



## ISSUES OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND MIGRATION IN THE SOUTHERN LANDS OF CENTRAL ASIA IN ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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### Annotation

This article discusses the issues of religious beliefs and migration in the southern countries of Central Asia in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, as well as the historical roots, foundations and factors of these processes. The issues of religious beliefs and migration in the southern countries of Central Asia in antiquity and the early Middle Ages, as well as the relevance and reasons for studying the contribution of these processes to the development of the civilization of Uzbekistan on a scientific basis are discussed.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, monism.

Today, when the processes of globalization are accelerating on an international scale, the harmonization of Far East and European civilizations, the realization of the identity of peoples living in different territories and believing in different religions, the deepening of mutual relations in the international arena, and the desire to preserve cultural heritage and local cultures are becoming more urgent issues. In particular, issues of ethno-cultural relations of people living in different regions of the world, local cultures and the influence of migration processes on ethno-cultural relations are of great importance in historiography. In recent years, great attention has been paid to revealing the scientific and comparative aspects of many different ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, religious and political processes that took place in the territories of our republic. "In the process of building a new society, it is very important to study and use the rich cultural and creative traditions of our people."

According to its natural geographical location, Central Asia, in particular, its southern regions, on the one hand, is close to the ancient cultural centers of India and Iran, and on the other hand, to the major cultural centers of the region, such as Marv (Khurasan), Eastern Turkestan (Khutan, Koshghar, etc.) neighbors and had continuous ethnocultural contacts with them. Especially among these regions, the role of religious beliefs in recent migration processes has been fragmented.

As shown by the leading position of the migration of religious views and beliefs in the





processes of historical and cultural development of the peoples of Central Asia in ancient times, these processes continued intensively in the ancient and early Middle Ages. It is widely recognized in the science of history that culture, art, language, writing, customs and traditions entered the regions as a result of migrations for various reasons, assimilation took place. One of the unique features of the history of the peoples of Central Asia is that in ancient times, the composition of the local population changed little not only due to internal growth, but also due to external migrations. According to the evidence of archaeological data, migration processes are especially intensified when it comes to the Eneolithic and Bronze Age. During this period, a large settlement of ancient farmers near Kopetdog, the foothills of the Murgob River, Northern Afghanistan and the oases of Surkhan and Zarafshan are recorded. In the second half of the 2nd millennium BC, the herding population began to move rapidly from the steppes of Uralbuyi, Central Kazakhstan and Far Siberia to Central Asia. This was one of the early stages of the region's earliest history of tribal migrations, processes of assimilation (mixing) between tribes of different economic and cultural backgrounds, and long-lasting mutual cultural cooperation. In such conditions, the criteria of religious and secular tolerance will develop on new grounds. The main environmental causes of ancient migrations were influenced by economic, social and political processes. Political processes in Central Asia during this period were associated with numerous wars arising from external invasions and internal conflicts. Starting from the Eurasian steppes, "great invasions" took place between the Amudarya and Syrdarya and Khurasan, i.e., the southern regions of Central Asia. It is from this period that complex processes take place in the socio-economic life of the peoples of Central Asia. In the formation of a specific culture that flourished in later periods, the interactions of the peoples of Central Asia with China, Iran, India, and Byzantium during the early Middle Ages and migration processes were of great importance. The role of religious relations in migration processes has always been partial. In the early Middle Ages, the religious views in Central Asia were in a complicated state. According to researches, during this period, four major religions - Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Monism - tried to promote Uz religion. At the same time, as will be seen a little later, in this period, especially during the period of the Turkic khanate, the belief typical of the ancient Turks began to spread in the region - the belief in God. Among the religions that existed in Sughd and Tokhariston in the early Middle Ages, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism certainly took the lead, among which the latter became more and more widespread. Although no evidence has been found in archaeological materials today, there are written records that confirm the influence of Buddhism in Sughd in the early Middle Ages. For





example, in the "Tan-shu" chronicle, related to the religious beliefs of the Samarkand rulership, "They follow the law of Buddhism. They appeal to the evil spirit of the land. [ they make machines with a high level of craftsmanship. In the eleventh month, they [play] the bells and [dance] and apply the cold [sent] from God, and periodically sprinkle each other with water." During this period, Zoroastrianism was the oldest among the religions widespread in Central Asia, and had spread to almost all regions of Central Asia until other religions entered. By the IV-V centuries, the dominance of this religion was preserved in the central and northern regions of Central Asia. For example, during the excavation of the ruins of the ancient city of Erkgurgan in Kashkadarya (Southern Sughd), a complex consisting of two temples - Eastern and Farbiy - was unearthed. These Zoroastrian temples consisted of a large courtyard, a large prayer room, and a hearth (altar) with a constant fire burning. During the excavations of the temples, many objects related to religious beliefs were found and studied in the central and northern regions of Central Asia. Buddhism spread mainly to the southern regions of the region. During the early Middle Ages, the Buddhist centers of Termiz, Karatepa and Fayoztepa, and the Ushturmullo monastery located on the banks of the Amudarya River, were destroyed and abandoned. According to the researchers, this situation is first connected with the invasion actions of the Iranian Sassanids, and later with the policies carried out by the Ephthalites.

As for the issue of Christianity, this religion began to enter Central Asia much earlier. Some researchers associate this situation with the persecution of Christians in Sassanid Iran and their migration to the East. The center of Christians in the region of Central Asia was the city of Marv. In particular, a Christian temple was found in the Gyaur fortress, and a Christian cemetery was found in the ancient Marv. There are many reports that this religion was widespread in the oasis of Marv. In addition to the coins that testify to the spread of Christianity, a lot of material culture items have been found in various archaeological monuments of Central Asia. These are the bronze amulet found in Koktepa (Gukdepe) in southern Turkmenistan, circular earrings, khum handle, lamp from Urgut monuments, "Holy Min ampoule" (small, two-handled container) from Samarkand, ceramic tile from Osh, bronze cross from Afrosiyab, items from Christian tombs of Panjikent. including There are also some written records about the migration of Christianity to Central Asia. For example, a pottery shard found in Panjikent dates back to the middle of the 8th century. A fragment of the Syriac version of the Bible is written on this piece of pottery. Such Syriac inscriptions with a Christian content were found in many monuments in the Urgut region. But there are reports that many of them are very difficult to read due to poor preservation. Monism was another widespread religion in Central Asia during





Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. As with other religions, the spread of this religion is connected with migration processes and ethno-cultural relations. According to the information, the Monites left a significant mark not only in the history and culture of Central Asia, but also in the history of the peoples connecting the entire Great Silk Road. Propagators of this religion started their migration routes from the cities of Iran and ended in the deserts and steppes of Central Asia. According to researches, Monis created many literatures of a religious nature promoting their religion. The spread of Moni's teachings naturally caused resentment among the ruling classes and Zoroastrian priests in Iran. That is why Moni was thrown into a dungeon and executed during the reign of Waran Khan I (273-276), a Sasanian branch of the III century. The adherents of Monism are persecuted and most of them move to the regions of Central Asia.

In conclusion, it should be noted that as a result of migrations, displacements and certain political processes, religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Godism, and Monism, which entered the ancient cities and regions of Central Asia, have influenced the development of architecture, material and spiritual culture, visual and practical art of these areas for several centuries. acquired special significance.

In short, sources written in different languages (ancient Persian, Syriac, Sugdian, Chinese) testify that representatives of peoples from different countries lived side by side with the local population in the ancient centers of Eastern civilizations. From the data, it can be concluded that the traditions, customs, language and rituals of the ancient peoples did not prevent different kinds of communication. Peoples of different origins respect each other's religion and beliefs. There were no racial and religious obstacles to adapt to the social and economic conditions of the new territorial and cultural conditions. Because ancient religions did not have a dogmatic nature.

Religious tolerance has been developing in Central Asia since ancient times, and this process continued even in antiquity and early prehistoric times. The Great Silk Road and its networks served not only trade and economic relations, but also cultural communication. Through this, various religions, philosophical views, embassy missions, spiritual values, examples of writing and visual art have spread. In today's period of independence, which creates wide opportunities and conditions for scientific research, many studies of various sizes on the history and culture of the southern regions of Central Asia have been published. In particular, the introduction of ancient and medieval written sources into scientific circulation, information on historical geography, results of archaeological research, coin science (numismatic) data, linguistics and ethnographic data are among them, among which there are many studies related to the processes of religious migration.







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