



Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Silk Road from the Area of Modern Uzbekistan

edited by
Marek Miłosz
Gafurdjan Mukhamedov



MONOGRAPHIE

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Monografie – Politechnika Lubelska



Politechnika Lubelska
Wydział Elektrotechniki i Informatyki
ul. Nadbystrzycka 38A
20-618 Lublin

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POLITECHNIKI LUBELSKIEJ

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This monograph has been supported by the Polish National Agency.
The printing of the monograph was financed from the Lublin University of
Technology Scientific Fund No FD-ITIT-007.

Publication approved by the Rector of Lublin University of Technology

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ISBN: 978-83-7947-463-9

Publisher: Wydawnictwo Politechniki Lubelskiej
www.biblioteka.pollub.pl/wydawnictwa
ul. Nadbystrzycka 36C, 20-618 Lublin
tel. (81) 538-46-59

Printed by: DjaF – 30-092 Krakow, ul. Kmietowicza 1/1
www.dajf.pl

The digital version is available at the Digital Library of Lublin University of Technology: www.bc.pollub.pl

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Circulation: 50 copies

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Preface

This monograph, the second in a series of three, is the result of the seven-year cooperation of the Department of Computer Science of the Lublin University of Technology with universities and cultural institutions of Uzbekistan. The common platform for cooperation is the use of information technology in the protection of the cultural heritage of the countries on the former Silk Road, in particular 3D digitisation of museum artefacts and architectural monuments. The cooperation resulted in three Scientific Expeditions of the Lublin University of Technology to Central Asia, the organisation of two International Conferences on Information Technology in Cultural Heritage Management (IT-CHM), participation with invited papers in three conferences devoted to the monuments of Uzbekistan, as well as publications at many scientific conferences and in leading scientific journals in the field of digitisation, such as *Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage*, *Digital Applications in Archeology and Cultural Heritage*, and *Museology and Cultural Heritage*.

The achievements of the cooperation between the Lublin University of Technology and Uzbekistan have been recognised by the National Agency for International Exchange (NAWA), which awarded funding to the “3D Digital Silk Road” project number PPI/APM/2019/1/00004. The project applicant is the Lublin University of Technology and the partners are 4 universities from Uzbekistan: National University of Uzbekistan (NUU) in Tashkent, Samarkand State University (SamSU), Chirchik State Pedagogical Institute (CSPI) and Urgench State University (USU). The aim of the project is to carry out scientific and research work in the field of digitisation of the cultural monuments of the Silk Road in Uzbekistan during scientific expeditions by LUT specialists in cooperation with partners from Uzbekistan and to disseminate research results through international scientific conferences, practical training, monographs and the silkroad3d.com online portal.

In this monograph, scholars from partner universities and cultural institutions of Uzbekistan cooperating with the Lublin University of Technology present intangible cultural heritage from areas of the Silk Road in modern Uzbekistan. It presents the literary and musical heritage, the development of calligraphy, libraries and court ceremonies as well as folk medicine. Historical aspects of the development of cities, regions, science and religion, including religious tolerance, in contemporary Uzbekistan are discussed extensively. Emphasis is put on the cultural and civilisational aspects of Tashkent and Khiva, as well as the contemporary concept of “The Silk Road as a Road of Dialogue”.

The results of historical studies presented in the monograph will serve as a guide during the organisation of subsequent Scientific Expeditions of the Lublin University of Technology to Central Asia as part of the “3D Digital Silk Road” project.

The book was published due to high commitment of the contributors and the reviewers. We want to express our thanks to everyone who has contributed to the creation of this book, especially to the NAWA financing project “3D Digital Silk Road” (number: PPI / APM / 2019/1/00004).

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Historical Roots of National and Religious Tolerance in the Tashkent Region

Abstract

The article attempts a scientific analysis of the historically formed roots of religious tolerance ingrained in the blood of the Uzbek people in a comparative analytical way and periodic basis on the example of the history of the Uzbek nation.

Keywords: Baha'is, Baptists, Lutherans, Blue God, Buddhism, Buddhists, Bukhara Jews, Catholics, Christian Koreans, Confessions, Evangelicals, fire-worship, freedom of conscience, Hare Krishnas and atheists, Islam, Jehovah witnesses, Monism, Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, Muslims, Orthodox, Seventh-day Adventists, Shamanism, Shia, Sunni, Zoroastrianism.

Relevance of the topic

The world's population now exceeds seven billion. They speak about six thousand different languages and dialects. Although there are basically three major races, they are actually divided into about twenty racial groups formed as a result of interbreeding. Even according to their economic and social status, people are divided with extremes of the richest and the poorest. This situation then determines political positions.

There is another aspect that differs from all of this – religion, belief. It is a religious belief that can unite different races, languages, genders, nations, ethnic groups, ages, etc. into a single entity, or it can turn people, a nation, relatives into strangers, enemies.

As long as there is a principle of national and religious tolerance in the world, inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts will not occur. After all, a society with internal conflicts can never unite, and eventually collapses. Most of today's armed conflicts have arisen and continue to arise on the basis of national or religious conflict. For example, the mutual conflicts between the Orthodox, Catholic and Islamic Slavic peoples of the Balkans, and so on.

In today's world, even though members of one religion make up the vast majority in a particular country, members of different religions and doctrines coexist. In this situation, the main goal of the state – the coexistence of people of different nationalities, religions and doctrines in peace, harmony and the unification of all forces and efforts for the development of the country – is a priority [7].

The national legal system of Uzbekistan creates equal conditions for all 16 religions living in the country. The Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and religion, the relevant legal framework creates conditions to meet the religious needs of all citizens, ensures the rights and interests of citizens regardless of national or religious affiliation, and on this basis effectively combats discrimination [5].

Historically, there have been no inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflicts on the territory of any of the local states that dominate our region. At the same time, believers in religions such as fire worship, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Monism, Shamanism, the Blue God or circumambulation of ancestral spirits lived side by side and lived in peace.

Genghis Khan, the great commander who conquered a quarter of the world in his time, also bequeathed to his successors to treat all religions equally. During the years of independence, the qualities of interethnic harmony and tolerance of our people have further increased. Thanks to the stable policy pursued in our country, interethnic relations have further improved. Thanks to the reforms aimed at ensuring interethnic harmony and freedom of religion, about 20 religious denominations, more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups live in peace in our country. In addition, a wide range of opportunities have been created for them in the country, as a result of which there are more than 140 national cultural centres in our country [1].

Methods and level of study

The article is based on the principles of generally accepted historical methods – historicity, comparative and logical analysis, consistency, objectivity, religious views of the world population, the principles of national and religious tolerance, as well as respect to those who came to our country for various reasons. Representatives of other nationalities and religions living and working were shown the conditions created by the state, tolerance, peace and tranquility of the people of Uzbekistan, the rational policy pursued by our government in this regard, achieving high results in the socio-political and spiritual life of the country.

A number of scientific studies on national and religious tolerance have been conducted in the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States: in Tajikistan Egamberdieva M. H. (2016); In Kazakhstan N. Balpanov, Z. N. Ismagambetova, A. G. Karabaeva (2018), K. G. Sokolovskiy (2016); in Russia O. Shataeva (2014), N. Medushevskiy (2020), E. K. Rudakova (2014), V. Zorin (2017), V. Nikityuk, O. Shataeva, N. Korshunova (2014), R. F. Usmanov, U. S. Vildanov (2012) and others.

Tolerance, care and humanity of the people of Uzbekistan towards the minority and other religions in our country R. H. Murtazaeva (2018), D. M. Inoyatova (2014, 2018), M. Muhammadsiddiqov (2009), R. B. Siddiqov (2019), Ya. X. G'afforov (2003, 2017), O. Ota-Mirzaev, V. Gentshke, R. Murtazaeva (1998, 2004), A. A. Komilov (2018), X. A. Mirzaaxmedov (2018), U. T. Gafurov (2018), X. X. Akieva, N. Saidova (2015), Z. A. Obidova (2016), F. G. Kulueva (2019), B. Nizomov (2007), R. G. Shamgunov

(2004), M. Ortiqov (2012) and has been covered in scientific articles, monographs, and works by a number of researchers. In addition, the issues of interethnic relations and tolerance in Uzbekistan are being studied by the Scientific Centre for Interethnic Harmony and Tolerance at the Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan. The centre conducts a number of scientific conferences and research work [8].

One of the most important topics is the study of the historical roots and specifics of the principles of national and religious tolerance, which are deeply rooted in the blood of the people of Uzbekistan.

Research results

Geographically, the Tashkent oasis is located outside Movaraunnahr, on the right bank of the Syrdarya, on the border with Dashti Kipchak. From ancient times the population was engaged in agriculture, handicrafts, trade and cattle breeding. The intersection of the northern and southern branches of the Great Silk Road, as well as the location of the lands of settled agricultural and nomadic pastoral peoples, allowed the Tashkent oasis to support socio-economic life, and its inhabitants to get acquainted with different nationalities and religions. As a result, various ethnic groups and tribes migrated and settled in the region. Their toponyms, hydronyms and other names have survived to the present day. For example, Sergeli, Buka, Dormon, Sagbon, Karasaray, Yakkasaray and others. In turn, from the first millennium BC to the 7th–8th centuries AD, various religious teachings began to come from the west and southwest, such as fire worship, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Monism, Nestorianism, and from the north – shamanism, Blue God, circumambulation of ancestral spirits. For some, the Tashkent oasis served as a homeland and a place, while for others it was formed and developed as a gateway to neighbouring areas.

The traditions of religious tolerance inherent in our people have deep historical roots. According to scientific sources, Uzbekistan is one of the oldest places in the world where the first religious ideas and views were formed. This is confirmed by an ancient tomb belonging to an 8–9-year-old Neanderthal boy found in the Teshik-Tash cave in the Boysun Mountains of the Surkhandarya region, excavated in 1938 by archaeologist Okladnikov [5]. Excavations at the Kara-Tepa, Fayoz-Tepa, Dalverzintepa and Afrosiyab ruins in Surkhandarya, Samarkand, and the remains of temples, Buddhist statues, coins, seals, and other artifacts have been unearthed in the region that testify the fact that they lived side by side, in harmony and peace.

Since ancient times, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism have existed in our land and later evolved into complex ideological systems. Most experts consider Central Asia, more precisely Khorezm, to be the birthplace of the world's first monotheistic doctrine – Zoroastrianism. The basis of Zoroastrianism is the idea of the dualism of things. That is, the constant struggle of the forces of good and evil, the consequent victory of the forces of good, the notions of heaven and hell, the bridge of chanvat, the notions of the

golden age, and so on. These rules and doctrines were later reflected in the doctrines of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam [3].

At the same time, Buddhism played an important role in Central Asia. In the early Middle Ages, Nestorian Christianity entered the region from Syria through Iran and gained prominence. Nestorianism was founded by Nestorius, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, who differed from the Christian teachings spread in Rome and Byzantium by believing that Jesus Christ was not God or a son of God, but a messenger of God, a prophet. This is why this religious doctrine is so widespread throughout Central Asia. In Samarkand in the early 6th century a Nestorian bishop served, and in the 8th century a Nestorian metropolitan functioned [2].

It should be noted that the idea of monotheism in Central Asia before Islam had an independent basis. In the Western Turkic Khanate during the Hakan regime (552–576) the words “Tangri”, “Khudo”, “Kudai”, “Egam” were used to mean the sacred sky – the Supreme Power [4].

Calling the Creator by these names is so ingrained in the language of the peoples of Central Asia that even after the spread of Islam here, for centuries, local peoples continued to call Allah “Tangri”, “Khudo”, “Kudai”, “Egam”. This phenomenon is still common today. In general, there is a scientific hypothesis that there were more than 10 different religions in Central Asia in the pre-Islamic period.

In the 8th century, as a result of the Arab conquest of Central Asia, Islamisation began in the region. Part of the population continued to believe in ancient religious teachings. The existence of a good basis for the acceptance of monotheism in our country has become the basis for the recognition of Islam by the peoples of Central Asia. It was here that the values, rituals, and customs of Islam and the local religions came together. The peoples of Central Asia introduced local religious and moral ideas, legal norms and customs into Islam. This is explained by the fact that Islam has its own characteristics in Movaraunnahr.

It was no coincidence that in the 10th century, the Hanafi school of thought, founded by the Great Imam of Islam, was widely tolerated and peaceful in the territory of the present-day Republic of Uzbekistan. The culture of Uzbekistan, which embodies the best achievements of the past, in turn, had a significant impact not only on the further development of Islamic culture, but also on the Western European Renaissance, the development of the principles of tolerance in the world. Therefore, the scientific, cultural and enlightenment achievements of our great ancestors are an integral part not only of the Islamic world, but also of the culture of the peoples of the world. Al-Jami ‘as-Sahih, a collection of hadiths written by Imam al-Bukhari during this period, has been recognized by his contemporaries as the most perfect of the traditional Sunni collections. At the same time, it remained one of the main sources of Muslims around the world. In this book, the absence of ideas that can be the basis for religious conflicts or contradictions, shows that the principles of tolerance have always prevailed in the history of our country.

The idea of tolerance that existed at that time, the primacy of its principles, allowed the great scholars of the religious and secular sciences to create in harmony. For example, mature scholars of religious and secular sciences, such as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmidhi, Mahmud az-Zamahshari, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, al-Khwarizmi, al-Beruni, and Ibn Sina, lived and worked in the same place and time.

The Mongol invasion in the 8th century had a specific impact on the process of further development of Islam in the region. The currents of Sufism formed up to that time became a unifying factor of the people against the non-Muslim invaders of the Sufis and later took an active part in the Sarbadar movement. Sheikh Najmiddin Kubro of Khorezm, the founder of the Kubroviya doctrine, was martyred at the age of 76 in a battle with the Mongols for the defense of Urgench.

It was in this religious environment that the great Amir Temur was born. During the reign of the Timurids, Islam began to play an important role in the socio-political and cultural life of Central Asia. Amir Temur writes in his *Tuzuki*: "I helped the religion of Allah and the Shari'ah of Muhammad as much as I could." He understood Islam to be a non-fanatical, universal religion. It was her understanding that helped her take care of her husband's other religious privileges. Highlighting the importance of this aspect, King Charles VI wrote to Timur: "I thank you for the care, respect, honor, attention and blessings you have shown to many Christians. We, in turn, with your help, are ready to serve the interests of your people."

Archbishop Ioann, Amir Temur's ambassador to Europe, described Amir Temur in his book *Memoir sur Tamerlan et sa cour*: "will not spare." It was this statement that allowed Lyanglu, who translated the "Statutes of Timur" into French, to write that "the misinterpretation of history has prevented the correct interpretation, understanding and evaluation of the personality of Amir Temur."

In the history of our people, there are many examples of peaceful coexistence and cooperation of different nationalities and religions, their tolerance, peace and harmony. That is why there have never been religious conflicts in Uzbekistan. Warm relations can be seen in the relations between the Islamic, Christian and Jewish religious communities.

As an assessment of these relations, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. A. Karimov said: "The coexistence of Muslims and Christians in Uzbekistan is a rare sign of religious and spiritual harmony and the best example of tolerance for all religions."

Uzbekistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, where people of different nationalities and ethnic groups live in peace and harmony. "The biggest fortune in recent years," says I. A. Karimov, "is peace and stability in our common home, interethnic and inter-citizen harmony. The understanding of this value and its constant importance is growing in the minds of our people every day."

The traditions of religious tolerance inherent in our people have deep historical roots. The policy of independent Uzbekistan in the field of religion also serves to strengthen these traditions and enrich them with content.

In relations with religious organisations, the state is secular and adheres to the following principles:

- First, respect for the religious feelings of believers, recognition of religious beliefs as a private matter of citizens or their legal associations.
- Second, to ensure the equality and non-persecution of citizens who believe in religion and those who do not.
- Third, the need to seek dialogue with various religious communities in order to use their potential in matters of spiritual renewal, the determination of universal human moral values.

Article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees Freedom of conscience. Everyone shall have the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Any compulsory imposition of religion shall be impermissible.

On June 14, 1991, the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations was adopted in the country's legal practice. On the basis of these legal documents, the state provides an opportunity for freedom of conscience without interfering in the religious affairs of religious leaders. The importance and necessity of religion in educating a person with the highest qualities was recognised. At the same time, the state has contributed to take preventive measures against the politicisation of religions, as well as the emergence of extremist and fundamentalist movements [6].

Religious leaders can help establish peace, tranquility and mutual respect. In our region, in Tashkent, the holding of an international Muslim-Christian conference under the motto "Under One Sky" serves as a confirmation of our idea. Also, during the years of independence, the Russian Orthodox Church, in cooperation with our government, celebrated the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Tashkent and Central Asia [5].

The ceremony was attended by Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexei II, who visited Central Asia for the first time at the invitation of the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In his speech, he said: "I think that good cooperation and effective relations between government agencies and religious organisations in Uzbekistan will be a good example for other republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States." In December 2008, the 100th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was widely celebrated in Tashkent.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that during the years of independence, the centuries-old cooperation, friendship, interethnic harmony and religious tolerance between the peoples of our region have acquired a special meaning. It also confirms that in the territory

of our multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country, every citizen of our state, regardless of race, nationality, religion and mother tongue, is treated equally.

Today, more than 2,000 religious organisations of about 20 denominations operate in Uzbekistan. Most are Muslim organisations. During the years of independence, hundreds of churches, synagogues and houses of worship were built and restored [6].

The years of independence have opened a new stage in interethnic and interreligious relations in Uzbekistan. The most important achievement of this period is peace and stability, which has become the key to the successful implementation of reforms.

Confessionally, Uzbekistan is a unique country. Among our multi-ethnic people there are representatives of all religions in the world. Uzbekistan has a unique experience of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. For many centuries, representatives of many traditional national religions have lived in peace and harmony in the republic, along with believers in world religions. These trends have been confirmed by the legislation of the country since the early days of independent Uzbekistan. The legal basis of such a policy is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the legislative framework created on its basis. First of all, these are the articles of the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations, adopted in 1991 and revised in 1998, which describes the secular path of the country's development and the separation of religion and religious organisations in Uzbekistan.

This law provides for further strengthening of interreligious cooperation in order to maintain interethnic and interreligious harmony in Uzbekistan, taking into account the positive experience of historically peaceful coexistence of different religions in the region.

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