

Holy Places in Kazakhstan

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KEYWORDS Cults. Folk Islam. Kazakhs. Traditional Religion

ABSTRACT The Kazakh people maintained the religious rites of their ancestors for a long time. Ancient beliefs and various cults formed the basis for tengrianism and shamanism. The cult for ritual worship of ancestral spirits (the cult of saints) was equally important. Respect for the dead brought about systematic and regular visits to a pilgrimage and to the burial site. These places are named Holy Places. The goal of this paper is to research the role of holy places in the revival of Folk Islam in Kazakhstan. Usually, the Kazakhs go to the graves of their ancestors every year because this trip is of benefit to the participants' ancestors, which can help their descendants. The symbiosis formed from two traditions, the cult of the ancestors of the nomads plus the Sufi tradition of honoring teachers in Kazakhstan. Thus, a trip to the Saint Places implies a revival of the Folk Islam of Kazakhs.