



## MONUMENT TO SALAVAT YULAEV

On 17 November 1967, the monument to Salavat Yulaev, the national hero of Bashkiria, was presented in Ufa. Soslanbek Tavasiev's unique creation has become a visiting card of the republic, a place of attraction for tourists; it is hard to find a person in Bashkiria who is indifferent to the present and future of this monument-symbol.

### HISTORY

The decision to create a monument to Salavat Yulaev in Ufa was made back in the years of the Great Patriotic War. Despite the hardships of wartime, 140,000 rubles were allocated to create a model of the monument and design the site for it. For comparison, at about the same period, in 1942, according to the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, a T-34 tank cost the state 193 thousand rubles. The deadline for the completion of design work on the architectural part and creation of the model of the monument was set for March 1944, timed to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Bashkir ASSR. The monument was supposed to be installed on the pedestal in October 1950, but the work was delayed for many reasons.

Disputes arose over the choice of the monument's location. The sculptor Tavasiev initially planned to erect the monument at the southern end of Chishminskaya Street, which still existed in Ufa at that time, on the hill before the descent to the Belaya River (where the monument stands now), but alternative options were proposed - for example, near the railway station or in Matrosov Park. Tavasiev stubbornly defended the chosen place, where, in his opinion, Salavat as a national hero goes beyond the city and acquires a "world name". Some difficulties arose with financial calculations; during the discussion of the project, critics suggested that the sculptor make the image of Salavat and his horse "more truthful", "clarify the details of the costume and equipment", etc.

The working drawings of the monument were finally approved by the Ministry of Culture of the USSR on 25 June 1961, but further work was soon suspended: the republic had to complete work on the Monument of

Friendship, in honour of the 400th anniversary of Bashkiria's entry into the Russian state. Permission to build the sculpture was only granted in April 1965, when the project was significantly modified to save on construction costs and simplify the architectural part of the monument.

The grand opening of the monument took place on 17 November 1967. A meeting was organised, attended by representatives of party, Soviet and Komsomol organisations of the city and the republic, cultural figures, guests from Moscow and Leningrad. The event caused a huge public resonance. Soslanbek Tavasiyev was awarded the title of People's Artist of the BASSR, and in 1970 he was honoured with the State Prize for this work.

### **INTERESTING FACTS**

The monument to Salavat Yulaev is cast from cast iron and covered with a thin layer of bronze on top. The figure rests on three points - the horse is depicted galloping at full gallop - so the sculpture's centre of gravity is displaced. To protect the statue from a possible fall (it is quite windy on the viewing platform where it is installed), a special frame was made that passes through the legs of the horse and the hollow figure of the rider.

Near the Salavat Yulaev monument there is a square where festivals and other mass events are held. Also, the Ufa Amphitheatre, a large natural slope covered with lawn grass, is situated next to the monument. The square and the Amphitheatre are favourite places of recreation for Ufa residents and guests, and it is always crowded.

### **SALAVAT YULAEV**

Salavat Yulaev is a hero of the Bashkir people, one of the most active participants and leaders of the Peasant War under the leadership of E. Pugachev. His struggle for the rights of the indigenous population of Bashkiria will always remain in people's memory. In addition, Salavat Yulaev left behind a creative legacy in the form of poems written in the Bashkir language.

Salavat Yulaev was born on 5 (16) June 1752 in a small village Tekeyevo of the Orenburg province. His family was quite noble and well known in Bashkiria. The hero's father served as a foreman of Shaitan-Kudeyskaya volost and, although he himself lived his whole life illiterate, he insisted that his son learnt to write and read. Salavat's contemporaries noted him as strong, well-built, determined and clever. At the age of 19, he replaced his father's position as an officer.

#### *Participation in the uprising*

Salavat together with his father took part in a peasant uprising, but was wounded in one of the battles, after which he was sent to his native village for treatment. Having restored his health, Salavat gathered his own army and moved towards Krasnoufimsk, which he captured in the middle of January 1774. Here local Cossacks, peasants and factory workers, who did not want to tolerate the strengthening of serf oppression, joined the ranks of the rebels. Then in February-March 1774 heavy battles took place, in which Yulaev took part. He commanded a Russian-Bashkir military unit and proved to be a talented leader capable of effectively organising a partisan warfare against a superior opponent.

In early June 1774, Salavat joined Pugachev's main army, sending 3,000 Bashkirs into its ranks, but after several successful battles on 25 November, Yulaev's unit was captured in the Karatau Mountains and together with his supporters was arrested. His wives and children were also imprisoned. After capturing Yulaev was sent to Ufa, then transported to Kazan, where he was sentenced to life in prison. The hero of the Bashkir people would spend the rest of his life in prison, where he died on 26 September 1800.

#### *Hero and poet*

Besides participation in the Peasant War, Salavat Yulaev is remembered as a talented poet. About 500 lines of his improvisation poems recorded in the XIX century have survived. They show an extraordinary love for his region.

The main themes that Salavat Yulaev glorified in his work were his native land, the Bashkir people, traditions and customs of his ancestors. The poet wrote his poems in the Bashkir language, so they are of great interest as a linguistic monument.

### **NATIONAL SYMBOL**

The name of the national hero will forever remain in the memory of the Bashkir people. Settlements, streets, cultural institutions, including several museums, are named in Salavat Yulaev's honour. In 1967, a prize (since 1992 the Salavat Yulaev State Prize) was established to honour the best artists of the republic. The famous hockey team also bears the name of Salavat Yulaev. In honour of Salavat Yulaev, an opera of the same name was created (by composer Z. Ismagilov and poet B. Bikbai), as well as a feature film (directed by Y. Protazanov).