

PERSPECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM FOR BUDDHIST REPRESENTATIVES IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

(on the example of the Surkhandarya region)

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ABSTRACT--The article deals with detail the prospects for the development of pilgrimage tourism for believing Buddhists in the Surkhandarya region, as well as the effective use of the tourist potential of Buddhist shrines.

Keywords-- religion, Buddhism, temples, tourist sites, memory tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Different religions spread around the world, which is further divided into ethnic, tribal, national, and world religions according to ethnicity [1]. Tribal religions are religions based on totemic, animistic representations of their ancestors, witchcraft, or tribal leaders. They are embedded in national and world religions and are currently preserved in some tribes in Australia, South America and Africa. In some parts of the world, national religions are usually practiced as a local religion within a single state. These include Hinduism in India, Confucianism in China, Shintoism in Japan, Judaism in Israel and many others. World religions include Buddhist, Christian and Islamic religions, which are the most widespread in the world and play an important role in its political and social life. Buddhism is a common religion. This is the oldest of the world religions.

According to researcher B.A. Litvinsky, Buddhism began to spread to Bactria (southern regions of Uzbekistan) in the third century BC through northwestern India and southern Afghanistan (Kandahar) [2]. In this regard, M.E. Masson [3] proposes that this faith be brought to Taharistan in the Balkans and that the Buddhist religion became the dominant religion during the Kushan period.

There is another idea of the emergence and spread of Buddhism in Bactria. Researcher R.Ch. Bacci believes that this process occurred during the reign of King Ashoka (273-232 BC). However, archaeological material is insufficient to confirm this statement. Thus, the idea that Buddhism entered this region during the Kushan period is closer to the truth.

In particular, B.Ya. Stavinsky proves this by saying that the Kushan government has close ties with sponsors of Indian provinces and Buddhist communities. However, there is also evidence that the Bactrians were familiar with Buddhism before Kanishka.

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According to historian E. Zurcher [4], Buddhism also penetrated the Far East as a result of the unification of northern India and Central Asia under the rule of the Kushan empire. It later spread to Eastern Turkestan, China.

In the V-VIII centuries Buddhist monks and worshipers of India followed two paths. The first is the Bay of Bengal through the South China Sea. The second - northern route runs through Afghanistan and Pakistan along the Great Silk Road [5]. Wisdom from the north of India brought Buddhist beliefs here, and support for the later classes played an important role in spreading it. Termez, located at the crossroads of the northern route, was the Buddhist center of Central Asia at that time and a transit center on the Great Silk Road [6].

For thousands of years, the Great Silk Road has been the largest land-based major highway in the world and has crossed into Europe through China and Central Asia. It is in this part of the world that cultures and lifestyles are interconnected between the nomadic tribes and the oldest cities in the world. It was a crossroads of religions influenced by Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims [7].

A.Yu. Aleksandrova emphasizes that there are 11 macro pilgrimage areas in the world, and each macro-region is known for its pilgrimage centers around the world. One of these is the Islamic-dominated region of Central Asia with together Buddhism [8].

II. THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK

The aim of this work is to study the historical formation of Buddhist tourist sites in the Surkhandarya region, to research religious tourism, including Buddhist tourist places, to use Buddhist tourist facilities and to make proposals for developing Buddhist tourism. The following tasks have been identified in view of the purpose: to study and analysis of Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the Surkhandarya region

III. THE MAIN PART

A number of measures are being taken in the country to develop tourism and its tourism sector, including eco, agro, historical, religious, extreme, shops, and to improve their specialization and territorial structure. [13,16]. There are many Buddhist monuments in the Surkhandarya region which is in the south of Uzbekistan [19]. Surkhandarya region borders on Afghanistan from the south through the Amudarya (Ox), Turkmenistan from the south-west, Tajikistan from the north-east and east. The population is estimated at 2, 569, 904 (2019 data). In the Surkhandarya region, there are 4 tourism destinations. One of them is pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrimage sites include Buddhist pilgrimages: Fayoztepa (Figure 4), Karatepa, Zurmala Tower, Dalvarzintepa and other facilities [15].

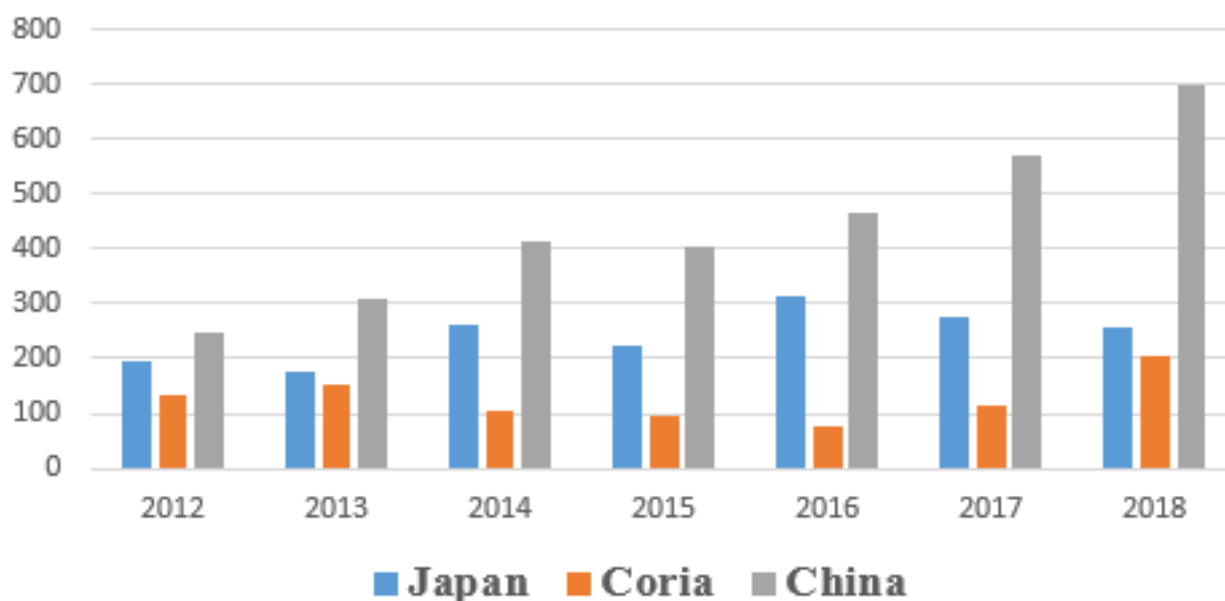


Figure 1: Visit of tourists from East Asian countries to Surkhandarya region in 2012-2018

Fayoztepa - the site of Buddhist temples of the first century BC, found in the Buddhist center, is of special interest to travelers. Karatepa which is a complex of Buddhist cave temples of I-III centuries BC may also be included in these types of sites. It is located in the northeast of Old Termez. Originally it was opened in 1926-28 by the expedition of the State Museum of Oriental Culture in Moscow; Dalvarzintepa (on the territory of Shurchi district), Ayritom (in Termez city), Zurmala tower (in the territory of the old Termez) are unique and antiquity in the direction of Buddhism in the Republic of Uzbekistan [17].

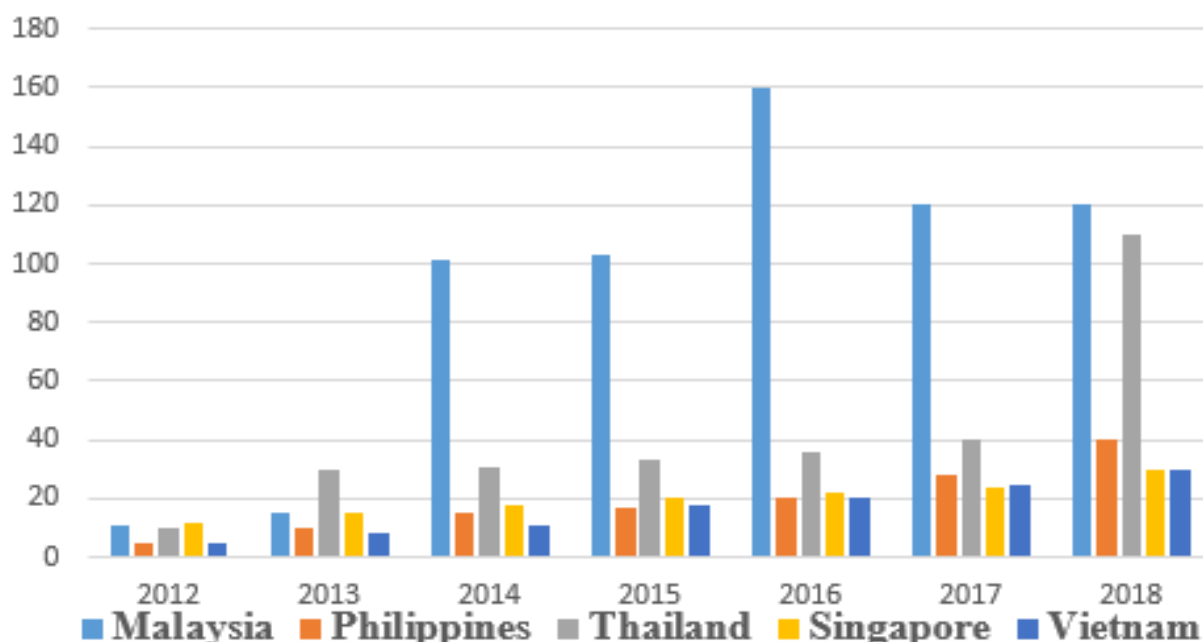


Figure 2: Visit of tourists from Southeast Asian countries to the Surkhandarya region in 2012-2018

At present days the population of states of East Asia - Japan, Korea, China (Fig. 1), Southeast Asia - Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam (Figure 2), and Southeast Asia, including Malaysia and India are raising their interest in visiting this area which is one of the ancient centers of Buddhist religion. Travelers visit and remember places of worship, such as temples and monasteries, where their religion is the center of Buddhism. There is a direct connection between memory and place. Remembrance can be called by different names, such as historical memory, social memory, cultural memory [4].

The historical commemoration is called the day of the death of the Buddha, and various memories are known as the remembrance of the country's heroes. It should be stressed out that these tourists not only visit the Buddhist temples but also visit other sights [18].

In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan, UNESCO, and the Japanese Trust Fund, a project on preservation and restoration of the ruins of the Fayoztepa Buddhist Monument has been implemented and is under state protection.



Figure 4: Fayaz-tepa. Temple of Buddhism. This photo was taken by the author

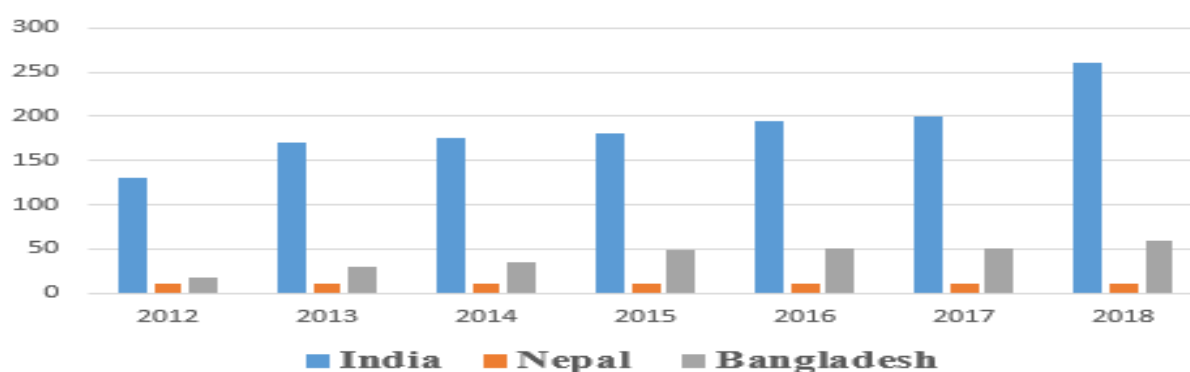


Figure 3: Visit of tourists from South Asian countries to the Surkhandarya region in 2012-2018

Due to the interest of Eastern and South-East Asian countries, the archaeological monuments of Buddhist religion are planned to implement several projects. For example, the Kudzo Kato Memorial Complex, a Buddhist Museum and Center in Termez, and a Japanese professor and the Japanese Kudzo Association project on the

project of building a modern park and hotel, and the Eurasian Friendship Club plan to create this complex is under development.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Kwon Yong-U visited the Surkhandarya region, got acquainted with the infrastructure which is being done in the region and learned about the development of the tourism industry. In particular, he got acquainted with the concept of tourist policing and the concept of safe tourism, which has been successfully implemented in several tourism centers of the country.

In this regard, from March 2, 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea annulled the decision to include the territories that are bordered with Termez and Afghanistan with a special list of territories for the citizens of Korea. This will enable thousands of Koreans to travel to Uzbekistan and will help boost cooperation with the country in economic, tourism and cultural fields.

We believe that Buddhist temples in Termez are both a pilgrimage and a memorial tourism destination for tourists from Eastern and Southeast Asian countries. That is why the number of tourists from Eastern and Southeast Asia has been increasing for years.

In Southeast Asia, tourism has great importance in Oceania's gross domestic product, while local and international tourism in coastal areas is well developed [14]. That is why it is possible to arrange tourist exchanges with East Asian countries.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of pilgrimage tourism is important for the Buddhist community in the Surkhandarya region.

The lack of targeted tourist routes related to Buddhism and the lack of tourist facilities at the service points especially for buddhists somewhat limit the effective use of Buddhist pilgrimage tourism development potential in the Surkhandarya region. Therefore, the creation of landscapes, gardens, and alleys in the monuments associated with Buddhist history will increase their tourist interest.

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