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Religious tourism as a sociocultural phenomenon of the present
"The unique sense today is a universal value tomorrow. This is the way
religions are created and values are made."

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Abstract

Religious tourism has such an important socio-cultural characteristic, as a social practice, changing man and positioning him in a social space. Hence religious tourism owns a kind of socio-cultural potential of influencing the motivational state of a person, which has the need of cultural and religious objects required for the spiritually ideological existence. Specificity of value consciousness of the modern person, as well as the characteristics of social, cultural and economic status of various social groups define a variety of tourist motives, which have significant influence on the choice of tourist activity of specific identity. At the present stage all kinds of tourism, including religious kinds develop in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The President of the country has allocated tourism among the seven priority clusters, development of the domestic economy, so the tourism has received a new impulse to improvement. Anyway the religious-tourist potential of our country is used not fully today. The process of creation of conditions for qualitative and competitive religious tourism on the territory of Kazakhstan for our compatriots and foreign citizens requires more balanced long-term state policy on all tourist market. Thus, high revenue from tourism can become a major budgetary factor and make it more profitable branch of economic activity, than even the traditional exports of oil or gas. Considering the above, it can be argued that in the conditions of expansion of innovative trends in the domestic economy of tourism in the near future it will be able to enter the international market with its unique religious tourist products.

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In contemporary polyconfessional Kazakhstan, as well as on the whole post Soviet Union territory, we can observe the process of revival of interest and attitude to religions and the church. Thus it becomes clear why religious tourism acts as one of the dynamically developing directions of tourist activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as around the world. Permanently growing interest in religious tourism can make it an important factor of ensuring social stability and interfaith dialogue in the society. In the given article the author aims to reveal the sociocultural nature of religious tourism and analyze its unique opportunities in weakening the reasons and conditions of social tension.

As is known, religious tourism acts as a unique kind of cognitive tourism since it satisfies gnoseological interest of travelers and tourists, giving them the opportunity to observe, live through a religious cult process, ceremonies and rituals, to purchase religious attributes, souvenirs. Such tourism has a number of peculiar features which are reflected in peculiarities of route building, choice and visit of objects of display, organization of excursions and transportation services and depend on educational level and age structure of participants, duration of trips and many other moments. Religious tourism frameworks usually presuppose visiting religious centers, functioning cult and memorable ones, and also museums and exhibition. Trips there can be made due to cult acts, holidays, and festivals taking place in a certain season.

So, it should be emphasized that religious tourism is an independent type of tourism. Religious tourism and other types of tourism comprise tourism as a whole, which is defined by Aleksandrova A.U as a set of relations and phenomena which emerge during people's moving and staying in places, other than their constant place of residence and work [1].

It should be noted that both religions and tourism share the same cultural heritage. Hence it is necessary to be interested in maintaining closest relations between heritage, religiousness, culture and tourism, aimed at higher development of spirituality and humanity. Therefore, one of the major tasks is the establishment of effective and mutually beneficial interaction of organizers of religious tourism with representatives of various beliefs.

Religious tourism has two main kinds. It is pilgrim tourism and tourism of a sightseeing-informative orientation. A kind of pilgrim tourism is spiritual pilgrim tourism [2]. We may refer the following example to spiritual pilgrim tourism: in the last years Muslims of Kazakhstan take part in interfaith journeys to Tibet where they have an opportunity to listen to the Buddhist leader of Tibet Dalai Lama XIV, meet the Tibetan Muslims.

Not everyone knows that in Tibet there are places of compact housing of Muslims which settled there. Besides, today there is no documentary evidence of how and when they settled there. In general, the place of Tibet in the Islamic world is known from early historical chronicles. Arab scientists, such as Yakut al-Hamavi, Ibn Haldun and At-Tabari wrote about Tibet. For example, Yakut al-Hamavi, in the book "Mudzham Al-Buldan" (toponymic "Dictionary of the countries") uses three different names: Tabbat, Tibet and Tubbet. Modern data on the life of Tibetan Muslims is poor.

Nowadays the main means of formation of a perfect civil society is a continuous process of learning which helps a person to form his attitude towards eternal values and on this basis to develop a complete worldview and world-understanding. That is why there is such a growing interest of people, particularly citizens of our republic, in the contiguity with their historical roots, religions, sacred and memorable places, religious practices and rituals. The religious purposes of journeys and trips, connected with church holidays and events, and not connected, are a natural attempt of a person to comprehend religious experience and to compare it with his own idea of the universe and essence of physical and spiritual life.

The purpose of social and cultural policy of our young state is the maintenance of cross-cultural and interreligious dialogue in ethnic, spiritual and religious variety, preservation of traditions of all people living in the republic, peace and consent on Kazakhstan earth. Taking into account the growing role of religion in the modern world, head of the republic N.A.Nazarbayev put forward an initiative of conducting the Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions. Today there is no analog of holding such interreligious meetings in the world, which would be given the state support. Gatherings of leaders of world and traditional religions (four of them have taken place already) expand prospects and opportunities for mutual cooperation; help prevent violence, religious fanaticism, extremism and terrorism.

Social bases of any religion are directly connected with real conditions of human life, physical and spiritual life in which contradictions between desire and reality, freedom and debt are inevitable. In religion freedom is always in the context of a moral act and is necessarily paired with responsibility. Therefore the purpose of religion becomes

the uniting of people on the basis of understanding moral responsibility, permanency of eternal values and display of a way to spiritual self-improvement through love, understanding, selfless mutual help and non-violence. Unfortunately, numerous fanatics, seeking to impose to everyone the exclusiveness and universality of only their own concepts, often forget about it. And it cannot but come out in a peculiar psychological and physical pressure and violence, and also in outrage and iniquity.

We can distinguish specific conditions of why modern religious tourism as a sociocultural phenomenon attracts many travelers. They are mainly:

- unique conditions for acquaintance with various religions and cultures;
- building dialogue, friendly relationships with representatives of other cultures and beliefs of different regions and countries which allows to compare sociocultural experience;
- availability of religious traveling for the majority of social groups which in turn makes religious tourism a mechanism of mitigation of a certain intensity in the society;
- broad experience of positive emotions which allow people to feel themselves in new life conditions, acquire the experience of decision-making and more objective assessment of their habitual environment.

In this regard it is necessary to mention a joint Italian-Kazakhstan experience of creating a religious guidebook to the Republic of Kazakhstan. In 2011 "Kazakhstan guidebook. Sites of faith – sites of history" created by Italian experts was published. This guidebook is a unique work published in English and intended to everyone interested in religious tourism and history of religion in Kazakhstan on the whole. It contains a review of the most important sites of religious worship, monuments and temples of various religions on the territory of Kazakhstan, which were or are still places of belief and pilgrimage. The collection is part of a larger research project in the field of religious and social history of Kazakhstan called "Religion and society in Kazakhstan: institutes and religious customs in the formation of national culture". The project was developed in Italy in cooperation with Kazakhstan scientific and academic institutions and with the financial support of «Eni», an Italian company. The first huge volume within this project was called "Kazakhstan: Religion and society in the history of Central Asia". [3]

Today practice shows that successful development of religious tourism requires broad application of sociocultural planning which acts as innovative activity technology in socio-cultural environment which essence consists in finding reasons of the arisen problems, putting goals, tasks and ways for achievement of the desirable condition of object. The results of such technology are a program and a project.

The program acts as an open document defining on a certain territory the total sum of conditions, necessary for optimization of cultural life: processes of creation, preservation, transfer and development of cultural values, traditions. It includes models of material, technical, organizational, personnel and information support for realization of planned events and initiatives. The project in turn represents a certain program focused on overcoming or prevention of problems by means of substantial and structural changes both in sociocultural environment, and in the main spheres of personality activity, creation of conditions for a person's successful self-realization by means of optimization of his life-style. [4, p. 131]

It is not a secret that a dilemma arises in religious tourism between commercialization and spirituality creating a lot of problems. These problems can be solved by creating the grounds of trust and friendship between different cultures and civilizations, leveling disagreements between state institutions, religious faiths and businessmen. Religious tourism forms patience, tolerance and more adequate understanding of life, i.e. solves worldview and moral tasks. The cultural landscape where a religious monument is situated keeps traces of different historical and cultural eras. In this regard the mutual search by the state and the church of common goals and tasks in tourism development, formation of sociocultural standards of religious tourism and creation of joint projects for their achievement becomes the main principle.

A specific factor of socio-cultural planning of religious tourism becomes its integration into state cultural policy aimed at decreasing social tension in the country and support of cultural heritage. Project technology in the organization of tourist activity is based on the human factor of tourism development. Financial and economic factor is derivative of the attracted people interested in this sphere. This statement, according to leading experts, is based on the need of its subjects' participation in socio-cultural planning: scientists, practical experts, local population, investors, and officials. [4, p.134].

Unification of efforts of all subjects of planning within the common project is possible by forming an entire

image of the region or the district through the synthesis of really significant valuable characteristics of a place where the tourist route will be organized and features of perception of this place by absolutely various subjects of tourist activity.

Thus sociocultural planning in the sphere of religious tourism can be provided through a complex mechanism of negotiations, dialogue of ideas and concepts of representatives of religions and the state, experts both in tourism sphere and in culture, local community. And the result of this dialogue will be a reasonable compromise from which all participants of negotiation process will only benefit. As was noted by the head of our state N.A.Nazarbayev: "... the state and religious communities have two spheres of cooperation: sermon of peace, civil consent and culture revival" [5].

Thus, socio-cultural project of religious tourism development relies on the resources of interested intellectual, informational, financial, and other groups that have achieved a constructive and creative consensus, which means that in tourist activity not only indirect (at the level of consultation), but also direct involvement of all subjects in the organization of tourist route is possible.

An example of project technology application in tourism arrangement is a comprehensive study and restoration of the Great Silk Road as the "path of socio-cultural dialogue." In 1987, at the XXIV UNESCO session an International project for integrated study of the Silk Road was approved. Greece, Portugal, Egypt, Italy, China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Oman took part in it. Later two major programs were realized: "Man, environment, resources of land and sea" and "Culture and the future" project. In connection with the implementation of such a comprehensive study in 1991 "Silk Way" National Committee was established in Kazakhstan. In 2012 Kazakh section of the Silk Road was included in the "UNESCO World Heritage" project, more precisely, "Tian Shan segment", which runs through our country and unites China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. [6] On the track of the Great Silk Road there are dozens, hundreds of various religious monuments, a visit to which is provided by dozens of agencies and tour operators.

The Great Silk Road has served for centuries as a way for convergence of different nations, exchange of ideas and knowledge, mutual enrichment of cultures and languages, religions. Of course, political conflicts, wars also broke out at that time, but the Silk Road always revived. There was an ineradicable craving for communication, for a reasonable benefit and better well being, which constantly took precedence over political and religious confrontation.

That is why, when creating a model for future relations between the peoples and cooperation it is necessary to use such a powerful example. The history of the Silk Road is the history of a wide cultural and inter-religious cooperation, exchange and mutual enrichment between the peoples of the East and the West. Acting and developing routes of religious, educational and religious tourism along the routes of the Silk Road prove that only close cooperation and mutual enrichment of cultures, religions are the foundations of peace and progress for humanity.

On the Silk Road were cities Taraz, Otrar, Ispidzhab, Talkhir. Through it moved and spread religions such as Manichaeism, Nestorianism Tengriism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, which since the VIII century became the predominant and later on the major religion of the Kazakhs. On the banks of the Syr Darya in Turkestan at the end of the XIV-beginning of the XV centuries was built a religious and spiritual treasure of not only Kazakhs, but all the Turkic peoples – the historical complex of Haja Ahmed Yasawi. Every year tens of thousands of tourists and pilgrims come to it. For the former - it is a miraculously preserved masterpiece, which is more than six hundred years old, and for the latter - a resting place of the great saint.

That's why, it should be emphasized that for the purpose of competent perception of the rich heritage and the current state of many historical and religious sites in Kazakhstan a traveler must have a preliminary training and detailed information about the possibility of his participation in the life of the sacred places from different perspectives: from the side of religion and the side of culture history of the people.

In the era of social change, as we know, deviations from settled norms in society are strengthened, mechanisms of socialization are weakened, and even its contents become more uncertain. Interpersonal and intergroup interaction becomes contentious. And the contents of this interaction lies in assessment of normative orientation of participants in relation to each other as partners; common intentions relating to the purpose of the interaction, participants' expectations in relation to each other and to the results of interaction, especially organization of information exchange and mutual understanding.

Religious tourism has the potential to expand emotional experience based on image-spectacular and artistic information, disclose the possibility of personal affirmation, to enrich the informal social networks of participants of

a tourist route. To make a tourist during his journey experience a maximum of positive emotions, correctly perceive the information and develop new positive psychological and aesthetic experience, impressions, it is necessary to build a harmonious route like a "cultural text", meaningful and valuable for a particular tourist.

Hence, the organizers of religious tourism have to forecast the «script of perception" of a journey, to provide cultural and educational dialogue between members of the group, as well as satisfaction of individual preferences of each of them in enriching emotional and sensory experience. This can be achieved by initiating the interaction of tourists both among themselves, and with the surrounding cultural environment, organizing the process of consolidation of impressions. Thus, socio-cultural planning in religious tourism bases on isolating problems, finding their possible solutions.

Technology of socio-cultural planning in religious tourism provides:

Physical, mental and spiritual health. The latter implies the use of a creative approach to life, to the process of self-improvement, to religious and cultural practices;

The overall cultural competence of the person - inculturation, i.e. the process of development of the system of values, approaches to different phenomena and events, knowledge of morality and ethics, national and class traditions, customs, rituals, contemporary intellectual and aesthetic trends, political and cultural history of people, the main symbols of national pride, etc.;

Conscious formation of a constant need for self-fostering, self-education and self-development , which is implemented at three levels: humanism and cooperation, spiritual and moral life of society as the basis of culture of communication, culture of an individual;

Attraction to tourist activity of all interested subjects as partners: academicians, professionals from different fields, officials, investors, and local residents;

Building tolerance - as a factor reducing social tension. Acquaintance with the diversity of cultures and religions, their co-existence and cooperation extends comprehension of the world and man's place in it simplifies the process of self-identification and eliminates aggressive behavior.

Modern scientific researches discover cultural and religious monuments in a new way. Examples of this are the ancient Egyptian pyramids, dolmens in the Caucasus, complexes in Central and Latin America, and many other sites. The inclusion of these cultural sites in the objects of religious tourism involves a definite interpretation, preparation of tourists for their perception and especially the correct behavior when meeting with these objects and observing religious rituals made by local people.

Religious tourism attracts various groups of population; faiths who learn not only religious but also historical, cultural and artistic heritage of visited areas enrich themselves with new knowledge. Hence tours must designate a field of research interest for tourists and travelers who in the process of exploring monuments of different historical periods discover in them a religious particle and search for an explanation of its meaning. At the same time, during the search it is compulsory to respect other cultures, be tactful to its ancient and modern media, and perfectly understand the value of the objects of historical and cultural heritage for the present generation and preservation of them for descendants.

It is axiomatic that the spiritual and moral state of society, no less than the economic, financial sector, is reflected in the lifestyle of people in the country, the level of welfare. But any manifestation of social tension turns into a special state of public life, fraught with aggravation of internal contradictions and conflicts. Such manifestation is called a set of economic, political, social, ethnic, religious and other processes. It is often exacerbated by the impact of external and internal factors. Hence religious tourism is intended to promote process of combining the interests of religious organizations and the state in order to reduce social tension in the country when the spiritual and social factors of the civic health of the nation become the priority.

Thus, religious tourism has a strong socio-cultural potential and the socio-cultural need for religious tourism - is a value status of any person who feels the need in cultural, religious and recreational facilities necessary for his spiritual ideological and physical existence. That is why motivation in tourism depends on recreational needs and on the values that affect the perception of the world and the individual's behavior.

Socio-cultural potential of religious tourism - is the availability of opportunities to meet the social and cultural needs of people in tourist services. Such a potential of religious tourism can be classified by such features as national identity; purpose of the trip; vehicles used on the route, modes of transportation, accommodation facilities

for tourists, journey time, duration of the trip, group composition, organizational forms and the principles of price formation for the product and, of course, the tourist product itself. [7]

Religious tourism possesses such a significant socio-cultural characteristic as social practice changing the person and positioning him in the social space. This, in turn, is implemented in socializing, communicative, cognitive, recreational, media, advertising functions, in the function of formation and satisfaction of tourist needs. The functioning mechanism of the phenomenon of religious tourism determines the impact of tourist activity on the level of the inner world of human, interpersonal relations, society, focusing most significant transformations of the contemporary socio-cultural situation, resulting in the tourist experience becoming socially significant.

Let us define socio-cultural functions of religious tourism, which are closely linked to the cultural development of society as a whole, evaluative priorities and guidelines of this society:

Understanding and approval of the co-existence of cultures in personal experience, which implies, in turn, the willingness for cooperation, mutual enrichment, commitment to pluralism, not uniformity.

Interpenetration of national forms of human culture is largely due to socio-cultural information exchange between tourists and travelers in terms of religious tourism

International religious tourism shows that today tourism is transformed into a powerful industry and becomes a part of globalization. But in turn, not all countries have such a social and economic potential to create and maintain the infrastructure of tourism. And this leads to a kind of communication inequality while globalization challenges the inherent right of a human - "right to his own culture."

Conclusion

It should be noted that religious-tourist potential of our country today is not used to its full degree, and the creation of conditions for high-quality religious tourism in Kazakhstan for our compatriots and foreign citizens requires a more active public policy in the entire field of tourism. And tourism revenues at achieving high volumes can become a crucial budget factor and make tourism a more profitable economic activity than, for example, traditional export of oil or gas.

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