



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

edited by
Marek Miłosz
Gafurdjan Mukhamedov



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Monografie – Politechnika Lubelska



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POLITECHNIKI LUBELSKIEJ

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Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	7
Utkir Abdullaev, Muborak Matyakubova <i>Palace Literary Environment in Khiva Khanate (second half of the 19th to early 20th century)</i>	9
Behruz Marufiy <i>The Shashmakom Musical Heritage on the Silk Road: the Life, Musical Heritage and School of Khoja Abdulaziz Abdurasulov</i>	19
Yarash Gafforov, Toshev Ahmadonovich <i>A Look at the History of the Tashkent Oasis</i>	27
Utkir Abdullaev, Muborak Matyakubova, Dilafruz Atamurotova <i>Book Work and History of the Library in the Khiva Khanate</i>	33
Aziz Mullaev <i>Central Asia's Cultural Networks and Dialogue on the Silk Road</i>	41
Utkir Abdullaev, Khamidbek Matkarimov <i>Ceremony of Enthronement of Khans in the Khiva Khanate and its Peculiarities: the Tradition of Inheritance of the Throne</i>	51
Jaloliddin Annaev, Khumoyun Nazarov <i>Dating Buddhist Religious Complexes of Northwestern Bactria-Tokharistan and the Distribution of Buddhism in the Territory North of the Oxus</i>	57
Mamlakat Jumaniyozova, Nargiza Kamolova, Feruza Jumaniyozova, Umar Khujamuratov <i>Development of Land Ownership Relations in the Khiva Khanate in View of Low Land Fertility</i>	67
Utkir Abdullaev, Muborak Matyakubova, Zukhra Babaeva <i>Folk Medicine and the Scientific Heritage of Doctors in the Khiva Khanate</i>	73
Mamlakat Jumaniyozova, Gulandom Abdullayeva <i>Historical and Ethnographic Heritage Defining the Power of Khiva Women: Dynamics and Transformation</i>	83

Jummagul Abdurahmonova, Ulugbek Ismailov <i>Historical Roots of National and Religious Tolerance in the Tashkent Region</i>	91
Utkir Abdullaev, Umid Abdalov, Axmedjon Yusupov <i>Khiva Shrines and Visiting Ceremonies on the Example of Sayyid Alouddin Shrine</i>	99
Jummagul Abdurahmonova, Ulugbek Ismoilov <i>National and Religious Tolerance in the Tashkent Region</i>	107
Utkir Abdullaev, Khamidbek Matkarimov, Bakhodir Satimov <i>Procedures for Reception of Foreign Ambassadors and Citizens in the Khiva Khanate</i>	125
Muhammadikhon Buzrukov <i>The Culture of Calligraphy and Miniatures of Timurid Era Samarkand</i>	137
Olga Kobzeva, Salamat Ktaybekov <i>On the History of the Study of the Great Silk Road by European Scientists in the Second Half of the 19th and the Early of the 20th Centuries</i>	145
Gafurjan Mukhamedov, Bakhodir Eshchanov, Umid Khodjamkulov <i>The Importance of the Great Silk Road in the Development of Science</i>	163
Saodat Toshtemirova, Sardor Doniyev <i>The Role of the Tashkent Oasis in the Development of Civilisation on the Territory of Uzbekistan</i>	171
<i>Author Index</i>	179

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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National and Religious Tolerance in the Tashkent Region

Abstract

The article provides a scientific analysis of religious conflicts in the world and their resolution, as well as measures for constructive dialogue and peaceful coexistence and interfaith relations in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Baptists, Barakkhan Madrasa, Bukhara Jews, Catholics, Christian Koreans denominations, Evangelicals, freedom of conscience, Hast Imam, Islam, Lutherans, Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, Muslims, Orthodox, Seventh-day Adventists, Shiites, Sunnis, Zangiota Complex.

The relevance of the topic

The 20th century is remembered in the history of humanity as the emergence of national and religious conflicts and the emergence of a global problem. For example, Islamic fundamentalism, the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, the scandals around Jerusalem in the Middle East, the persecution of believers in the former Soviet Union, the persecution of Christians in Nigeria, and the local clergy, etc. As a result, thousands of people died and suffered. According to international experts, 83% of the world's population has severe restrictions on freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Persecution, repression and discrimination based on religion, belief or blasphemy are a daily reality in many countries.

Religious temples and buildings have also been damaged or destroyed as a result of inter-religious clashes. In India, for example, a 16th century mosque was completely demolished by the Hindus under the pretext of building a temple in Ram. Two-and-a-half-thousand-year-old Buddha statues in Afghanistan's Bamiyan province have been blown up by the Taliban, and other cases.

In today's world, even if members of one religion make up the vast majority within a given country, members of other religions and doctrines coexist. In this situation, the main goal of the state is to promote the peaceful coexistence, build strong relations between the people of different nationalities, religions and doctrines in the development of the country. 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 the conditions to meet the religious needs of all citizens, regardless of national or religious affiliation, ensures the rights and interests of citizens and is effective against discrimination on this basis [5].

During the years of independence, the virtues of interethnic harmony and tolerance of our people have increased. Thanks to the stable policy pursued in our country, inter-ethnic relations have further improved. Thanks to inter-ethnic harmony and reforms aimed at ensuring 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 more than 140 national cultural centres are operating in the country [1].

Styles and level of study

The article is based on generally accepted historical methods – historical, comparative-logical analysis, consistency, impartiality, in which the religious views of the world's population and the ongoing conflicts between people of different religions and nationalities in the world, as well as the conditions created by our state for the representatives of other nationalities and religions living and working on the ground, the tolerance, peace and tranquility of the people of Uzbekistan, the rational policy pursued by our government in this regard are the result of a rational policy.

A number of scientific studies on national and religious conflicts have been conducted in the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The tolerance, care and humanity of the people of Uzbekistan towards the minority and other religions in our country have been addressed by many authors in scientific articles, monographs and works of a number of other researchers. In addition, the issues of interethnic relations and tolerance in Uzbekistan are being studied by the Research Centre for Interethnic Harmony and Tolerance at the Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan. The centre conducts a number of scientific and practical conferences and research work. [8]. One of the most important topics in Uzbekistan is the study of non-Muslim members of other religions by researchers.

Research results

Today, Uzbekistan has a population of about 34 million. More than 80% of them are Uzbeks. In addition to Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Turkmen, Afghans, Kyrgyz, Russians, Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Uighurs, and 136 other nationalities and ethnic groups live in the country. All conditions have been created for them to feel like citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan [6].

Today, the spiritual and cultural life of Uzbekistan is characterised by a variety of religious beliefs. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, a number of measures were taken to ensure the coexistence of our multi-ethnic and multi-religious people. For example, Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations states that citizens have equal rights regardless of their attitude to religion, including: "Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have the same rights as citizens regardless of their religion. Official documents do not allow citizens to express their views on religion. Any restriction of the rights of citizens

on the basis of their religion and the granting of direct or indirect privileges to them, the incitement of hostility or hatred, or the insulting of their feelings connected with religious or atheistic beliefs. Articles 141 and 156 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan also provide for criminal liability for such violations. As a result of such a fair policy, about two and a half thousand religious organizations of 16 different denominations are now operating in the country on a fully legal basis. Of these, 175 are Christian (church, monastery), 8 are Jewish (synagogue), 6 are Bahá'í, 1 is Buddhist, 1 is Hare-Krishna. Uzbekistan is an interfaith Bible Society, and the rest are Islamic (Masjid) [5].

The government focuses on constructive dialogue and cooperation with international organisations and experts in this field. During the visits of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zayed Raad Al Hussein and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Lamberto Zannier, the current state of affairs was discussed and is being documented in our country. Following the visit of Ahmad Shahid, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Uzbek parliament adopted a separate document on the implementation of a number of measures in the field of religion [4].

In Uzbekistan, all religious holidays are freely celebrated. For example, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha and Ramadan, Christians celebrate Easter and Christmas, and Jews celebrate Passover on a large scale every year. By compliance with the decree of the President, Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr have been declared holidays. In addition, with the support of the state, pilgrims visit the holy sites.



Fig. 1. Taraweeh prayer at the Sheikh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf Complex in Tashkent [14]

All Muslim religious organisations in the Republic of Uzbekistan are subordinated to the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan in the conduct of their activities.



Fig. 2. The building of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan in 2007 [16]

This organisation was established on October 20, 1943 in Tashkent at the Congress of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan as the “Religious Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan.”

Sheikh Eshon Babakhan ibn Abdul Majid Khan started working in the yard. From 1956 he worked at the Barakhan madrasah.



Fig. 3. Barakhon madrasah of the 16th century [17]

After Uzbekistan gained independence, it was renamed the Movarounnahr Muslim Board in 1992. Since 1996, it has been known as the Muslim Religious Board of Uzbekistan.

It operates as an independent organisation separated from the state. The administration directs religious affairs among Muslims in Uzbekistan, issues fatwas, appoints imams to mosques and trains clerics. Materially, the donations from Muslims to mosques are provided at the expense of subsistence farms and others. Management of the governing body – the Supreme Board. Its chairman is the mufti. The department has departments of law, international relations, education and training, mosques and fatwas. The Imam Bukhari Islamic Institute in Tashkent also trains 7 boys and 2 women in specialised Islamic secondary schools.

The Muslim Board maintains contacts with many religious organisations in our country and abroad. Every year 3.5–4 thousand people take an active part in organising the Hajj.

In connection with the declaration of Tashkent as the capital of Islamic culture in 2007, the International Organisation of the Islamic Conference's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) has launched a large-scale creative project in Hast-Imam on the initiative of President Islam Karimov. A new, modern magnificent building was built for Each room is equipped with latest facilities.



Fig. 4. International Relations of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan [15]

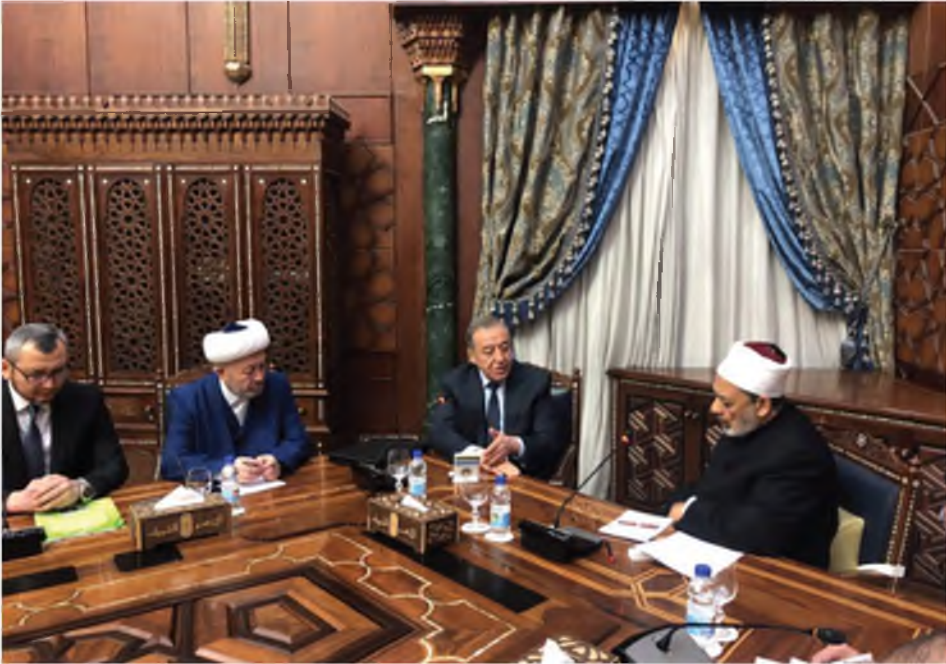


Fig. 5. International Relations of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan [20]



Fig. 6. International Relations of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan [15]



Fig. 7. International Relations of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan [18]



Fig. 8. During Friday prayers in mosques “Islam ota” of Uzbekistan [28]

Our government also pays great attention to sacred places of worship. For example, one of the leading members of the Yassaviya doctrine in Zangiota district, the Zangiota shrine was completely renovated during the years of independence and now serves as a large shrine. Pilgrims do not stop. The mausoleum was built in the 15th century by Amir

Temur. The walls of the mausoleum are decorated with ornaments by Mirzo Ulugbek. In the former Soviet Union, it was turned into a warehouse and later into a museum. During the years of independence, the mausoleum was renovated and reopened to pilgrims [2].

On the basis of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 of October 20, 2013, large-scale construction and beautification works were carried out in the Zangiota complex in Tashkent region and adjacent areas. A new mosque for 1,000 people, a building of the regional office of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, a toilet for 40 people, 2 toilets, 2 fountains instead of the old pool, 2 sheys in the national style, a drinking water supply system, and a water supply system, electricity, communications, lighting), underground passage, parking, 50-bed 3-storey hotel, 70-bed teahouse, two-storey mini-market and more than a dozen national handicraft shops, bakery, modern market, 50-seat market, bitkazildi. According to the new project, the entrance gate to the complex was rebuilt, and the boundary walls were rebuilt. The old madrasa building has been completely renovated. The old minaret in the courtyard was removed and a new 31-meter-high minaret was built in front of the new mosque. Both the Zangiota and Anbaribibi mausoleums have been completely renovated. 5 domes in the complex were restored.

The new model of relations between members of different religions is based on a balanced approach and equality of all believers before the law and the state. Its success is an important factor in the stability and security of Uzbekistan

From the earliest days of Uzbekistan's sovereignty, there has been a growing interest among ethnic groups in their religious values. It is no coincidence that many of the National Cultural Centres, from the earliest days of their existence, have called on the city authorities to return the former buildings of temples belonging to national minorities and their denominations and other national values. Society's demands did not go unnoticed: in the early 1990s the ancient writings of Sefar-Toro were transferred from the treasury of the Republican Museum to the Jewish community of Bukhara, the Tashkent Evangelical Lutheran Church to the German Cultural Centre. The Polish Catholic Church was transferred to Roman Catholics [12].

The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tashkent, the Diocese of Tashkent or Uzbekistan, was established in the spring of 1871 in the city of Verny (Almaty) as a Turkestan parish [7]. During the former Soviet Union, diocese officials were persecuted and the Bolsheviks took control. From the 1950s onwards, persecution intensified. During the years of independence, religious freedom was granted. On July 27, 2011 it was included in the newly formed Central Asian metropolitan area. The head of the Tashkent diocese presides over the metropolitan area. He is called the Metropolitan of Central Asia in the affairs of the metropolis, as well as during liturgical services. The Assumption Cathedral in Tashkent houses a copy of the Iberian icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Mount Athos, brought to the parish by Archbishop Dmitry (Abashidze) in the early 19th century.

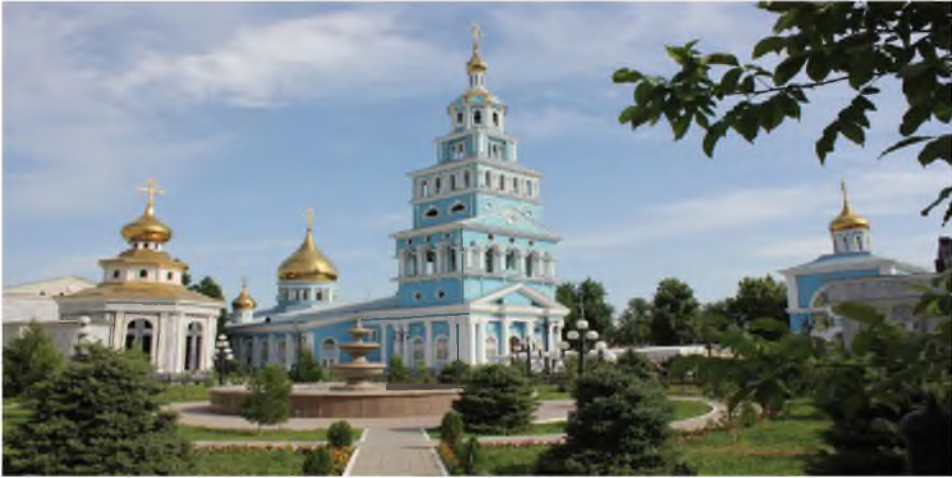


Fig. 9. Cathedral of the Assumption in Tashkent [22]

The Tashkent Theological Seminary is a higher spiritual education institution of the Russian Orthodox Church that trains clergy in the Central Asian Metropolitan District.



Fig. 10. Cathedral of the Assumption in Tashkent [25]

The Tashkent Religious School was opened in 1990. In November 1996, with the support of the Government of Uzbekistan, the construction of a religious and administrative centre began in the Cathedral of the Assumption. By the decision of the Holy Synod of April 9, 1998, the religious school was reorganized as a seminary. Since that year it has been operating as the Tashkent Religious Seminary. On July 21, 1998, the Tashkent Religious Seminary was registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. On January 22, 1999, the seminary received a license to operate.

In 2002, a new two-story building for the Tashkent Theological Seminary's dormitory, with four rooms each, was commissioned. Tashkent Theological Seminary has three faculties (departments): Department of Pastoral Care and Theology, Department of Catechesis (Women), Department of Regent (Women).



Fig. 11. Tashkent Religious Seminary [26]

The St. Troitsky Monastery of St. George of the Central Asian Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tashkent and the Diocese of Uzbekistan is located in Chirchik, Tashkent Region.

The monastery was opened on February 22, 1996 in Chirchik by the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on the basis of St. George's Church. The St. Troitsky Monastery of St. George began in the late 19th century with the construction of a temple for the Russian-populated village of Troitskoye in Turkestan (now Chirchik, Uzbekistan). On September 11, 1895, the Turkestan Religious Consistory presented a book to the villagers to raise funds for the construction of a temple. Most of the charitable funds raised for the construction of the temple were collected by members of the Muslim population [11]. This testifies to the fact that the principles of religious tolerance have long been ingrained in the minds of our people.

The first house of worship was built and opened on February 1, 1897. The building of this house of worship has been preserved to this day. After the opening of the house of worship, the construction of a temple began in the village. The church was officially opened on November 23, 1900, and a prayer was said for St. George the Victorious. In 1931, the temple was closed by the former Soviet government and used as a barn. Later, it served as a village council and a kindergarten building. The temple bell was broken. The temple building was returned to the church in 1945.

The first monk's tanzura (haircut symbolising dedication to the church) was performed in 2004 by Metropolitan Vladimir (Ikim) of Tashkent and Central Asia. Since 2012, the monastery has been holding daily religious services.



Fig. 12. St. Troitsky Monastery of St. George's in Chirchik [24]

On March 19, 2020, the renovation of two monasteries, the Svyato-Pokrovsky Monastery in Dustabad and St. Troitsky Monastery of St. George in Chirchik began. During these nine months, the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and personally the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. M. Mirziyoev, and with the active support of philanthropists worked tirelessly to restore these two monasteries in Tashkent region.



Fig. 13. St. Troitsky Monastery of St. George in Chirchik [21]



Fig. 14. St. Philip Arman Apostolic Church in Tashkent [19]

The Church of St. Philip Arman of the Apostolic Church, one of the leaders of Christianity, was officially registered on January 12, 2007 in Tashkent in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



Fig. 15. St. Philip Arman Apostolic Church in Tashkent [19]

The Cathedral of the Holy Heart of Jesus is the Catholic Church in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and the Apostolic Administration of Uzbekistan is the cathedral. The cathedral is built in the Gothic style of Western European architecture.



Fig. 16. Construction of the Catholic Church in Tashkent in 1912 [13]

Construction of the Catholic Church in Tashkent in 1912 at the initiative of the priest Justin Bonaventura Pranaitis, a well-known Polish architect Ludwik Pancakevic had started from the side. The workers at the Cherkov construction site were Catholic soldiers who had served in Tashkent, and later the builders were prisoners of war held near Tashkent, including highly qualified engineers, sculptors and stonemasons. After the death of Pranaitis in 1917, construction continued under the leadership of the Catholic priest Boleslaw Rutenis. After the revolution and the Bolsheviks' coming to power in Tashkent, the construction stopped

From 1925 to 1976, the unfinished church housed a variety of businesses, including a dormitory and a warehouse. During the period when the temple building was used for other purposes, all its statues were looted or destroyed.

In 1976, after the government decided to renovate the building, it was rebuilt and transferred to the Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR. In 1981, the church building was declared an architectural and historical monument of Uzbekistan [9].



Fig. 17. Cathedral of the Holy Heart of Jesus, the Catholic Church in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) [23]

After the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, buildings and structures based on the religious sphere, as well as sacred objects were returned to the representatives of religious denominations officially operating in our country. In 1992, the government decided to transfer the cathedral to the Tashkent Catholic Church. In 1993, a complete restoration of the church building began. On October 22, 2000, the restored Cathedral of the Holy Heart of Jesus was inaugurated.



Fig. 18. Cathedral of the Holy Heart of Jesus, the Catholic Church in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) [27]

Today, Sundays are held in four languages: English, Russian, Korean, and Polish. The Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Protestant Church of Uzbekistan is located in Tashkent. The cathedral was opened on October 3, 1899. The church building was designed by the architect A. L. Benoit and funded by the Lutheran community at the expense of I. I. Krause. During the former Soviet era, the church building was used as a warehouse, and in the late 1970s it was transferred to the Tashkent Conservatory. When the restoration work was completed, it was used as an opera studio room at the conservatory. At that time, the organ was installed in the building, and concerts of organ music were organised on a regular basis. During the years of independence, the building was transferred to the management of the newly formed Lutheran community [10]. Religious services are conducted in Russian and German [3].

Conclusions

In many parts of the world, interfaith tensions are growing. They are mainly related to the violation of the rights of religious minorities. In this context, the protection of human rights and freedoms, security, interfaith and harmony in Uzbekistan has become the main content of the new political direction.

In 2018, a new composition of the Council of Confessions was approved by presidential decree. It is a community advisory body under the Committee on Religious Affairs, which has been expanded from 9 to 17 members. It includes representatives of almost all religious denominations registered in Uzbekistan. New members were invited to the expanded membership, including leaders of Seventh-day Adventist Christians, the Evangelical Society of Uzbekistan, the Hare Krishna Society, Jehovah's Witnesses, and a handful of other religious organisations.

The Council discusses the current state of religious and social processes in Uzbekistan, and is the state body responsible for ensuring the rights of citizens to freedom of conscience and religion, equality, and the regulation of relations with religious organisations. In total, there are 175 Christian religious organisations, 8 Jewish communities, 6 Baha'i communities, one Jehovah's Witnesses, one Hare Krishna community and one Buddhist temple in Uzbekistan, as well as the Uzbek Interfaith Bible Society.

On December 7, 2020, the United States Department of State issued an official statement announcing that Uzbekistan had been removed from the "List of Specially Protected States" in the area of religious freedom. In particular, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo acknowledged that our country has made great strides in ensuring freedom of religion. Uzbekistan is now regarded as a country where religious freedom is fully guaranteed. The statement praised Uzbekistan's experience in delisting. In particular, the US Secretary of State is pleased to announce that Uzbekistan has been removed from the List of Specially Protected Areas, based on significant, tangible achievements made by the Government of Uzbekistan over the past year. "Uzbekistan's laws and courage in action are an example for other nations."

An important feature of the religious life of modern Uzbekistan is that one religion or denomination should not be allowed to establish its advantages or limitations over others. The task of further strengthening freedom of conscience is reflected in the Strategy of Action. The fifth direction is to ensure security, interethnic harmony and religious tolerance, and to pursue a balanced, mutually beneficial and constructive foreign policy. According to him, more than 50 legal documents and 25 practical decisions have already been adopted in the field of religion [4].

Uzbekistan's policy on interethnic and interreligious harmony is fully in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments.

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