

## PREFACE

Sacred places, which we call “mazars” in this volume, play an important role in the intricate system of religion in former Soviet Central Asia and Xinjiang (Chinese Central Asia). Most of them are the mausoleums of Islamic saints, in which various people are believed to have been buried: Islamic saints and leaders of Islamic mysticism, whose activities in Central Asia have been verified as historical facts; saints and prophets who belong to central Muslim traditions; legendary saints whose existence is questionable; kings and leaders who were active during the Islamization period; and anonymous saints. There are numerous mazars all over Central Asia, characterized by a wide variation of size and structure.

A pilgrimage to a mazar is normally motivated by pleas for intercession (relating to a variety of other-worldly and empirical concerns) from the religious personage buried in the shrine and is therefore closely related to Sufism. Some of the mazars are associated with forms of religious belief and conduct that would appear to precede Islam (e.g. belief in sacred natural objects such as caves, rocks, trees, and springs)

In addition to these religious dimensions, some mazars have political significance; for example, during the Muslim rebellion that began in 1864 in Xinjiang: religious leaders who managed the mazar of Mawlana Arshiddin and called themselves descendants of the Islamic saints buried there seized political power at Kucha.<sup>1</sup> Since notable mazars attract pilgrims from a wide range of areas, these religious sites have also served as the locus of trans-regional religious networks that have also fostered trade and socio-cultural relations. Research into mazars therefore yields important insights into the empirical social conditions of Central Asia.

However, despite the importance of the mazars, many aspects have yet to be researched in Central Asia. There exists some research on the mazars in Xinjiang—articles that have examined the historical development of each mazar and field research reports focusing on Kashgar and Turfan. Field research in the Fergana Valley in recent years has also provided important data on related areas. However, we not only lack basic data concerning individual mazars but also face difficulties with regard to the organization of academic knowledge we have accumulated thus far. We are still at the stage of finding an appropriate

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<sup>1</sup> Hamada, Masami 1978, “Islamic Saints and Their Mausoleums,” *Acta Asiatica*, 34, pp. 92–94.

methodology to examine mazars in a comprehensive way. In particular, we need to pay attention to the interdisciplinary approach.

Consequently, the purpose of this volume is to integrate the cogent results of recent historical and anthropological research conducted by experts around the world—China, France, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan—on mazars in the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, and to offer new perspectives for future research on the mazars in Central Asia, using the accumulated and organized interdisciplinary knowledge and information concerning mazars.

Taking account of recent trends in scholarship on mazars—particularly the comprehensive utilization of a variety of data regarding mazars, such as literary manuscripts, written documents, and interviews conducted during field research—the volume is divided into the following four parts: Part One: Classification, Part Two: Sources and literature, Part Three: Case studies, Prophets, Imams, and Sufis, and Part Four: Mazar Ritual Activities and Gender.

Since the people believed to have been buried at or associated with the mazars in Central Asia and Xinjiang are principally Islamic saints but belong to various categories, it is important to investigate the problem of how mazars should be classified. In Part One, two articles deal with the classification of mazars on the basis of field research and the study of Islamic history. SAWADA Minoru, on the basis of the results of the recent field-work around the Ferghana Valley, classifies mazars into five categories according to the historical “saints,” most of whom are believed to have been buried there. On the other hand, Ashirbek MUMINOV examines the features of mazars in Central Asia from different perspectives: the various saints who are believed to have been buried in the mazars, the legends, positions of custodians, and rituals related to the mazars.

A trend that is gaining momentum in recent studies on mazars attempts to carry out in-depth investigation into the historical background by referring to hagiographies and other literary works that were not used in previous studies, as well as by gathering and researching the documents preserved in private archives. In Part Two, two articles clarify the historical circumstances concerning mazars in Xinjiang and the Ferghana Valley using such sources. Alexandre PAPAS, on the basis of the descriptions in his hagiographies, examines Āfāq Khwāja’s attitudes toward mazars, which aimed to establish the united land of the Altī-shahr region “under the sufi banner” by promoting cults of mazars. KAWAHARA Yayoi investigates the historical context of Qutayba ibn Muslim’s mausoleum in the Andijan district in Khoqand Khanate’s period by analyzing the documents preserved by the descendants of the custodians.

Some mazars have been the focus of research on the basis of their distinctive historical background and socio-cultural significance. Recently, there have been several studies on the characteristics of individual mazars, and these have mainly relied on field research and new historical sources. In Part Three, the distinctive aspects of three mazars in the Ferghana Valley are presented. Thierry ZARCONÉ argues that Takht-i Sulaymān in Osh, which is believed to be a *qadam-jāy* and a field where interactions between *jins* and people took place, can be considered as

an atypical mausoleum. Sergei ABASHIN highlights the significance of mazars such as the Boboi-ob which can be regarded as a “mountain mazar” with few Islamic features. SHINMEN Yasushi and KAWAHARA Yayoi shed light on the activities of Buzurg Khān Tora, one of the Afaqi Makhdumzadas who advanced into the Kashgar region in the late nineteenth century and the condition of his mazar at Katta Kenagas.

In Part Four, three articles provide important insights into ritual activities that are undertaken at mazars on the basis of fieldwork research. WANG Jianxin has explained the condition of the major mazars in the Turfan basin in detail by using ethnographic data collected during his fieldwork, and aims to offer an interpretive understanding of the sociological consequences of mazar worship. Nadirbek ABDULAHATOV deals with mazars named after women in the Ferghana Valley and presents ethnographic data on mazar worship by women. Rahilā DAWUT investigates gender and ritual activity at the major mazars in Xinjiang and points out that mazars play an important role in the quotidian religious life of Uyghur women.

The articles in this volume provide a sample of some of the key findings that have emerged from recent scholarship on mazars. On the basis of these results, we attempt to broaden the scope of our research and conduct a comparative study of the beliefs of Islamic saints and their tombs in other parts of the world where Muslims reside. Such a study will facilitate the analysis of the regional features of mazars in Central Asia.

This volume is based on the International Conference on Mazars in Ferghana and Xinjiang, held in Tokyo on November 26 and 27, 2005. The conference was organized by SAWADA Minoru, SHINMEN Yasushi, SUGAWARA Jun, and KAWAHARA Yayoi and conducted with the financial support of four projects: “Investigative Study regarding Transformations in Uighur Communities and Ethnic Identities in Central Asia,” supported by a JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (research category “A”); “Study on Islamic Sacred Places in Central Asia,” sponsored by The Nara International Foundation commemorating the Silk Road Exposition; “Preservation, Compilation, and Annotation of Mazar Documents in Ferghana and Xinjiang,” sponsored by the Toyota Foundation; “Online Resources for Inner Asian Studies (ORIAS),” a subproject of Grammatological Informatics based on Corpora of Asian Scripts (GICAS), Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Although the articles are based on the papers presented in the conference, this volume is not simply a collection of the proceedings of the conference, but an edited version of the articles presented.

During the process of editing this volume, we received a considerable amount of assistance from the authors and other scholars. In particular, we would like to express our deep appreciation to Professor Thierry ZARCONÉ who suggested the idea of the publication of this volume, and put great efforts into its realization. In the actual process of editing, the work of unifying the style was undertaken with the assistance of Mr. MORIWA Noritaka and Dr. KAWAHARA Yayoi. We

would like to express our thanks to them. We also wish to express our gratitude to Professors KIM Hodong, HAMADA Masami, KOMATSU Hisao, OTOSHI Tetsuya, TONAGA Yasushi, UMEMURA Hiroshi, and YOSHIDA Setsuko for participating in the International Conference on Mazars in Ferghana and Xinjiang as the discussants and chair persons.

The publication of this volume has been seriously delayed. We would like to apologize to the authors who submitted their papers earlier.

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