

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE OF QASHQADARYA FROM THE
1920s OF THE 20TH CENTURY TO THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY
(A Case Study of Koson District)**

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Keywords

Koson District, Qashqadarya, socio-economic development, cultural life, historical monuments, Kosontepa, Obrontepa, agriculture, industry, migration, archaeology, historical development, Kushan Empire, population density, territorial development.

Abstract

This article examines the socio-economic and cultural development of Koson District from the 1920s of the 20th century to the early 21st century. The historical formation of the region, population migration, and the development of agriculture and industry are analyzed. In addition, the significance of historical monuments such as Kosontepa, Lag'mantepa, and Obrontepa is highlighted. The study reveals the historical development of Koson District and demonstrates its role in regional development. This article is useful for researchers interested in history and economics.

Koson District, located in the Qashqadarya Region of the Republic of Uzbekistan, is one of the earliest districts established in the republic and was founded on September 29, 1926. The meaning of the word "Koson" is derived from the distorted pronunciation of the ancient term "Kat," originating from the word "Kas," which means "fortified city." Another historical interpretation states that Koson, as one of the main stations on the Great Silk Road, has long been a center of craftsmen and artisans. In ancient times, pottery, blacksmithing, wood carving, chest-making, painting, jewelry making, gold embroidery, carpet weaving, tailoring, weaving, and, in general, all types of traditional folk crafts were highly developed here. Literature, art, and culture also flourished at a high level.

According to historical sources, after the collapse of the Bactrian state, the Kushan Empire ruled for nearly one and a half centuries in the 11th–12th centuries CE over much of present-day Central Asia, as well as parts of Iran and Afghanistan. Historical sources note that the word "Kushan" was later pronounced as "Koshon" and "Koson." This is explained by the fact that in the Arabic alphabet the letters "sh" and "s" have the same written form and differ only by dots. Thus, the term "Koson" first appeared in the name Kosonsoy in present-day Namangan Region. [1.4.5]

The naming of the Koson cemetery as Eshon Koson cemetery, the meanings of neighborhood names, and many other pieces of evidence also support this view. In short, the origin, history, and exact age of the term "Koson" constitute a valuable source worthy of in-depth research and study.

Until the 1950s, Koson was a relatively small village. By 1997, the population of Koson city had reached 54,000. From 1972, when Koson was granted city status, until 1997, 16 neighborhoods were established. During this period, 110 organizations, 6 industrial enterprises, 1 institution, 3 public catering enterprises, 4 banks, 7 farmers' markets, 83 schools, 44 kindergartens, 8 hospitals, 13 pharmacies, 17 clinics and outpatient facilities, 44 libraries, 12

clubs, and many other cultural, social, medical, and trade institutions were mainly concentrated in the center of Koson. These changes took place between 1972 and 1997. [1.5]

From the 1950s of the 20th century, similar processes occurred in the region. The population of mountainous areas migrated to cotton-growing regions. Residents of Toshqo'rg'on, Zarmos, Vori, and Qiziltom villages of Yakkabog' District moved to Kasbi and Mirishkor districts, where they established new settlements. These villages were named after their former places of residence: Toshqo'rg'on, Zarmos, Vori, and Qiziltom. In the 1980s, cotton growers from Chiroqchi began reclaiming virgin lands in the lower part of the Karshi steppe. The newly established settlement was named Chiroqchi.

A portion of the population of Sherobod, Muzrabot, and Qizirik districts of Surkhandarya Region (who in the 1950s of the 20th century migrated mainly to Dehqonobod, G'uzor, Yakkabog', and Kasbi districts in order to develop new lands) returned in the late 1980s to Koson, Nishon, Muborak, and Mirishkor districts. They reclaimed new lands and built well-developed fortresses and villages, naming them Nomina Surxon and Sherobod.

New principles of naming villages emerged. As a result, a situation arose in which newly created names did not always correspond to the meanings of ancient toponyms. Ancient names had been formed several thousand years earlier, and the social, natural, and spiritual factors that served as the basis for their emergence were different. In contrast, the names that appeared at the end of the 20th century were created on entirely different grounds. The name of Chiroqchi village in Koson District, for example, originated because people from Chiroqchi built this complex of settlements, reclaimed virgin lands, planted cotton, and established a prosperous habitation. Similar reasons, principles, and factors of naming are characteristic of many repeated place names. In the mountainous areas of Yakkabog', the O'g'in people migrated in the 1950s to the lower cotton-growing regions and named their village O'g'in. As a result, two villages named O'g'in appeared within the same district. There are many such villages and repeated names across the region. [2.13,14]

Ancient Kosontepa is a hill rising 8–12 meters above the surrounding ground, located southeast of the present-day center of Koson District. Since ancient times, the Kosontepa site has occupied a fairly large area, with a total size of approximately 200 × 150 meters. Archaeological excavations conducted on the hill revealed that the lower layers are covered by the ruins of buildings constructed in later centuries. Some of the cleaned trenches yielded artifacts dating back to the centuries before the Common Era. A cultural layer belonging to the period prior to the Mongol invasion was also uncovered at this site. This ancient settlement, which was the predecessor of the modern city of Koson, emerged in the 1st century BCE and continued to exist in subsequent periods. Due to the Mongol invasion, the settlement was destroyed and later relocated to its current site, slightly inclined toward the southeast. [3.179]

Another ancient monument, Lag'mantepa, located not far from the ancient city of Nakhshab, is also believed to have emerged during the same centuries in which the settlements of Kasbi, Fazli, and Koson were formed. [3.180]

Another ancient site of the district is Obrontepa. The Obrontepa settlement is located at the foothills of Koson Mountain, near the village of Obron, and in ancient times it was the site of a large village. The steep walls of the massive elevation on the northeastern side indicate that the site represents architectural ruins. The flattened surface of the hill rises approximately 7–8 meters above ground level, and in the northwestern corner there is a domed tower remnant reaching a height of up to 18 meters. The elevated platform of the hill covers nearly half a tanob in area. Over the centuries, the hill has subsided. Overall, the site occupies an area of about 80 × 60 meters.

From Obrontepa, pottery materials dating to the 5th–6th centuries have been discovered. The lower cultural layer of the monument has not yet been studied and is assumed to be much older. Fragments of ceramic vessels from the 8th–10th centuries have been found on the surface of the hill. Two coins bearing a “V” symbol and depicting a horse were also discovered at Obrontepa.

In conclusion, Koson District is one of the most ancient and historically rich regions of Uzbekistan, and its formation and development are closely linked to long historical processes. According to historical sources, the term “Koson” originates from the period of the Kushan Empire, and this territory has long served as one of the centers of craftsmanship, trade, and culture. In the 20th century, particularly during the 1950s–1980s, the district underwent significant socio-economic changes, characterized by population growth and the establishment of new villages. During this period, agriculture, industry, and infrastructure developed, turning Koson District into one of the important centers of the region. Moreover, the presence of ancient monuments such as Kosontepa and Obrontepa demonstrates that the Koson area has deep historical roots. These archaeological sources confirm that developed societies have inhabited the region since ancient times. Overall, Koson District occupies an important place in the history of Uzbekistan, and comprehensive study and research of its past contribute to a deeper understanding of our people’s cultural and historical heritage.

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