



ḲODĀYDĀDZĀDA, BĀBĀ-YUNOS

ḲODĀYDĀDZĀDA, BĀBĀ-YUNOS (Tajik. Boboyunus Ḳudoydodzoda; b. Baljovan, ca. 1870-75; d. Baljovan, 27 May 1945; [Figure 1](#)), Tajik folk poet and [Kōroḡlu](#) singer.

Bābā-Yunos Ḳodāydādzāda was born in the village of Kāsatarāš, in Baljovān district (subsequently renamed Sovet, then Timur Malek), a mainstay of Tajik folk literature in the mountainous northern Kulāb (q.v.) province. He received little formal education other than learning music and poetic meters from his maternal uncle and later from master Baljovāni folk singers (*hāfez*) such as Šokurmast, Mirzā-ye Kāl, and Nur-‘Ali Jiriq (Nal’sinskiĭ, pp. 53-54; Braginskiĭ, ed., p. 681; *EST* VIII, pp. 34-35).

His biography, as manipulated by the Soviet authorities, remains vague. As a teenager, he was eyewitness to a mutiny against the Bukharan authorities in his home district, an incident he favorably elaborated on later in his life when Soviet Tajikistan fostered the incident as a historic anti-feudal uprising led by Wāse‘ (see [Kulāb](#)). Eluding the governor of Baljovān, whether because of the uprising or for economic reasons, Ḳodāydādzāda spent most of his youth far away from his birthplace, mostly in the Transoxianan districts of Samarkand, Ḳ’oqand, and Tashkent, which by then had gone under the jurisdiction of the Russian governorate of Turkestan. Ḳodāydādzāda is said to have worked at a ginning factory in Tashkent, where he sympathized with the Russian



Bolsheviks during the 1917 Revolutions (Tursunzoda and Boldyrev, p. 10; *EST VIII*, p. 34). Whatever the case might have been, by the virtue of his mere presence in the Russian-dominated cities of Central Asia, he must have acquired a unique experience that was implausible to a typical *galča*, or mountain Tajik of the Bukharan emirate. Subsequently, it appears that from early on under the Soviet regime, Ḳodāydādzāda cast his artistic lot with the new trend, which led him to become the folk-poet laureate of Soviet Tajikistan by blending the folkloric verse with current social themes, and by boosting Soviet patriotism, especially during the World War II (Hasan). His poem appeared in textbooks for decades.

The most authentic of all Ḳodāydādzāda's performances is his repertoire of the Guruḡli (Kōroḡlu) epic. His exceptional skill in singing the Guruḡli stories on the *dotār* (a long-neck lute; q.v.) won him great reputation throughout Tajikistan. He knew by heart tens of thousands of verses of many legends and tales. According to his biographer Ya. I. Nal'sinskiĭ (pp. 53-54), Bābā-Yunos's performance would take hours from evening to dawn, with only short breaks to relax and eat, for several nights in a row. Truly as a traveling bard he would visit village to village in the districts of Kulāb, Qatātegin, Darvāz, Ḥeṣār (qq.v.), and Vaḳš to perform in private banquets and life-cycle parties (Rajabov, p. 6). In his travels many novice Guruḡli singers joined him as disciples, some of whom became master *Guguḡli*-singers (*Guruḡlik'ān*) of the next generation, such as Ḥaḡnaḡar Kabud, Qorbān-'Ali Rajab, Ṣādeq Razzāq, Mirzā 'Ali Ḥasanov, and Karim Maḡmadov (*EAST I*, pp. 110-13; *EST VIII*, pp. 34-35, 326, 380, 383).

Ḳodāydādzāda attracted scholarly attention early on; his Guruḡli stories were recorded and preserved at the archives of the Rudaki Institute of Language and Literature at the Tajikistan Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe (Braginskiĭ et al., pp. 680-81). The repertoires of Ḳodāydādzāda and two other master performers were combined to produce a compendium of Tajik Guruḡli epic under the editorship of Iosif Samuilovich Braginskiĭ (*Gūrūḡlī*, 1987). Otherwise, only excerpts of Ḳodāydādzāda's Guruḡli have been published in print (in his *Še'r va dostonho* [*Še'r wa dāstānhā*], pp. 25-80; "Jangi Avaz bo pahlavoni Salmonšoh–Govdoršoh," in his *Surudho*, pp. 148-52).

Aside from his artistic activities, little is known about Ḳodāydādzāda's personal life. Soviet authorities portrayed Ḳodāydādzāda as a member of a *kolkhoz* farm who worked hard also in road construction projects (Tursunzoda and Boldyrev, p. 10; *EST VIII*, pp. 34-35; Braginskiĭ et al., p. 681),



but this proposition contradicts his career as a professional bard. Ḳodāydādźāda died in the village of Čilča in Baljovān district in 1945.

Sample text. The following episode is taken from “Dostoni Vose’,” Part II (in *Fol’klori tojik*, 1957, p. 418), which was sung by Ḳodāydādźāda in accompaniment on the *dotār*. The poem’s prosody is based on eight-syllable verses (occasionally seven or nine syllables) organized in loosely rhymed couplets.

*Askar-i Vose’ šud ravon;
Dar Satalmuš girift makon.
Du kas omad ay Baljuvon:
“Ḳud–ut odam-i juvozron,
Gurext,” guft, “mir-i Baljuvon.”*

*Askar-i Vose’ bud judo;
Yak taqsim-uš mond bolo.
Mardum digar nakard nigo.
Pešravo budan bevafo;
Ahd-e bastan ba hoqimo:
“Guriftan-i Vose’ tan-i mo.”*

*Ay Satalmuš zarb-i tir šud;
Pešrav-aš guf, “Vose’ dastgir šud.”
Vose’ kambid dar Baljuvon;
Dar sar-i mazor girift makon.
Har-du-š buromad ay Baljuvon;
Guf, “e Vose’ juvozron,
Askar-a man nakun čandon.”
Vose’ yak gašt kad nigo;
“Tabl-a bizanen,” guft, “yoro!”
Tabl-i jang-uš bino šudak;
Dar Baljuvon ġazo šudak.*

The army of Vāse’ set out;
And launched in Satalmush [village].
Two persons (spies) came from Baljovān:
“From you a [mere] seed-oil extractor,
Fled the ruler of Baljovān,” they said.



The army of Vāse' was divided;
One branch stayed atop.
People cared not any longer.
The forerunners [of Vāse's army] were disloyal;
They made a pledge to the rulers:
“Leave the arrest of Vāse' to us.”

From Satalmush came firing of bullets;
The forerunner said, “Vāse' was captured.”
Vāse' dismounted in Baljovān;
And positioned himself at the cemetery.
Both of them (spies) came from Baljovān;
And said, “O Vāse' the seed-oil extractor,
Do not prevent the soldiers for long.”
Vāse' took a look around;
“Play the drum, comrades,” he said.
The battle drum was set up;
And the battle began in Baljovān.

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