



THE HOLY PLACE OF OUR PEOPLE – KHOJAIGOR TEMPLE

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
The article talks about the shrine in the Northern Surkhan oasis, in particular, in the village of Taytavo in the Sariosi region.	Surkhandarya region, Taytavo village, Khojaigor, pilgrimage, shrine, belt, cave, saint, chillkhana.

Introduction

In our country, a number of works are being carried out to protect and preserve cultural heritage sites and transfer them to future generations. Regulatory documents are being adopted to ensure continuity of practical work in this area. The history of each of our cultural heritage is carefully studied.



The pilgrimage site of Khojaigor is a place of pilgrimage in the Sariosiysky district of the Surkhandarya region, located in the historical village of Taitavo, 20-25 km from the district center.¹ Khojaigor has become one of the holy places of pilgrimage of our people for several centuries. The shrine consists of a cemetery and its surroundings, protected by additional stones, trees and gray earth. On the outskirts of the cemetery there is a medium-sized grave, next to it is a very old pistachio tree and a large stone. There is a flat area around the Kharsang stone where pilgrims can sit and rest, and some structures (cauldron, oven and hakoza) are made for those who come from afar to cook their own food.²

On the west side of the cemetery is a high rocky mountain. The shrine has a length of 25-30 meters, a width of 5-6 meters and a crescent-shaped belt 6-7 meters long at an altitude of 400 meters of the mountain. The same amount of clear water drips from the vaulted ceiling in winter and summer. The sunbula plant grows by obtaining nutrients from this water. Pilgrims with good intentions drink this water and take it home.³



Until now, no specific information about the Khojaigor sanctuary has been found in historical sources. But there are many legends among the people. One of them is that after the time of the fourth caliph Ali ibn Abu Talib, there was a conflict in the caliphate and a split in Islam, and these were Shiites and Sunnis. After the Shiites came to power, many companions, subjects and tabaotobins came to the territory of Central Asia. Not all of them came during this period. Some came earlier, some later, or for other reasons.⁴ That is why there are many graves and shrines of saints in Central Asia. Of course, it was not easy for all these saints to settle and live in Central Asia. At that time, among the population of Central Asia, especially in the territory of modern Uzbekistan, there were those who did not accept Islam. Those who have not converted to Islam have been resisting Muslims for some

¹ Notes in the margins. Taytavo village, Sariosiysky district, 2023

² Notes in the margins. Taytavo village, Sariosiysky district, 2023

³ Notes in the margins. Taytavo village, Sariosiysky district, 2023

⁴ Nematulla Khokorov. Gazaragim-Gavkharim.-T.: Publishing House of the National Library of Uzbekistan named after Alisher Navoi-2008. P. 65.

time. During these resistances, many saints took refuge in mountains or caves and, in most cases, settled in these places.



The stories about the Khojaigor sanctuary are similar. In the book “Gazaragim-Gavkharim” by Nematulla Khoksari the following is mentioned: “Khojaigor Astana, located on the slope of a mountain in the north-west of Gazarak, has become one of the holy places of pilgrimage of our people for several centuries. . According to legend, one of the great lords, who fought an unparalleled battle against the infidels, met with countless enemies and ended up on this hill. All the soldiers under his command will die a martyr's death in this battle. To capture Khoja, who was left alone, the enemy people began to press from three sides. There is no way out of the blockade. Enemies are everywhere. In the foreground is a towering mountain with steep cliffs. In desperation, the Khojas take off their shoes and begin to climb the mountain barefoot. Along the way, they roll rocks and kill some of the enemies that come out from behind them. With so much effort, they cover almost two-thirds of the mountain. At this moment, a large belt will appear in front of them. They rest for a while in the cool air of the belt and quench their thirst with icy water dripping from the ceiling. And the enemies were approaching the belt. Khoja gets out of the belt and begins to rise again. It becomes increasingly difficult to get out of the rocks. Realizing that there was no way to escape from the persecution of the infidels, Khoja entered the cave that God had left before them and disappeared. Since then, the large belt on this mountain has become a place of pilgrimage under the name Khojaigor Astana.⁵

In addition, the above-mentioned book also describes the events that took place in the middle of the last century, about the cave into which Khoja entered and disappeared, which today is called Chillakhona⁶ of the Khojaigora sanctuary. I want to tell you another wonderful story about the Chillahana cave. 40-45 years ago, hunter Saidmurad, who was hunting partridges, wanted to cut down

⁵ Nematulla Khoksorov. Gazaragim-Gavkharim.-T.: Publishing House of the National Library of Uzbekistan named after Alisher Navoi-2008. P. 65.

⁶ *Chillakhana - a place to stay alone, do zikr, recite the rosary, pray.

one of the thick maples growing at the entrance to the Chillahana cave and make a stick out of it. As soon as he hits the tree trunk with the large knife in his hand, countless mosquitoes (mosquitoes) fly out of the cave and begin to sting the hunter's hands and face. In one breath, his face and hands were covered in blood and swollen. The hunter, who managed to escape from the mosquitoes, goes down to the shrine under his belt, washes his face and hands with consecrated water with repentance and tazarra and gets rid of the mosquito poison. Having repented of his sin, he would no longer hunt in these places. According to the elders, those seven maples at the entrance to the cave have been growing in the same position for many years, neither thick nor thin. There are many similar stories associated with this shrine. For centuries, this shrine was considered and visited as one of the holy places of our people.



References

1. Notes in the margins. Chilanzor district of Sariosi region. Information from Khoksorov Nematulla, 2023.
2. Notes in the margins. Taytavo village, Sariosiysky district, 2023.
3. Nematulla Khoksorov. Gazaragim-gavkharim.-T.: Publishing house of the National Library of Uzbekistan named after Alisher Navoi-2008.