The Legend of the 40 Courageous Girls who Defended the Common People

2023 17 February

Every historical monument in Uzbekistan is shrouded in legends of the past. Many of them reflect the courage and the good heart of the Uzbek people. One striking example is the “Kirk Kiz” fortress located in Termez. Legend has it that:

Once upon a time, the lands of Uzbekistan were under the protection of 40 warrior-girls who fought for the freedom of the common people. One day, after a long journey, the girls decided to stay in a fortress. At that time the city was surrounded by an enemy army. The girls decided to fight off the enemy and hold the fortress until help arrived. The battle lasted several days and nights. In the end, only Gulaim, the leader of the tribe, managed to survive.

The girl emerged from the gates of the fortress and challenged the one who had decided to capture the city in battle. The enemy leader approached Gulaim, looked into her eyes, and saw his death in their reflection. He was jealous of her courage and turned his army around, saying he had seen the real jewel of the city. Gulaim fell to the ground and the last thing she saw were warriors rushing to her aid.

Another, less popular legend has it that Kirk Kiz housed a madrasa for women, which was extremely rare in Central Asia. Forty girls were brought up in the madrasa, which was managed by a very educated woman named Ruhayda binti Warrok.

According to historical information, Kirk Kiz was built in the 9th and 10th centuries AD. Who its architect was still remains a mystery. Time has not spared the building, as it is now almost completely destroyed. Nevertheless, Kirk Kiz is very popular among tourists and Uzbeks. It is the atmosphere that reigns in the fortress. The ruins take you back to the past, giving you a sense of detachment from daily worries and the hustle and bustle of city life.

What makes Kirk Kiz unique is its absolute symmetry. Each archway and corridor has its counterpart on the opposite side. Despite this, it is easy to get lost within the

walls of the fortress because of the large number of passageways. According to scholars, Kirk Kiz was a huge palace with 50 rooms and wide corridors.

The fortress is located about 3 km north of Termez. From railway station of Termez city or Termez international airport you can reach Kir Kiz by foot in 30-40 minutes or by car in less than 5 minutes.

The fortress is now under state protection and is considered to be archaeological monument and a site of cultural and historical heritage. You can see Kirk Kiz and other attractions of the city of Termez with your own eyes by traveling with Uzbekistan Airways there every day of the week except Wednesday.