

THE ROLE OF KURASH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15741393>

A.A. Orziev.

*Lecturer of the Department of Physical Education
Andijan State Pedagogical Institute*

Abstract

This work examines the role of kurash — a traditional form of national wrestling — in shaping and developing national identity and culture. It analyzes the influence of kurash on strengthening cultural values, patriotism, and preserving historical heritage. The importance of conserving and popularizing this sport as an element of national self-awareness and cultural richness is emphasized.

Keywords

Kurash, national identity, culture, traditional sport, patriotism, cultural heritage.

Introduction:

For any nation, cultural heritage is not just a memory of the past passed from generation to generation; it is a living and dynamic manifestation of national identity that connects history, traditions, and modernity. It shapes the unique image of the people, their spiritual code, and moral values, serving as a source of pride and a common sense of belonging.

In Uzbekistan, rich in history of great historical mosaic and cultural traditions, Kurash — an ancient form of wrestling — holds a special place. For centuries, it remained an integral part of folk life and culture. It is not only a sporting art requiring physical and spiritual effort but also a living testament to the rich traditional culture, a craft, and a ritual passed down orally.

Kurash embodies not only combat skills but also spiritual precepts such as bravery, honesty, respect for the opponent, courage, and resilience. It is a symbol of national identity and an expression of cultural uniqueness, uniting people of different ages and social strata. In the era of globalization and intense cultural changes, this traditional sport continues to strengthen intergenerational ties, helping to preserve the wealth of Uzbekistan's historical and cultural heritage.

Today, as the country actively works on developing national culture and promoting its traditional values on the international stage, the role of Kurash becomes even more significant. It turns into not only a cultural symbol but also a

bridge between the past and the future, reinforcing pride in national history and contributing to shaping a positive image of Uzbekistan abroad.

Such heritage requires constant efforts for its preservation, research, and promotion. In this context, the task of modern society is not only to respect and appreciate traditions but also to find new ways to transmit and develop them so they remain alive and relevant for new generations. Kurash plays an important role as a unique cultural phenomenon capable of uniting, inspiring, and educating new generations of Uzbek people.

History and Origin of Kurash in Uzbekistan:

Kurash is one of the oldest forms of wrestling, dating back centuries. Historical sources trace its origins to territories that are now called Uzbekistan, and more broadly, Central Asia. This form of wrestling traces back to the epoch of the Sakas and Scythians, who inhabited the steppes and mountainous regions of the area thousands of years BCE.

Ancient reliefs, archaeological finds, and frescoes discovered in modern Uzbekistan show that combat traditions similar to Kurash existed on these lands. Images and tools found suggest that wrestling and strength competitions were part of rituals, entertainment, and educational traditions of ancient Central Asian peoples, serving as a connecting element between generations.

Over the centuries, this ancient traditional form of wrestling was influenced by various cultural, historical, and religious factors, enriching and transforming under the influence of a changing world. In the Islamic East and Central Asia, wrestling maintained its roots and evolved within folk games and rituals, becoming an integral part of cultural heritage.

Particularly significant in the history of Kurash were the steppe nomads – Scythians, Oghuz, Uzbeks, and other nomadic peoples for whom martial arts, including wrestling, were vital elements of social and cultural life. Wrestling ceremonies, initiation rituals, victories, and celebrations were part of the spiritual life of these peoples.

In the Middle Ages and within the Uzbek statehood, Kurash gradually became not only an element of folk crafts and entertainment but also an important part of educating young generations, a means of fostering masculinity, patriotism, and national pride. Many legends about great wrestlers were passed down orally, maintaining the spirit of national solidarity.

With the shifting of Central Asian countries from colonial and socialist pasts in the 20th century, efforts to preserve and develop cultural values gained importance. In Soviet Uzbekistan, kurash avoided losing its significance as a

component of national culture, with competitions, clubs, and federations being formed to cultivate traditional styles and elements of wrestling.

Today, in independent Uzbekistan, the state revisits its cultural roots. National festivals, the Olympics, and international tournaments are helping to revive and popularize Kurash as an essential symbol of cultural heritage. This form of wrestling has become not only a sport but also a powerful educational and cultural tool, strengthening national identity and remembrance of a rich historical past.

Cultural and Symbolic Significance of Kurash:

Kurash is not just a contest of physical strength but also a carrier of spiritual values, cultural traditions, and Uzbek national identity. Every match, regardless of the outcome, reflects values of courage, honesty, respect, and resilience embedded in cultural and historical tradition.

For the Uzbek people, Kurash is sacred heritage transmitted through generations. Modern and older generations participate not only in sports competitions but also in family rituals, national holidays, and festivals, where wrestling becomes a symbol of unity. These events help preserve cultural values, reinforcing the connection between past, present, and future.

The national costume of the wrestler holds a significant place in culture. Traditional attire – a short, bright jacket (chappa), a cap (do'sho or tubeteyka), and belts – are not only practical for performances but also powerful symbols of national identity. These clothing elements highlight belonging to cultural heritage, often associated with ceremonies, rituals, and festivals related to Kurash.

Rituals and ceremonies during tournaments and festivals are often accompanied by national music, dance, and songs, making these events cultural occasions that unite people in respect for traditions. During such moments, wrestling and rivalry are intertwined with symbolic aspects, demonstrating strength, valor, and the unity of the people.

Special symbolic elements include national ornaments, emblems, and insignia used during competitions, transforming Kurash into an integral part of Uzbekistan's cultural brand. It serves as a reminder of the richness of historical and cultural heritage and as part of the country's presentation on the international stage.

Thus, Kurash stands as a key cultural phenomenon, conveying multifaceted meanings: from character education and moral orientation to strengthening national pride and self-identification. Its symbolism reminds society of eternal values that help preserve the identity and unity of the people in a rapidly changing world.

Kurash as a Factor in Shaping National Identity:

In the modern world, where globalization influences all spheres of life and tends to homogenize cultural images, it is especially important to preserve unique cultural traditions that truly reflect the historical and spiritual heritage of the people. In this context, Kurash in Uzbekistan has become not only a sports discipline but also a powerful symbol of national pride and unity.

As an ancient and significant cultural phenomenon, Kurash has acquired the status of a living symbol – a "living heritage" – helping society strengthen its sense of distinction and authenticity. It acts as an etymological connection between generations, uniting people of different regions, social groups, and ages within a common tradition, reminding everyone of the richness of cultural roots.

Particularly important is its active use as a means of upbringing youth and fostering civic patriotism. Schools, universities, and cultural centers organize lessons, training, and practices where young people absorb values of bravery, honesty, perseverance – traits associated with national identity. During national holidays and festivals, wrestling becomes a platform for fostering respect for traditions and understanding of historical belonging to a great culture.

Participation of Uzbek wrestlers in international tournaments, festivals, and competitions also contributes to strengthening the country's image abroad. Every victory and participation enhances Uzbekistan's recognition and prestige as a country rich in cultural values and traditions. International Kurash competitions attract not only professional athletes but also tourists, diplomats, and journalists, which expands cultural exchange and strengthens international bonds.

This makes Kurash an important platform for promoting national culture globally and creating a positive image of Uzbekistan as a proud country with a rich heritage. It is not only about preserving cultural legacy but also actively developing national values that shape the unique spirit and character of the people. The future of Uzbekistan depends on this foundation – a country proud of its traditions and prepared to meet new challenges of modernity, maintaining its uniqueness and authenticity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Islomov, S. (2020). *Kurash – milliy merosimiz*. Toshkent: "Sharq" nashriyoti.
2. Jo'rayev, O. (2018). *Milliy sport turlari va ularning yoshlar tarbiyasidagi o'rni*. Toshkent: "Yangi asr avlodi".
3. Qurbonov, A. (2019). *Kurash tarixi va zamonaviy rivojlanish bosqichlari*. Samarqand: "Zarafshon".

4. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti Shavkat Mirziyoyevning sport va yoshlar siyosati bo'yicha nutqlari (2017-2023).
5. "Kurash to'g'risida" O'zbekiston Respublikasi Qonuni. Qonunchilik ma'lumotlari milliy bazasi, 2021-yil.