



International Conference on Educational Discoveries and Humanities

Hosted online from Moscow, Russia

Website: econfseries.com

16th November, 2025

THE CHURCH OF SAINT ALEXANDER NEVSKY IN TERMIZ: AN EXEMPLARY OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the historical formation of the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Termez, its architectural features and its significance as a symbol of religious tolerance. It also discusses issues related to the state policy of ensuring freedom of conscience and interfaith harmony in Uzbekistan during the period of independence.

Keywords: Church of Alexander Nevsky, Termez, Orthodoxy, tolerance, freedom of conscience, religious harmony.

Аннотация:

В статье анализируется историческое становление церкви Святого Александра Невского в Термезе, её архитектурные особенности и значение как символа религиозной толерантности. Также рассматриваются вопросы, связанные с государственной политикой обеспечения свободы совести и межконфессионального согласия в Узбекистане в период независимости.

Ключевые слова: церковь Александра Невского, Терmez, православие, толерантность, свобода совести, религиозное согласие.

(Introduction)

As a multinational and multi-confessional society, Uzbekistan has long been a place of harmonious coexistence of different religions and cultures. One of them is the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky, located in the city of Termez, the center of Surkhandarya region, which is not only a religious structure, but also a symbol of interethnic harmony and tolerance.



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By studying the history of the church, one can understand the specific features of the Russian Orthodox religious heritage in Uzbekistan and the process of their integration with local culture.

Materials and methods

This article uses historical-analytical, comparative and cultural-anthropological approaches. The stages of the formation of the church were studied based on archival data, historical sources and modern documents.

The sources used in the study are diverse in content and form, and they play an important role in illuminating different stages of church history. First of all, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "Vijdon erkinligi va diniy tashkilotlar to‘g‘risida" (May 1, 1998) guaranteed freedom of religious belief in the country on a legal basis and was an important factor in the restoration of the Alexander Nevsky Church. This document formed the normative and legal foundation of the study.

The "Declaration of Principles of Tolerance" (2004) adopted by UNESCO made it possible to link the activities of the church with the ideas of global religious and cultural tolerance.

Also, M.A. Yusupova's study "Православные церкви Термеза" (1998) is of particular importance as a historical source, which scientifically illuminates the process of formation of Orthodox religious life in Termez in the 19th-20th centuries. The "Report of the Representative of the Committee on Religious Affairs", which is currently stored in the archives of the Surkhandarya regional administration, is important as a primary document confirming information related to the restoration of church activities and official re-registration in the post-independence period.

Results

The Church of St. Alexander Nevsky was built in 1901 according to the military church project developed by architects Fyodor Verzhbitsky and Fyodor Smirnov. The building was made of baked brick, and the interior was decorated with a size of 24x16 meters. Initially, the church belonged to the 9th Turkestan Regiment and was named after St. Alexei.



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Since 1910, it has been renamed in honor of St. Alexander Nevsky. After 1927, the church was closed and used for various purposes - an armory, a military hospital, and later as a gym.

In 1990, the church was reopened, and on August 14, 1998 it was re-registered with the Department of Justice under the name “Kazanskaya ikona Bozhiyey materi”. In the early 2000s, the altar dome was restored, and restoration work is currently underway.

Discussion

Along with its historical significance, the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky occupies an important place as a practical manifestation of religious tolerance in Uzbek society.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”, adopted on May 1, 1998, guarantees every citizen the right to freely choose his or her faith, to practice it or not. This law has practically laid the foundation for the revival of church activity.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev’s “Strategy of the New Uzbekistan” also identifies strengthening interethnic harmony and interconfessional solidarity as an important factor in the country’s spiritual development.

The Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Termez has become a living expression of this policy, and despite the fact that the majority of the population of the oasis is Muslim, conditions for worship have been created for the Christian population. This is clear evidence of the effectiveness of the policy of religious tolerance in Uzbekistan.

Conclusion

The Church of St. Alexander Nevsky is an important historical monument in Surkhandarya region, representing intercultural dialogue and tolerance. Its restoration and continued operation are a practical result of the policy of freedom of conscience pursued in the Republic of Uzbekistan.



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Also, this church has a special scientific, cultural and spiritual significance as a successful example of the policy pursued in the context of New Uzbekistan to preserve cultural heritage, strengthen religious tolerance and ensure peace.

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