THE LIFE PATH AND CAREER OF THE FIRST UZBEK PHOTOGRAPHER KHUDOYBERGAN DEVONOV

Undoubtedly, Khudoibergan Devonov has a special place among local photographers. The date of birth of Khudoibergan Devonov is recorded in some sources as 1878, and in other sources as 1879. It is clear that he was born between these two dates. After all, at the time when he was born, the calendar based on the AD system was in practice, and when most of the years and months of that calendar were converted to Hijri years, sometimes a year-and-a-half difference appeared. Perhaps that is why the year of his birth was written differently in different sources.

It is written that Nurmuhammad was born in the family of Devan (mirza) in the city of Khiva. According to some sources, his father served as a munshi (secretary) and physician in the Khan's palace. Another source says that Nurmuhammad's father was a governor in Khojayli district. According to Abdulla Yusupov, the nephew of Khudoibergan Devonov, Nurmuhammad was the manager of the land and water department in Khojayli district.

"His father, Nurmuhammad, was one of the most educated and cultured people of his time - he taught his son to read and write. From the age of twelve, Khudoibergan attended the courthouse with his father and helped him in writing letters.

Those who emphasized and repeated that Khudoibergan was formed under the influence of Russian language and culture.

The author named Salimjon Hasanov in his article "The first Uzbek cinematographer" gave the following information about the same period of the life of the first Uzbek photographer: "Khudoibergan, who had a sharp mind, learned black and white, and soon learned Arabic and Persian languages perfectly. He also began to diligently read the works of the classics of Eastern literature. In order to learn the Russian language, he became an apprentice of the Russian language teacher Mukhtar Bakirov. Especially progressive people like Kamil Khorazmi, Bayani, Tabibi, Mutrib Khonakahrobi, Avaz O'tar oglu, Otajon Abdalov, Muhammed Rasul Mirza, Safo Mughanni, Faqiri, Partavi, who were progressive thinkers of their time, in the formation of his worldview, instilling love for advanced Russian science and culture. the influence of spiritual enlighteners has been great."

An inquisitive teenager began to learn German, which determined his future destiny. The fact is that at the end of the 19th century, the then ruler of Khorezm, Muhammad Rahim Khan II, allowed several families of German-Mennonites to live in the country. The youngest of them, Wilhelm Penner, or Panor in the local people's language, saw the camera for the first time and asked permission to use it. Later, Grandmother Panor was happy with the success of her student and gave him a camera as a gift.

It seems dangerous to say that he learned photography from Wilhelm Penner, one of the Germans who settled in Okmasjid. That is why he did not mention the name of his main teacher, Wilhelm Penner, at all, saying that the person belonged to the Russian nationality. However, his interest in photography and his formation as the first Uzbek photographer are directly related to the name of Wilhelm Penner.

He aroused Khudoiberganda's interest in the art of photography and diligently taught him the complex process of taking photographs and exposing the image onto a mirror in a dark room using chemicals. He even gave him a "Zot" camera as a gift. With his encouragement, Khudoibergan happily started taking pictures with this camera.
However, the next activity of the first Uzbek photographer was not easy. The news that a young Muslim boy was taking a photo spread instantly. Khudoyberan's peers and friends watched his work with envy and followed him, but the fanatics called the young man who was "sinning" to quit his job, ignoring Sharia laws, even saying, "The people you photographed will come back to life when the doomsday comes. They demand that you return my life. When you die, you will go to hell and suffer the punishment of hell for your sins!" they threatened. His declaration of Khudoiберан as an "infidel" caused even older people to turn away from him. But Khudoyberan remained firm in his decision despite the objections. If the throne of Khiva had not been occupied by Muhammad Rahim Khan II, but by another khan who was far from enlightened, the fate of Khudoиберан and his father, who "couldn't take the reins", could have been completely different.

In 1898, the coronation ceremony of the new emperor Nicholas II, who came to the Russian kingdom, was held in Petersburg. Khan Khiva was also invited to the ceremony as one of the honored guests. Muhammad Rahimkhan went to Petersburg in connection with this event and saw with his own eyes that photography and silent cinema are entering the life of Russian society, and he is amazed by this great effect of scientific and technical progress.

He met with foreign photographers who came to the Khorezm oasis, watched the pictures they took, and was stunned by this new miracle of technology. When he went to Petersburg, he got acquainted with the technical achievements. He visited the magnificent palaces in the capital and its surroundings, beautiful gardens, and fountains shooting up to the sky. The difference between people, avenues, parks in Khiva and Petersburg made him think. He felt that it was necessary to bring the achievements of technical and cultural development to the Khanate of Khiva.

In historical sources, information is preserved that Muhammad Rahim Khan went to the Russian tsars and asked to bring a railway to the country, to establish a modern printing house, a sewing factory and a cinematography laboratory in the khanate. After that, the first photographers began to form in the territory of the khanate.

But the fact is that after the death of Mohammad Rahim Khan II on August 7, 1910, his son Asfandiyar Khan took the throne of Khiva, and instead of fulfilling his father's will, on the contrary, he suppressed Khudoиберан and did not allow his photography career to take off.

References:
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