great hope for his literary future.

Scholars have identified that his first prose work, "The Victim of Ignorance" (Qurboni Jaholat), was published in the April 29, 1914 issue of the same newspaper. His early works were signed with names such as "Abdulhamid Sulaymon" and "Abdulhamid Sulaymoniy." Later, he used the pseudonyms "Qalandar", "Mirza Qalandar", and finally "Cholpon," the name under which he entered Uzbek literary history.

In 1919, Cholpon worked in Tashkent alongside Fitrat, participating in the activities of the "Chig'atoy Gurungi" cultural-literary society. In August 1920, he took part in the historic Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku, where intellectuals and revolutionaries from across the Muslim world gathered to discuss the future of Eastern nations and their struggle for independence.

From Cholpon's 1927 letter addressed to the Congress of Uzbek intellectuals, it is known that during those years he worked in responsible positions at several prominent newspapers and institutions, including TurkRosTA (the Turkestan branch of ROSTA), Ishtirokiyun, Qizil Bayroq, Turkiston, and Bukhoro Akhbari.

It is believed that he served in Bukhara between 1920 and 1923, when Fitrat held a government position in the People's Soviet Republic of Bukhara. According to literary historian Ziyoy Said,

Cholpon served as an executive editor for Bukhoro Akhbari between 1920 and 1922. This fact is also confirmed by Zaki Validi's memoirs, which mention that Cholpon lived in Bukhara during 1921–1922.

In 1922, his poems were published in the anthology “Young Uzbek Poets” (O‘zbek yosh shoirlari), printed in Tashkent, which included 14 of his poems. That same year, Cholpon's first poetry collection, “Uygo‘nish” (“Awakening”), was published. In early 1923, his second collection, titled “Buloqlar” (“Springs”), was released, further establishing him as one of the leading voices of the early Uzbek literary renaissance.

Начало формы

Конец формы

Professor Ozod Sharafiddinov noted that in 1924, Cholpon served as one of the literary collaborators and leaders of the Drama Studio established in Moscow under the House of Enlightenment for the professional development of young Uzbek actors. Similarly, Zaki Validi wrote that Cholpon later “studied at the Institute or Academy of Literature and Art in Moscow.” Both accounts point to the same truth — these were years of study and cultural enrichment for the poet.

During this period, Cholpon immersed himself in the literary and artistic atmosphere of Moscow, deepening his knowledge of theater, dramaturgy, and stagecraft. He studied the art of performance and stage direction, experiences that would later shape his creative works.

In 1926, Cholpon published his third poetry collection, “Tong Sirlar” (“Secrets of Dawn”), as well as the play “Yorqinoy.” By this time, he had gained recognition as one of the most celebrated poets of his generation, symbolizing the spirit of national awakening and artistic innovation.

However, with the arrival of 1927, the political climate began to shift dramatically. The Soviet government, under the banner of “social awakening,” launched an aggressive campaign against national revival and independent thought. Cholpon — the leading national poet of his time — was expelled from the congress of intellectuals.

This marked the beginning of years of persecution and hardship. His works were subjected to relentless criticism and censorship. What was once called “ideologically weak” was now branded “harmful,” and the author himself was openly denounced as an “enemy of the people.”

Amid increasing repression, Cholpon's health deteriorated — he suffered from diabetes, while political and emotional pressures deepened. The once-bright poet, who had awakened a nation through his words, was gradually forced into silence as the oppressive era of totalitarianism closed in around him.

After the execution of Munavvarqori, archival documents reveal that in 1931, Cholpon was sent to Moscow by Fayzulla Khojayev, who sought to protect the poet from growing political

repression. Thanks to Khojayev's intervention, Cholpon was temporarily spared.

Between 1932 and 1934, Cholpon lived in Moscow, working as a translator in the apparatus of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. During this period, he devoted himself to literary translation and creative work, producing some of his most remarkable contributions to Uzbek culture. He translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Carlo Gozzi's *Princess Turandot*, and continued writing his own major novel, *Kecha va Kunduz* ("Night and Day").

In 1935, Cholpon returned to Tashkent. Despite the continuing slander, humiliation, and persecution, he displayed incredible perseverance and inner strength, continuing to write original works and produce translations. Between 1935 and 1937, he completed and published the novel "*Kecha va Kunduz*" and the poetry collection "*Soz*" ("The Melody"), and prepared another collection, "*Jo'r*" ("Chorus"), for publication.

Cholpon also translated into Uzbek a number of world classics, including Maxim Gorky's *Mother*, Gorky's play *Yegor Bulychov*, Pushkin's *Dubrovsky* and *Boris Godunov*, 25 of Pushkin's poems, and Lahuti's *Journey to Europe*.

However, the dark wave of Stalinist terror did not spare him. In the autumn of 1937, Cholpon was arrested during the mass purges. On October 4, 1938, one of Uzbekistan's greatest poets and thinkers — the voice of freedom and national consciousness — was executed by firing squad.

His death silenced one of the most powerful voices of the Uzbek Renaissance, but his legacy — the ideals of freedom, enlightenment, and national identity that he championed — continues to live on in the hearts of his people.

The Path to Freedom — Cholpon wrote — "is a difficult and long road." Yet, those who embark upon it are driven by a powerful and steadfast will. Most importantly, this desire is pure and sacred. It is not born of ambition or temporary passion, but of an innate right — the right of a people to possess their own homeland, as natural and pure as a mother's milk. This right, Cholpon believed, was not newly imagined, nor was it a modern demand — it was an ancestral duty, passed down through generations. He expressed these sentiments with deep conviction in his 1922 poem "*Yurt Yo'li*" ("The Path of the Nation").

Equally significant is his 1921 poem "*Xalq*" ("The People"), written in Bukhara, which holds great value for understanding the poet's worldview. In this poem, Cholpon emphasizes several key ideas:

The people are the true source of strength. He recognizes the might, wisdom, and creative energy that reside within the common folk.

Freedom and independence — he views these not as abstract ideals, but as the deep longing of the nation, the ultimate goal of its historical journey.

Unity of the artist and the people — Cholpon calls upon writers, poets, and intellectuals to be among their people, to live and breathe with them, to "open their arms and enter the heart of the

people.

The People Are the Sea, the People Are the Wave

(English translation of Cholpon's poem "Xalq")

The people are the sea, the people are the wave, the people are strength,

The people are rebellion, the people are fire, the people are vengeance...

When the people rise, no power can halt them,

No force can destroy the people's desire The people's revolt destroyed the thrones,

The people willed — and crowns and kingdoms fell.

The people wish this land to be free,

May the shadow upon their heads vanish forever

They will surge, they will boil, they will rush,

They will strive, they will tremble, they will dance.

They will defeat even hunger and despair,

And make their homeland rich with all things.

Let us draw all our strength from the people,

Let us open our arms and go among the people.

In every poem he wrote, Cholpon deeply grasped the longing for freedom, liberty, and justice, the rights of the people, and the spiritual paths that lead to independence — and this depth of insight especially fills the generations of today's independence with wonder and excitement. Though Cholpon was the brightest star of early 20th-century Uzbek literature, his status as a literary luminary was only restored toward the end of the century. This blessed recognition and rehabilitation became the very light and glad tidings of the Independence he himself dreamed of and lived for — the "dawn of salvation."

Independence and Cholpon. These names are lofty and harmonious for the Uzbeks. Independence and Cholpon have the full right to climb the passes, to teach new generations, to resonate aloud, and to shine:

My storm will sweep across the people,

It will scale the mountains of life,

And live on immortal, eternal!

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