



LOCAL - TERRITORIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VIEWS RELATED TO THE SHRINES AND VISITATIONS OF KASHKADARYA OASIS

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ANNOTATION

The article helps to study the history of spirituality in our country, the rich national and spiritual heritage on the basis of sacred shrines, a comprehensive study of the sacred shrines of Kashkadarya and a deeper understanding of the rich aspects of the history of our spirituality.

KEYWORDS- Oasis, sacred shrines, zoroastrianism, Sacred animals, tombs, mosques and mausoleums.

INTRODUCTION

In its centuries-old history, the Kashkadarya oasis created not only a system of different ceremonies associated with the sacred shrines, but also became its executor. Although some of the ceremonies at the sacred shrines are gradually disappearing under the influence of social, economic, political and cultural changes in the society, and some has faced changes, all of them have great historical and scientific significance for they are used in the lifestyle of the nation, in economic activities, in the past and present, no matter what ideological direction they are in. Therefore, we found it necessary to study the rituals at the shrines of the oasis more widely, to collect data about them and study them on a scientific basis. By describing the ceremonies held at the shrines it is possible to evaluate correctly that the role of customs, rituals in the spirituality, culture and traditions of the Uzbek people is connected with the shrines.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the nations of Central Asia, the views about the shrines began to develop in ancient times. Especially, if we look directly at the views on the shrines related to fire in the Kashkadarya oasis, it shows that the views, customs and skills of the population related to fire are formed and they believe in that fire is sacred. Particularly, one of the rituals performed among the local population is related to fire, which indicates that in the first millennium BC zoroastrianism (fire-worship) was widespread among the peoples of Central Asia.

It is possible to observe that such traditions still continue in the present days among the population by going to the shrines and lighting candles or lanterns¹.

Sacred animals and beasts. The worship symbols of the Navtakians were made of ore and stones, for example, a symbol of golden hedgehogs, as well as a small dwarf idol statue and a frog (actually made of carnelian) were found in the altar shelf made of stone-cuts. In the doctrines of fire-worship, hedgehogs were considered to be sacred beings. Therefore, the presence of symbols of the frog and the snake, which were considered to belong to the evil world in the "Avesto", together with the golden hedgehog among the Navtak artefacts, reflects the peculiarities of the worldview and religious beliefs of the Navtak people. The fact that the Navtaka temple buildings were built in pairs can also be connected with the influence of Greek traditions. The Greeks are known to have built the temples of Athens and Hercules in pairs. From an architectural point of view, it is difficult to say for sure whether the temple at Navtaka was the continuation of that style or whether there was a need for a larger fireplace as a result of the expansion of the city. In any case, there was a tradition of building temples in pairs in Sogd (as in Navtak and Panjikent)². Thus, this style of construction of ancient temples and the existing

¹ Field notes. Kashkadarya region. Yakkabog district, 2017.

² Ravshanov P. History of Kashkadarya ... - P.154-155.



fireplaces in it show the antiquity of the beliefs and worship of the people of the oasis.

Furthermore, according to Valerie Hansen (Valerie Hansen), one of the nations who made a great contribution to the culture of the Great Silk Road was the Sogdians. They lived in and around the present Samarkand city in Uzbekistan. Trade relations between China and Sogdiana rose the peak point between 800-500 BC. Information about the Sogdians and their beliefs is more preserved in China than in theirs³.

Among the relics of the Jangaltepa artifact, animal-shaped (e.g. sheep) lamps (fire-related vessels) are not found at all. However, sheep-shaped lanterns were also found in the ancient monuments of Navtak and its surroundings. In Jangaltepa there are vessels (water and milk containers) shaped like animals. The representation of the shape of the domestic animals on pottery has been proven to belong to the Qang culture, who transformed from a nomadic life to a sedentary way of life⁴.

Merit of Snake. According to reporters, snakes are sacred creatures⁵. The people of the oasis believed that snakes attacked at people who went to the holy tombs with evil intentions. However, the white snake belonged to the saint and was believed to bring the wealth to its destination⁶. Killing it was a sin. According to the elders of Kamashi village of Kasbi district, their ancestor Hayitboy bobo talked to a crowned snake. This snake was living in the cave of Old Fazli.

VIEWS RELATED TO THE SACRED OBJECTS IN SHRINES

According to the observations and information provided by the informants, every object in the shrine is considered to have sacred power. Among the sacred objects in the shrines are:

1. White cloth;
2. Animal horn;
3. Doors and chains of tombs, mosques and mausoleums;
4. Ancestral tree, books and other documents;

³ Valerie Hansen. The silk road a new history. Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. 2012. – P.17.

⁴ Ravshanov P. History of Kashkadarya. T. Fan Publishing House. 1995 y. B.154-155 .; Kabanov S.K. Culture of rural settlements ... p.115 .; Litvinskiy B.A. Kangyuyskogo sarmatskiy fari. Dushanbe. 1968.p.23. .

⁵ Field records. Kashkadarya region, Yakkabag district. 2018.

⁶ Field records. Kashkadarya region. Kasbi district. 2018.

5. There may also be flags, trees, symbols and pictures preserved from historical periods.

The white cloth is gray or white cotton cloth, and one of the peculiarities of the Kashkadarya oasis shrines is that a white cloth is tied to a pole near the graves of saints and martyrs in the way of Islam. In particular, in the shrines of Nazar-bobo in Nishan district, Koshchalish ota in Kasbi district, there are poles installed wrapped with white cloth. Among the population, it was believed that unintentional littering or overnight stays here would lead to disease. According to local shepherds and informants, the sick man was healed by coming here to recite the Qur'an, repent, and slaughtering an animal⁷.

Animal horns. We have observed the situation of hanging sacred horns in the shrines. Local people explained that it had no connection with Islam. Indeed, the hanging of sacred horns on tombs is associated with totemistic views. Accordingly, the animal horn was believed to be as a tool of protecting humans. Even if such horns are not hung right now, they can still be found.

Doors and chains of tombs, mosques and mausoleums. In the legends about shrines and visitations among the population of the Kashkadarya oasis there is information about the gates and chains of sacred places. For example, the story of Zanjirsaray can be seen in such legends as the visit of Hazrat Ali to the Old Fazli⁸.

The story of Zanjirsaray emphasizes that Amir Temur grew up there until he was 10 years old, and the chains in the palace. According to another narration, Hazrat Ali came to the ancient city of Fazli and tried to convert the local population to Islam. When he faced to the resistance he threw the door of Old Fazli, the door fell on the road to Samarkand. It is known that Hazrat Ali did not come to Central Asia, but our research revealed that Ali Bazdavi was born in the city of Old Fazli (i.e. Bazda). Even today, the old doors of some mosques and mausoleums are considered sacred and kept in a special place with respect.

As a result of the observations, it became clear that the doors and chains of the shrines such as Old Fazli, Ishaq Bobo, were one of the objects of shrines and the pilgrims wiped them against their eyelids out of respect. Among the population, it was believed that cleaning the doors of the shrine by young girls and their contribution to the cleanliness of the shrine would help to open their fortune and

⁷ Field records. Kashkadarya region, Nishan district. 2020.

⁸ Field records. Kashkadarya region, Nishan district. 2020.



happiness⁹. The doors of some shrines were built low. This is due to the fact that in order to maintain the respect of the population for the shrine, its entrance is built low¹⁰.

Ancestral tree, books and other documents. It was obligatory for the locals to know the names of their 7 ancestors. This situation was also reflected in the shrines. In the room of Mulla Ruziboy Akhun in the village of Kamashi, Kasbi district, a collection of books and a family tree are kept from generation to generation. According to our informants, 63 saints were buried in Langar ota cemetery in Kamashi district. The custom of burying people of the same generation in the same place is still preserved in the oasis¹¹. We have witnessed that some genealogies had been made over the centuries being passed down from hand to hand. The locals are proud of their ancestors.

Some of the books in the shrines were given only to those who aspired to science and belonged to this generation. It was believed that falling these books into the hands of other people would break the connection between ancestors and generations.

Flags, trees, symbols and pictures preserved from historical periods were even sometimes believed, and even worshiped by the locals according to their own views. As if these things helped them to get rid of their pain, suffering and affliction¹².

Of course, visiting sacred places has had a profound effect on people's mood. Sacred shrines have also served as the norms of the etiquette of visiting them, in keeping the moral culture of the people at a high level. Consequently, the ancient proverb, "If you are hungry, go to the market, if you are full, go to the grave," has encouraged people to react to the hardships of life. In addition, sacred shrines have played an important role in develop people's sense of nobility. Visiting the sacred places challenged people for avoiding doing wrong things, being honest, and doing good deeds such as leaving only good after themselves. Sacred shrines also play a positive role in the formation of feelings of devotion and loyalty in people. For example, when the people of the Fergana Valley visited the graves of Toshkelin, Bibi Ubayda, Qiz mozor, Childukhtaron, they heard the qualities of saintly women's devotion to their husbands and loved ones, and tried to follow their behavior¹³.

It should be noted that every pilgrim does not ask for help from a saint or other person lying in the grave and asks him to provide their needs. The fulfillment of any need is directly requested only from the Lord Itself. Therefore, if possible, it was necessary to go to the qibla side of the graveyard, turn the back to the qibla and recite and pray face to face with the people of the graveyard. The Salafis, acted directly in the name of religion, and put forward the ideas such as purifying the religion, returning it to its original state as in the time of the Prophet, and uniting all Arabs and the people of the world under a good green flag. They strongly opposed secular culture, believing that engaging in music, theater, and the arts was an unforgivable sin. The Salafis resolutely fought against such cases and used religion as a weapon to resolve them¹⁴.

Although it is not allowed visiting local elders in the shrines, performing tawafs, slaughtering animals, performing rituals like mushkulkushod, tying ropes to trees, drinking water stirring stones, and wiping soil against their eyelids out of respect, it has become a custom among the people. The peculiarities and characteristics of each place are known to the local imams and local people sitting here¹⁵. However, due to the ongoing reforms, a special pilgrimage etiquette is being developed. It is clear from these analyzes that going to shrines, valuing the land, and blessing the deceased are considered good among the people. In particular, the hadiths say, "Visit the graveyards, for it is a reminder of the Hereafter. It is said that remembering the Hereafter draws people away from evil and brings them closer to goodness"¹⁶. This allows people to fear Allah and not do wrong things, and especially does not allow them to become arrogant and conceited. Therefore, among the people it is understood that if one goes to the shrine with sincerity and everyone will achieve their goal, then donating for Allah will prevent any calamity that will come¹⁷. People go to shrines and feel as light as a bird. They get support from the spirit of the saints who lie here, and they are proud of them. It is not righteous to light candles on graves, to kiss tombstones, to sit on them, to walk on them, to pray in front of graves. The locals believed that if they did not follow these rules, they would soon get harm. There is a wonderful saying among the people of the oasis that "saints are not gods, they are not

⁹ Field notes. Kasbi district. Old Fazli, Taken from the conversation with the pilgrims at the shrines of Iskhaq Baba. 2018.

¹⁰ Field notes. Kasbi district. 2016.

¹¹ Field notes. Kamashi district, Langar village. 2017.

¹² Field records. Kashkadarya region. Karshi city. 2018.

¹³ Abdulhatov N.U. The role of visitation in the way of life of the population of Ferghana Valley....

¹⁴ Zakurlaev A. The struggle of ideas. -T .: Movarounnahr, 2000. p 63.

¹⁵ Field notes. Kashkadarya region. Yakkabog district, Orta village. 2011.

¹⁶ Islam. Encyclopedia. Under the editorship of Xusniddinov Z. . -Tashkent, 2004. - p.93.

¹⁷ Field notes. Kashkadarya region. Shahrisabz, Yakkabag districts. 2016.



devoid of gods”, which in itself expresses the fact that people have a high level of attitude towards saints since ancient times. Visiting their graves and shrines is believed to save them from various calamities and ease their difficulties. To cite one example, according to legends, before the Arab conquest of the country, the inhabitants of the Lower Kashkadarya oasis survived on the hills near the shrines during the floods¹⁸.

Many myths and legends are considered to be only fabrications, but we have witnessed during the field research in the oasis that there is truth behind some myths. Most of the shrines in the oasis have the tombs of saints. In this regard, the book “History of Hazrat Sultan and Hazrat Bashir Manoqibi” describes the saints as follows: “The blessings of the saints are true: those who pray to Allah day and night, eat halal, drink halal, dress halal, and keep their customs and habits, they help the widow and the poor. They call people for righteousness. When they are engaged in the secular affairs, their hearts and souls are in Allah. Thanks to the blessings of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala, they know the condition of people who are miles away from them and try to help them in their place. They help people with their hard work. They try to keep them from drowning, burning in the fire, premature death. They help by the will of Allah subhanahu wa ta’ala. Such nobles are called awliyullah (saints). On the Day of Resurrection, they will be more honored in the sight of Allah than other people. They also help people by the command of Allah”¹⁹.

In the explanatory dictionary of Uzbek language *visiting* is given a definition as the going to a sacred place and worship, going and seeing the grave of a well-known figure, or a close friend of theirs, remember them, honor them, or officially visiting a person, and *shrine* is described as a sacred place to visit²⁰.

The sacred places have a great contribution to the development of our spiritual culture, which we can see in the activities of Islamic scholars who are in connection with these places in the promotion of religious education, the continuation of folk beliefs and the work of masters, eshans, sheikhs in the field of visitation. According to Islamic teachings, visiting shrines is a very good deed, and everyone who goes there to ask for their intentions should ask Allah alone. Respect for shrines and blessings for the dead are among the good deeds. It is said that if the pilgrimage is sincere, his intentions will come

true. When donated for the sake of Allah, various calamities are prevented or averted.

According to the custom of pilgrimage, pilgrims have always treated the sacred shrines with special humility. During the visit, the locals tried to find answers to the questions that were bothering them, and they felt free and relaxed from the worries of worldly sorrows for a while. The attitude of the local people towards the shrines and visitations was so high that everyone who went past the shrines, tombs, visitations got out if they were in any transport and visited that shrine and then went on their way. Local people go to the shrines in spring and summer days. In addition, in the southern regions of Uzbekistan, certain days of the week are designated as days of pilgrimage, mainly Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Because these days are considered by the population to be as “lucky days”²¹. The analysis of the many rituals performed at the shrines shows that some of the rituals performed are related to pre-Islamic beliefs and views. Particularly, in going around the mausoleum and the tomb we can see the supernatural connection with the saints here, the desire to communicate, and not only making vows when tying various rags, but also the magical connection between the pilgrim and the object of faith, the combination of Islamic and pre-Islamic beliefs in sacrificing.

At the heart of the word pilgrimage (visiting) in the way of life of Uzbek people lay the concepts of hope, relief, relief from pain, and doing good deeds. The phrase “Let your visit be accepted” expresses the realization of people's dreams and aspirations in life. Every sacred place is considered to have divine power in the imagination of the people, and receiving support from the spirits of the saints and scholars who lie here, they are proud of them.

According to Islam, visiting the graves of great people and remembering them with blessings is a good deed. However, it is strictly forbidden to worship the graves of saints, ask for their help to have children or seek healing. When a need is asked in the grave, one should ask only from Allah Himself²². When Islamic teachings spread to the territory of our country, it underwent a unique process of mixing with the traditions and customs of local peoples. As a result of this process, a unique form of Islamic teaching was developed, intertwined with the culture of indigenous peoples. In this context local scholars paid special attention to the prevention of religious bias in Movarounnahr, in particular in the territory of Uzbekistan, and explained the scientific basis for ideological divisions. As a result, hundreds of

¹⁸ Field notes. Kashkadarya region, Kasbi district, Mirishkor village, 2012.

¹⁹ Choriev A. History of Hazrat Sultan and Manoqib of Hazrat Bashir. –T.: «Sharq», 1996. - p. 247-248.

²⁰ Explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language. - Moscow, 1981. –1 vol. - p.305.

²¹ Field notes.. Kashkadarya region. Kasbi district, Mirishkor village. 2012.

²² Islam. Encyclopedia: Edited by A-H /Z.Husniddinov. - T, 2003. - B.161-162.



dynasties of great scholars emerged, such as Abu Rayhan Beruni, Abu Ali ibn Sino, Musa Khorezmi, Abu Mansur Moturidi, Imam Bukhari, Imam Termezi, Abu Lays Samarkandi, Mahmud Zamakhshari, Burhaniddin Marghinoni, Abu Mu'in Nasafi, Qaffal Shoshi, Hakim Termezi, Bahovuddin Naqshband, Haysam Kulayb Shoshi.

CONCILIATION

The process of reviving sacred places and shrines in Uzbekistan as an officially national and spiritual value dates back to the 90s of the previous century, the period of national independence. It was studied as a result of field research that restoration, repair and reconstruction works have been organized in almost all shrines of the country since that time. Also, since the first days of independence, a solid legal basis has been created for the relationship between the state and religious organizations on the issue of freedom of conscience. This legal basis is the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations."²³ In particular, 17 religious denominations of more than 140 nationalities and ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan were allowed to operate freely. Among them are representatives of different religions, Islam, Christianity and its many directions, Judaism, Buddhism, performing their religious prayers and customs. The traditions of inter-religious tolerance, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance, which have been practiced in the history of Movarounnahr since the years of independence on the basis of a culture of reconciliation, have been revived and is still continuing. In addition, the study of national spiritual development in connection with the shrines clearly shows that each organizational element, historical period, types, features of the shrines develops our national culture. This, in turn, requires that the topic of shrines be studied separately in the system of social sciences and humanities. Because the analysis and study of the national and spiritual development of the Uzbek people on the example of shrines allows us to clarify the harmony of national and religious values in the spirituality of our people. In addition, the shrines are a source of goodness in the minds of the people, serve as a sacred place that calls for compassion of each nation, and they have a unique religious tolerance.

²³ On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (new edition) // New Laws of Uzbekistan. No. 19. - T.: Adolat, 1998. - p. 224-234..