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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

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