Contents

Preface
Chika OBIYA (Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University, Japan) 4

Introduction
Chika OBIYA 5

Articles

“The Politics of the Veil” in the Context of Uzbekistan
Chika OBIYA 7

“PARADISE AT THE FEET OF MOTHERS AND WOMEN”: Soviet and Post-Soviet Discourses of Muslim Women’s Emancipation
Bakhtiyar M. BABADJANOV (Center for the Study of Oriental Manuscripts, State Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan) 19

Women, Marriage, and the Market Economy in Rural Uzbekistan: Cases from a Pastoral Area of Kashkadarya Province
Fumoto SONO (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) 40

Jahri Zikr as Practiced by Women in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: The Survival of a Sufi Traditional Ritual through the Soviet Period and Its Uncertain Future
Seika WAZAKI (Chubu University, Japan) 50

Comments

Comment 1
Haruka KIKUTA (Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University, Japan) 67

Comment 2
Kaoru MURAKAMI (Institute of Developing Economies, Japan) 69

Comment 3 Transformations in Uzbekistan: Gender and Development
Bakhtiyor ISLAMOV (Tashkent Branch of Russian University of Economics named after G. V. Plekhanov, Uzbekistan) 71

International Workshop “Islam and Gender in Central Asia: Soviet Modernization and Today’s Society” Program 76

List of the Participants 77
This volume, *Islam and Gender in Central Asia: Soviet Modernization and Today’s Society* (CIAS Discussion Paper, No. 63), is the outcome of an international workshop with the same title, held at the Center for Integrated Area Studies (CIAS), Kyoto University, on December 26, 2015. The workshop was organized by the CIAS, its Joint Research Unit “Socialist Modernization and Today’s Society in Central Asia: Focusing on Islam and Gender” (for FY2015, CIAS Joint Usage/Research Project), and JSPS KAKENHI Grant-in-aid Project “Islam, Gender, and Family in Central Asia: Seeking New Perspectives for Rethinking Modernity” (for FY2012–2015, Kiban (B), 24310184). The purpose was to present and share the latest academic findings of these two area studies projects.

We welcomed four prominent scholars and researchers from Uzbekistan as workshop participants, as well as Japanese scholars and researchers, including upcoming young researchers conducting active fieldwork in Uzbekistan. Although the workshop was held on a rather small scale, we shared much academic information about the historical process of the emancipation of women, positive and negative spheres of Soviet modernization in gender questions, actual problems of Islamic revivalism and the role of women under strict state control, and so on. We had very intensive and fruitful discussions. We reached the common view that there is still much to be discussed and that we should continue research from this perspective. I do hope that in the future we can extend the discussion to all of Central Asia or even to all Muslim areas of the former Soviet Union.

I would like to express my appreciation to all workshop participants and presenters for their contributions. Special thanks go to the support staff of the CIAS who helped so much with organizing the workshop and publishing this volume.

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Chika OBIYA

Center for Integrated Area Studies,
Kyoto University, Japan

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The workshop “Islam and Gender in Central Asia: Soviet Modernization and Today’s Society” focused on Uzbekistan, a former Soviet Central Asian country, where Soviet socialist modernization and Islam crossed paths.

After the Soviet Union’s collapse and the subsequent independence of Central Asian countries in 1991, we have observed a general difficulty in dialogue between those who internalized principles of secularism through their Soviet experience and those influenced by Islamic revivalism who now try to live a better Muslim way of life. Such a situation might deepen serious social fissures in newly constructed nation states, not only in Uzbekistan but also in other Central Asian countries. After the long influence of official ideology of Soviet secularism, along with more than 70 years of scientific atheism, how to harmonize different attitudes to Islam in the Uzbek nation is a crucial question today for nation building and national integration.

In the 1920s, the early days of Sovietization, according to Soviet ideology, Islam and patriarchy in Central Asia were regarded as a “bad tradition” to be liquidated on the path toward socialist modernity and progress. In this discourse, women became the subject of Soviet authorities’ interest as an indicator of modernity. The existence of “liberated” (unveiled, educated, working, mothering children…) women became as a symbol of a progressive socialistic Soviet nation (natsiia). But generally, as some academic work has already proved, Soviet policies could not deeply change “traditional” gender relations and norms. Tradition survived, and today, it sometimes conflicts with “Western values” and authoritarian government policies. Here, the problem is how to deconstruct Soviet modernization and discover a new perspective for rethinking such issues as women’s emancipation, gender equality, and individualism in the context of 21st century Uzbekistan.

From such a standpoint, this workshop’s aim was, first, to examine ideals and realities of Soviet modernization regarding Islam and gender relations, and second, to characterize the influences that Soviet modernization brought to today’s society of Uzbekistan. The third and final aim was resolving emotionally negative attitudes toward the Soviet regime, more or less required by the new nationalism after independence, and attempting to discover reasonable grounds for discussion of the issues of Islam and gender for society in contemporary local and global contexts.

We considered three significant points for our discussion. These were accomplishments of recent academic works on post-Soviet or post-socialist area studies and Middle East studies. Here, we would like to foster the notion that from a Central Asian studies perspective, we can bridge academic discussions between post-Soviet or post-socialist studies and Middle East studies.

Our first point of discussion explored features of socialist or Soviet modernization. One of the most prominent Japanese scholars in Soviet and post-Soviet studies, Nobuaki Shiokawa indicated that Soviet modernization had its own features: priority on principle and ideology; strong initiative of party and state, i.e., modernization by order from above; strong state and weak society; special focus on development of science and technology; and unbalanced development between the Soviet East and West. Thus, on one hand, post-Soviet states are suffering from post-modern social problems, and on the other, they are simultaneously suffering from lack of modernity. Shiokawa also suggested that a new perspective on modernization theory is needed, one that uses multi-track development, taking the

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1 See, for example [Kamp 2008][Wazaki 2015].
traditions and customs of each nation into consideration [Shiokawa 1999: 293-341].

Secondly, we have important implications from the project of post-socialist cultural anthropology led by Japanese cultural anthropologists, for example, Hiroki Takakura, Hibi Watanabe, and Shiro Sasaki. In post-Soviet space, it is very important to have three historical phases—(1) traditional, (2) Soviet-socialist, (3) now—and to apply them simultaneously to analyze and understand what happens in the now. In this context, what happened during the Soviet period is far more important than a simple historical background [Takakura 2008: 1–28]. Something very Soviet (e.g., systems, institutions, ways of thinking, mentalities) has taken deep root and been internalized in people.

The third point involves implications from Middle East gender studies by scholars of Middle Eastern origin, for example Leila Ahmed, Leila Abu-Lughot, and Deniz Kandiyoti. I would like to share their views as follows: to study gender issues for the Muslim world, we should not premise for discussion such a dichotomy as tradition–modernity. We should not facilely regard modernity in the same light as women’s progress, liberation, and empowerment. We should very carefully read the influences of European colonial rule and post-colonial legacy on the gender politics of once-colonized countries [Abu-Lughod (ed.) 1998].

At the workshop, we heard the following presentations: “‘The Politics of the Veil’ in the Context of Uzbekistan” by Chika Obiya; “‘Paradise at the Feet of Mothers and Women’: SADUM in the Struggle for Emancipation of Muslim Women” by Bakhtiyar Babadjanov; “Modern Uzbek Family: Marital Relations” by Nodira Azimova; “Women, Marriage, and Market Economy in Rural Uzbekistan” by Fumoto Sono; and “‘Jahri Zikr’ by Women in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: Survival of a Sufi Traditional Ritual through Soviet Policies and Its Future” by Seika Wazaki. There were two main topics: historical study of the Soviet women’s liberation movement “Hujum” (and unveiling) and the anthropological analysis of rural society’s contemporary situation. I believe that through comments and discussion, we could manage to combine these two topics as a first steppingstone to rethinking modernity vis-à-vis the entirety of institutions, technology, and values for a better life for Central Asians in the contemporary context.

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Wazaki, Seika
“The Politics of the Veil” in the Context of Uzbekistan

Chika OBIYA
Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University, Japan

Keywords: Islamic veil, women, socialism, modernity, Uzbekistan

Introduction

I borrowed the “the politics of the veil” concept from Joan W. Scott’s book The Politics of the Veil [Scott 2010], which addresses the 2004 French ban on wearing conspicuous signs of religious affiliation in public spaces. Scott analyzed the decision-making on this ban, during which debates focused on Muslim women’s headscarves. Scott’s book includes important implications for considering modernity, secularism, democracy, and citizenship in a nation state, not only for European countries but in general even for Muslim countries. When the veil, as an emblem or symbol of Islamic intolerance, fanaticism, or extremism is criticized or attacked, “the clash of civilizations” reveals hidden racist or colonialisit views. In France, behind the veil question lies the marginalization of North African Muslim immigrants as “other” in the cause of French laïcité, or secularism.

Here, however, I would like to trace political discourses and images of Islamic veiling in Uzbekistan, beginning with some writings by Russian orientalists during the colonial period of the Russian Empire, then in Soviet propaganda, next as an ideology of new nationalism after Uzbekistan’s independence, and, finally, under current conditions. As a “Muslim” country, Uzbekistan experienced Soviet modernization under scientific atheism. As I explain below, Soviet authorities made great efforts to liquidate the veil during the socialist modernization of Uzbekistan and its society. The traditional veil paranji (Figure 1, 2) nearly faded out of daily life. After independence in 1991, Uzbekistan reclaimed Islam as an important part of Uzbek national tradition in a secular regime. Even so, influenced by Islamic revivalism, the new veil (hijob in Uzbek) appeared. In 1998 in Uzbekistan, just as in France or in Turkey, wearing religious clothing in public spaces was banned by law; then in 2012, the sale of hijob by private vendors was practically banned. It seemed that the anti-veil campaign had begun.

Figure 1 Paranji for Elder Women, Paranji for Girls (Usto Mumin, 1948) [Usto Mumin 1982: Illust. 76]  
Figure 2 To Likbez (Photo by M. Penson, 1927)
again, but this time without Soviet ideology or atheism and without orders from Moscow. Why is the veil “bad”? Examining this logic in a historical context illustrates the “modernity” that Uzbekistan, and more widely, the former Soviet Central Asia, experienced and still experiences, where Islam and socialism crossed paths.

### Leila Ahmed’s View on the Veil

For years, the veil question has been discussed from various standpoints, including Western feminism. Here, I would like to emphasize the view of Leila Ahmed, a prominent American gender studies scholar of Egyptian origin, who has questioned ways of Western thinking about Muslim women’s liberation and progress.

According to Ahmed’s work *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* [Ahmed 1992], in the 19th century as Europe’s colonization process was taking place in the Middle East, women’s issues became a centerpiece of European narratives on Islam as “other.” This colonial discourse adopted “the language of feminism” that had gained power in Europe and came to include a clear thesis “that Islam was innately and immutably oppressive to women, that the veil and segregation epitomized that oppression, and that these customs were the fundamental reasons for the general and comprehensive backwardness of Islamic societies” [Ahmed 1992: 151–152]. Here, the issues of women’s oppression and of cultures of “other” men were combined. Especially because the veil was “the most visible marker” for Europeans, it became “the symbol of both the oppression of women” and “the backwardness of Islam.” Thus, the veil became “the open target of colonial attack” to legitimize colonial rule [Ahmed 1992: 152].

In addition, Ahmed criticized not only European colonizers, such as Lord Cromer (1841–1917), but also Arab reformists, such as Qassim Amin (1863–1908), who was regarded as the first Arab feminist to raise the question of abandoning the veil. At the same time, she criticized aggressive opponents—traditionalists who opposed those Arab reformists. She wrote that, on the one hand, Arab reformists imitated and internalized Western discourse, even sometimes looking down on their own Egyptian society, especially on women. On the other hand, she said, opponents—traditionalists’ response indeed looked like the antithesis of colonial discourse, a protest based on nationalism, emphasizing “the dignity and validity” [Ahmed 1992: 164] of Muslim customs. Despite that, their discussion was based on colonial terminology that European colonizers had created. In short, or with or without veils, both in the colony in the Middle East and in the homeland in Europe, male-dominated societies continued to be reproduced.

Thus, discourse regarding the veil emerged in 19th century Europe. For Europeans, the veil was not a simple question of unfamiliar, exotic Oriental dress or outlook but that which implied superiority or inferiority of cultures, with dichotomies of progress/backwardness, free/repressive, West/East, “we/other,” and so on. This kind of discourse omitted any discussion of true liberation and gender equality in women’s actual lives.

### Uzbekistan and the Veil in Historical Contexts: From *Paranji* to *Hijob*

Ahmed’s discussion on discourse on the veil has implications for Russian/Soviet Central Asia, too. Thus, I would like to present a rough sketch of the development of discourse on the veil in its historical

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3 Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer. He was the British consul-general in Egypt from 1883 to 1907.
contexts: Turkistan under Imperial Russian rule, Soviet Uzbekistan, and independent Uzbekistan. Some visual images I have included here place special focus on “politically correct” Uzbek women during the Soviet period.

(1) Turkistan under Imperial Russian Rule

Generally speaking, prior to the Russian Revolution, exchange of knowledge, information, and people was basically free between Russia and Western Europe. Naturally, therefore, we can observe almost the same colonial discourse on Islam and Muslims in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century among the ruling elite and observers of Central Asia in the Russian Empire, as Ahmed illustrated in her work.

Imperial Russia legitimization its conquest of Central Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries in the cause of its great mission to civilize Asia by the Grace of God and the Tsar. For Russians, Islam was still something unknown, unfamiliar, even sometimes awful and evil. Muslims in the Empire were undoubtedly “the others” and needed to be assimilated, i.e., “Russified.” In the Volga region where Tatars and Bashkirs lived, as a policy Imperial Russia enforced conversion to Russian orthodoxy. Similarly, in Turkistan, the latest colony of the Empire, the “ignorance of Islam” policy was introduced: Basically, Muslims were not forced to convert but were left alone as long as they did not resist Russian rule.

As a result of the conquest of Central Asia and establishment of the Turkistan General-Governorship in Tashkent in 1876, Russia came to have almost 20 million Muslims inside the Empire. In 19th century Russia, discussion on the Muslim question as a political agenda for integration and academic Orientology, including Islamic studies in general and ethnographical studies on Russian Muslims, developed in close relation to each other [Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010].

For example, Nikolai P. Ostroumov (1846–1930) was a distinguished Russian orientalist, a specialist on education of non-Russian native people (inorodtsy) and on anti-Islam missionary propaganda among Russian Muslims. He was dispatched to Turkistan (Russian Central Asia) as an inspector for schools, became the first director of the teachers’ seminar (normal school) in Tashkent, and then worked as an orientalist/ethnographer and journalist throughout his life there. He knew well the academic work of Islamic studies in Western Europe. In Islamic Studies, he expressed his opinion about Russian Muslims as follows: the Muslim question was very important and serious for Russia; Russia should take all possible measures to bring Russian Muslims close to Russia, cutting them off from pan-Islamism and the non-Russian Islamic world; Muslims’ subordination to England, France, and especially Russia supported their lives, because this favored them with higher cultures [Ostroumov 1914: 55–57]. Although he repeated that Russian Muslims were “our” compatriots, he never thought that Islam was compatible with modernity or progress, as another of his works, Qur’an and Progress [Ostroumov 1901], clearly showed.

Ostroumov wrote an interesting piece on Muslim women in Russia, Contemporary Situation of Rights of Muslim Women [Ostroumov 1911]. He criticized some of the Russian Empire’s debates on Muslim women at that time, explaining Muslim marriage, polygamy, marital relationship, divorce, and women’s general situation in light of the Qur’an and shari’a. Indeed, he tried to understand Islam deeply, but it remained “other” to him. In conclusion, he said, “As long as an access to European education and knowledge is closed for Muslim women, no improvement in their family and social situation will come true” [Ostroumov 1911: 45]. Regarding Sart4 men, he said, “[they were] jealous and preferred keeping their own hearth untouched by anybody” [Ostroumov 1915: 67].

To take another example, in an article from the newspaper Tashkent Courier titled “Women According

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4 A term used to mean “Central Asian settled people” by Imperial Russia. In the context of this paper, it means almost today’s Uzbek.
to Muslim Law,” an anonymous author wrote that the question of the veil was then the most important “hot topic” among various circles of intellectual Muslim society. Here, the author, taking not only Russia but also the Middle East into consideration and referring concretely to Turkey, described how Muslim women were forced out of social life, forced to change into a substance without spiritual and intellectual needs, and were buried forever under the veil [Zhenshchina 1910].

Obviously in Russia, knowledge of Islam and Muslims was gained and developed progressively during the second half of the 19th century and toward the beginning of the 20th century. For instance, a Russian translation of the Qur’an (in 1877) and the index for the Qur’an (in 1879) by G. Sablukov were published in Kazan’ and widely used by Russian orientalists. We might see some of Russia’s own contexts in writings, such as those mentioned above, but more importantly, directly and indirectly, they reflected European colonial discourse and dichotomies relating to Islam and Muslim people.

(2) Soviet Uzbekistan

After the October Revolution in 1917, Soviet authority was established in Central Asia. In 1924–25, the national delimitation process was introduced in Central Asia. Consequently, Central Asian national republics, including the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, were established, and in each republic, the socialist modernization process began.

In Europe, as Ahmed observed, feminism and cultural anthropology served, as a result, for the creation and development of colonial discourse on Islam [Ahmed 1992: 151–152]; in the Soviet Union, the theory of socialistic gender equality (including the theory of the death of family5), scientific atheism, and Marxist–Leninist materialistic and progressive view of history firmly supported the further development of similar discourse in the newly established, huge Soviet state, which was, in its ideology, instituted through the struggle against Imperial colonialism.

In addition, the Soviet state involved its own Orient, the Soviet East (Vostok).6 The distinction between tradition and modernity and between backwardness and progress became very clear because the 1917 Socialist Revolution was regarded as a great turning point in history, i.e., from the pre-October 1917, traditional, backward, repressive, feudalistic, and capitalistic society to the post-October 1917, modern, progressive, free, socialist, and communist society. In other words, clearer dichotomies appeared as state ideology. Central Asia’s tradition was regarded as something to do with Islam and patriarchy. As Massel [1974] and Northlop [2004] wrote, in Central Asia, women became the symbol of the Soviet socialist nation: In Soviet discourse, if women were not liberated, not only women, but a nation in its entirety, including men, could not progress. In Uzbekistan during the Hujum campaign, abandonment of the veil became an emblem of liberated women. If the new Soviet Uzbek nation had veiled women in its society, it could never construct socialism—or so went Soviet rhetoric.

Given below are some examples from Soviet propaganda discourse and images related to the veil and the ideal new Soviet Uzbek woman.

Figure 3 is an illustration from the front page of the newspaper Qizil O’zbekiston (Red Uzbekistan), dated March 08, 1927. On this day, symbolically, international women’s day, the mass campaign for abandonment of the veil—“Hujum” or “attack”—was initiated.7 In this picture a young woman (or a

5 According to Kawamoto, the outline of the theory of the death of family is as follows: When means of production are seized from private individuals and communalized, and socialism is realized, the family that was needed to inherit property is no longer needed, and as a result, women are liberated. Marriage is no longer based on property or economy but on love. Children, no matter whether legitimate or bastard, are treated equally, and society, in place of the family that became unnecessary, cares for children. [Kawamoto 2012: 191]

6 About Soviet West/East see [Martin 2001: 126–129]

7 At the same time, Hujum was scheduled to be completed by May 01, 1927, which was, as it turned out, completely impossible.
girl) has just thrown her paranji to the ground, and the sun is shining. The clear message is that if she abandons paranji, a bright future and a new life await this young woman, who is eager to obtain them.

Figure 4 is an article titled “Open the door more widely for girls of the East!” from the newspaper Komsomolets Vostoka (Komsomol Member of the East), also dated March 08, 1927. Here, the appeal reads, “Throw away the veil [chadr], it closes you away from the world, it damages your health, and it obstructs your working.” The illustration seems to show the ideal, new woman’s life: working, reading, and gaining knowledge, mothering children, and doing housekeeping. This heavy situation of the working Soviet women was, later, in the Perestroika period, regarded as women’s double or triple distress in.

Here, attending to the terminology of “veiled/unveiled,” expressed as “closed/open” (in Russian zakryt/otkryt and in Uzbek yopik/ochiq), is interesting. Literally, it means a woman’s face is open or closed, but obviously this terminology has ambivalent meanings: “open” means a woman is free, open-minded, and progressive; she has the right to go from her home into public space according to her own will and decisions; the door to knowledge, to society, to labor, to a bright future is open for her. “Closed” means the opposite: A woman is not free, being under the control of her father or husband and segregated in the house as if still in the feudal era; she is cut off from society and remains an ignorant victim of Islam and patriarchy. As I observed in my fieldwork, this terminology is still used among people who have a negative attitude toward the veil (and toward Islam or toward religion in general) in today’s Uzbekistan. In 2009, in Samarkand, a housewife-pensioner told me: “In Uzbekistan before the Revolution, women could not see unrelated men, … could not go out of the house. … Only after the Revolution, women abandoned paranji and became open, free. Today we live well. We are open, too. In Karimov’s independent time, we live well.” This quotation seems to suggest how deeply people internalized such terminology and dichotomy during the Soviet era.

Figure 5 is part of an article “Without any hesitation! [to abandon the veil]” from the newspaper Pravda Vostoka (Truth of the East) that celebrates on March 08, 1928, the one-year anniversary of the Hujum campaign’s initiation. In a photo (right), three women are standing in paranji. The photo caption reads “[Paranji is] Vestige of slavery past.” In another photo (left) two young girls are reading a newspaper.

8 Islom Abdug‘aniyevich Karimov (1938–), President of Uzbekistan since 1990.
Its caption says, “Daily life and culture of preparatory faculty for workers of the East in Moscow. Uzbek girl students read Uzbek newspaper Yangi Yo’l (New Way).” These two photographs clearly contrast the old and new life for Uzbek women.

Figure 6 is a drawing entitled “Without paranji” (1930) [Usto Mumin 1982: illustration No. 28]—the work of Russian artist Usto Mumin (Aleksandr Nikolaev, 1897–1957) who lived and worked in Soviet Uzbekistan. The drawing is clearly of an ideal, “politically correct” Soviet Uzbek woman or girl. She is unveiled, wearing European clothing with a (possibly Komsomol) red tie and a short hairstyle; she is carrying books (or notebooks) and moving forward with a serious face and decisive steps, while two small women in black paranji are left behind, standing still. This picture is redolent with Soviet metaphor.

Figures 7 and 8, also by Usto Mumin, illustrate a call for work in cotton fields. As is well known, growing cotton was the most important task for Uzbekistan in the Soviet economic system. Thus cotton was called “white gold.” These pictures were used for propaganda posters. In figure 7, “Even one
gram, don’t lose cotton! Even one minute, don’t waste! All cotton to the state!” (1933) [Usto Mumin 1982: illustration No. 34] Here, a woman works alongside men, gathering cotton. The slogan, like the picture’s title, is on a red banner held above the cart. In figure 8 “All men, go to the cotton field!” (1933) [Usto Mumin 1982: illustration No. 35], a woman is calling loudly, inviting men to work in a cotton field. This woman represents the ideal, diligent hard worker of cotton kolkhozes. Not only that, she is obviously a worker superior to the men who are behind her, relaxing with tea in a dark space (somewhere in a choikhona?).

Portraits of good Uzbek women workers were often shown in communist newspapers. Figure 9 “Tursun-oi Rakhmanova” from Pravda Vostoka (March 07, 1937) is one example, which says that she is a Komsomol member, work team leader, and now a brigadir (leader of brigada) of kolkhoz “International.” She pledges that her brigada is going to have a cotton crop of 14t per ha. for 1937. Many articles and photos of this kind appeared in various newspapers. Those “liberated” women were praised and used as propaganda, but except for some famous activists/specialists, such as the first Uzbek female parachutist Basharat Mirbabaeva, they were mostly depicted almost without personal characteristics, even though their names, addresses, professions, and working ability were indicated.

As we already know, the Hujum campaign in the 1920s was not successful. It was confronted with harsh reactions, including honor violence and honor killings of unveiled women by men (in most cases, fathers, brothers, and husbands) who maintained conservative traditional family and gender norms [Northlop 2004: 85–96; Kamp 2008: 185–214].

Thereafter, there were some waves of anti-veil campaigns with other measures, including the establishment of the official representative of Soviet Islam (the Muslim Religious Board, SADUM, in Central Asia) or propaganda from various channels and media. The custom of wearing traditional paranji was gradually lost in daily public life, especially after WWII. Instead, of paranji, women began to wear headscarves (ro’mol in Uzbek)(figure 10). As time went by, these headscarves also disappeared in large cities. Whether the Islamic meaning of the veil has been maintained by the ro’mol might be a question for careful investigation, but at least during the Soviet era, reexamining or rediscovering the “positive” meaning of the veil in public debate was almost impossible.

Thus, for more than 60 years, throughout the Soviet modernization process, the dichotomy of open/closed, unveiled/veiled, progress/backwardness free/repressive, etc. deeply penetrated and was
internalized, especially among the ruling elite and urban intelligentsia in Uzbekistan. And these internalized dichotomies seemed rooted also in the concept of Soviet-type secularism, which was basically maintained after independence.

(3) Independent Uzbekistan

Islamic revivalism has been observed in various spheres of social life in Uzbekistan since the late 1980s, the time of Perestroika. After Uzbekistan became an independent secular state, the authority made great effort to create new official institutions for Islam, for instance, reorganization of the Muslim Religious Board and official madrasas, establishment of a new Islamic university, and so on. But on the other hand, this effort was challenged by politicization of Islamist movements from inside and outside the country. I do not discuss the details here, but, for example, in the late 1990s, violent activities, including some bombings by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), based then in Afghanistan, caused serious concern for the government of Uzbekistan. Then, in 2001, the September 11 incident happened in New York and Washington DC. This was followed by US bombing of Afghanistan and wars for justice in the Middle East against international terrorism from the perspective of “the crash of civilizations,” which gave some authoritarian countries justification to strengthen control and suppression of anti-governmental elements, including various types of Islamist organizations.

According to Rasanayagam, Uzbek authority adopted a new dichotomy under such circumstances—good Islam/bad Islam for Uzbekistan. The former is “traditional” Islam for Central Asia and Uzbekistan, based on modest morality and values historically maintained in people’s relationships, for example, in mahalla (local community) life. The latter is exclusive and fanatic Islamic dogma from outside Uzbekistan, i.e., Islamic extremism [Rasanayagam 2010: 96–120].

In such a situation, the new veil—*hijob*—appeared in Uzbekistan. I do not have enough information regarding exactly when and how such veiling began in Uzbekistan, but Marianne Kamp wrote that in 1991–1993, in Tashkent, she sometimes observed young girls wearing the new veil, called *yopinchik*9 in Uzbek (figure 11). At that time, those who wanted to express their affiliation with Islam began to wear a beard and white skull cap (men) or *yopinchik* (women). Kamp also commented that in the middle of the 1990s, Uzbek authority seemed concerned about this religious outlook seriously connecting them with expansion of Islamic extremism, so they initiated rather strict control [Kamp 2008: 233–234]. This period might have been the first phase of the new veil’s emergence.

The second phase might be the appearance of another new veil—*hijob*. Figure 12 are photos from 2009, when I was, in a sense, very shocked at veiling. After my three-year absence from Uzbekistan, I suddenly saw many veiled women at the zoo in Tashkent, one by one, walking happily with their

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9 At the time of the workshop, Dr. H. Kikuta kindly commented that in her field in Ferghana valley, there is a type of veil people call *yasmak/yashmak*, meaning “veil” in Turkish. Then Dr. N. Azimova explained that *yopinchik* is a rather general name for headdress, while *yasmak/yashmak* means veil, which often includes face covering.
families or friends, just enjoying their Sunday. I was shocked because it was a landscape of Uzbekistan that I had never seen since my first trip there almost 20 years previously. This type of veiling rapidly became popular in Uzbekistan.

Although, in general, visible protests or political demands suggesting Islamic extremism or politicization did not seem to be observed in women who began to wear hijab, authority again saw the enemy. A representative of authority said, “Religious extremist women used to wear such clothes, and women might have carried guns under their hijabs” [Fakhraie 2009]. To stop hijab wearing, the authorities tried to explain its negative influence on the public through medical information that “Arab-style headscarves cause calcium deficiencies” [Fakhraie 2009]. This is more or less reminiscent of Soviet logic against paranji, as in figure 4, saying paranji “damages your health,” basically meaning that veiled women could not have good health because they were cut off from sunlight and could not breathe fresh air.

In 1998, prior to my first experience of seeing hijab, the law banned wearing clothing for religious rituals in public space. Even after that, the use of hijab seemed to increase gradually. In 2012, rather quietly, an announcement prohibited private vendors selling religious clothing, especially hijab, in shops and bazaars. Thanks to information provided by Prof. B. Babadjanov, a fatwa that welcomed unveiling was issued by an imam of the Muslim Board in 2013. It was reported that restrictions on vendors and wearers of hijab were renewed in 2014. In 2015, police began active public attacks on hijab wearers. In Tashkent, police arrested veiled women at bazaars, took them to the police station, and forced them to take off hijab or to see anti-terrorism department officers [“Deveiling” Drive 2015; Uzbekistan: Tashkent Police 2015]. Again, the veil is an emblem of Islamic extremism. However, I wonder, did all the women I saw in the zoo have something to do with extremism?

There is a discussion that the emergence of the new

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10 At the same time, interestingly, the representative also criticized Western clothing. Uzbek “‘traditional attire’ was in, hijabs were out, and Western clothing was ‘undesirable,’ because it led to ‘unspecified health problems’.” [Fakhraie 2009].

11 According to this information (unofficial Russian translation of the fatwa by Prof. B. Babadjanov), the traditional headscarf ro’mol is fit and sufficient for pious Muslim Uzbek women.
veil from the 1980s in the Middle East was rather a new phenomenon as a result of (or in response to) the European modernization process, influenced also by globalism in a broader sense [Ahmed 1992; Scott 2010]. Basically, I agree with this view. Why did women in Uzbekistan begin to wear the new veil? This is an interesting academic question, considering perspectives of post-Soviet identity and social change in Uzbekistan. However, broad and deep investigation for this purpose would possibly not be allowed under the current political situation there.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, let us examine one more photo, figure 13. In Uzbekistan, there are many types of veil—for daily use and for rituals, including *hijob*. Is drawing a line between “good veils” and *hijob* worthwhile? Is spending so much time and energy defining a border between good and bad veils worthwhile?

Regimes have changed historically, but dichotomies—traditional/modern, East/West, backwardness/progress, closed (veiled)/open (unveiled)—have remained. To add to this situation, the emergence of the new veil (*hijob*) after independence was not a simple revival of traditional veiling, but rather part of a new global phenomenon. Its banning by authority also indicated a new dichotomy of bad Islam/good Islam, suggesting the “other/we” dichotomy in a nation state with almost 90% Muslim population. In France, “others” wearing the veil are Muslim immigrants from North Africa. In Uzbekistan, then, exactly who is “the other”?

As long as such a dichotomy is active, we cannot expect any real development in positive discussion related to women and gender relations in a contemporary context, for example, about respect for the individual, realization of women’s own will, and pursuit of individual happiness, a concept that little concerned the Soviet’s modernization. With or without a veil, each woman, as well as each man, has the right to seek ways to a better life.

To end this paper, I would like to cite Ahmed again: “Far from indicating that the wearers [of Islamic dress, including the veil: CO] remain fixed in the world of tradition and the past, then Islamic dress is the uniform of arrival, signaling entrance into, and determination to move forward in, modernity” [Ahmed
I am not a supporter of veiling, but it is important to recognize that such a positive view is possible and reasonable for deconstruction of discourse on the veil, or furthermore, on modernity and progress, on a better society, and on a better life for women today.

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Acknowledgments

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The phrase quoted in the title of this article comes from a narrative saying of the Prophet (from the Hadith). One of the oldest SADUM theologians, Yusupkhon Shakirov (d. 1996), used it in an article with the symbolic title “Problems of Women’s Equality and Their Resolution” (1977). Shakirov tried to prove the “natural equality” of women in Islam. In addition to traditional sources—the Qur’an and Hadith—he used works of the Egyptian reformer Qassim Amin (“Al-mar‘a Fi-l-Islam”),2 and some writings of Muhammad Abduh (see more details about Shakirov’s article below).

Besides Shakirov’s article, I consider various documents and discussion publications since the period of 1917–1918, which initiated vast discourse on various trends by the theologians (reformers and conservatives) relating to the “female issue.” For this article, I used additional sources, e.g., a number of SADUM fatwas and “clarifications” (from 1946 to 1991) focused on the interrelations between males and females in family and social life. Even more SADUM fatwas are dedicated to the criticism of rituals practiced mainly by women (e.g., pilgrimages or ziyarat to the graves of the holy people and rituals on the Prophet’s birthdays).

Analysis of the articles in the famous SADUM journal Muslims of the Soviet East (published from 1968 to 1991, in Uzbek, Russian, Arabic, Persian, and French) showed that the journal had not practically discussed the “feminine topic” up to 1990. By then, the issue of “returning the Soviet woman to Islam” had been initiated by new Mufti Muhammad-Sadik Muhammad-Yusuf (d. March 10, 2015; mufti 1989 to November 12, 1994). The new journal of the Spiritual Board Maworounnahr musulmonlari (Mawara’ an-nahr Muslims) published a number of articles in which local theologians tried to avenge years of coercion and silence on the “true look of the Muslim woman.” I also treat some publications by Shaikh Muhammad-Sadik, in which he discussed, for instance, the Muslim woman’s norms of behavior and principles of interrelations with her husband and family.

The Russian Revolution and the Gender Issue

Major discussion of gender issues among local clerics began right after the Russian Revolution in October 1917. Discussions on the social or family status of a woman and her new dress code in the Muslim environment of the former Russian Empire were determined by two factors:

First, as is well known, the Bolshevik power initiated a number of decrees including those concerning

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1 Spiritual Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, founded in 1943. See [Babadjanov 2001].
2 See the English translation of his work [Amin 2000].
women. For example, the famous woman Bolshevist A. Kollontai drafted one of the first decrees with a very symbolic title: Decree on the Emancipation of Women. Naturally, the ulama of the former Russian Empire, including Central Asia, responded to such decrees differently. Major issues of the ulamas’ discussions focused, for example, on different types of hijab, on women’s opportunities to visit mosques with men, on doing social work, and on working at government offices with men.

The second factor is connected with the internal evolution of the reformation movement among Muslims themselves. I am recalling a number of articles in Muslim journals and newspapers in the Volga River basin (e.g., Vaqt and Ādāb al-Islām) that published reform articles on gender equality in Islam. Their authors offered arguments for Muslim forms of women’s emancipation; naturally, these were from the Hadith and, sometimes, quotations from the Qur’an.

In November 1917, the first congress of Muslims of Russia was initiated and organized by the reformers from the Volga River basin (M. Bigiev, Mufti Riza ad-din Fakhritdinov, and others). Delegates adopted an address to the Muslims of the former Russian Empire, calling for them “to free Muslim women from the chains of slavery and humiliation.” The Bolsheviks’ influence is readily noticeable in these slogans and their vocabulary. Not only the Bolsheviks but also, for example, the Egyptian reformers, who followed the European reforms in Muslim women’s emancipation, used almost the same style and clichés.

The responses of Central Asian Muslims to such reforms, public declarations, and decrees initiated by reformers varied. The Jadids (or reformers) of Central Asia were careful in their assessment of cardinal (maximalist) forms of emancipation [Khalid 2015: 197–207, 302, 352].

As for the majority of Muslims (tentatively, I call them conservatives), they reacted negatively to women’s emancipation, and it is the response of the conservatives that interests me most of all. The collision of two organizations—“Shurā-yi ‘ulamā” and “Shurā-yi Islām/Shurā-yi Islāmiya”—became the earliest examples of regional theologians’ internal discussions on the gender issue. The first organization was established as a result of a split in “Shurā-yi Islām” (June 1917). “Shurā-yi ‘ulamā” mainly consisted of the conservative theologians who embraced “the inviolability of the main prescriptions of Islam/Shari’ah” in public and political life.5

Besides these two organizations’ problems of political structure, Shari’ah principles of interpretation and other theologies became conflicts of opinion on the “female issue” (Ayollar/Khotunlar mas’alasi—as it was formulated in that era’s publications). Jadids from “Shurā-yi Islām” stood for new forms of women’s emancipation, insisted on the necessity of their participation in the elections and other forms of public life, their right to work and to receive education, and so on. Their counterpart from “Shurā-yi ‘ulamā” opposed any forms of emancipation for the Muslim women that were, in their opinion, enforced by “socialists and Bolsheviks.” These positions manifested particularly brightly when elections were discussed with local authorities (with the “Meeting of Founders” and then the “Soviets”). “Shurā-yi Islām” insisted on the necessity of women’s participation in elections. Along with this, women had to come to voting stations without hijabs.6 “Shurā-yi ‘ulamā” issued a separate proclamation, sharply opposing women’s shedding of the hijab, indicating that doing so completely violated Shari’ah.7

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3 For the details, see [Alimova 1989].
4 The united party “Shurā-yi Islām” was founded in March 1917. The “Shurā-yi Islām members” remaining after the split came mainly from the circle of Jadids fighting for Turkestan’s national and territorial autonomy. They exclusively rejected the “Shari’ah solution” of the everyday social, legal, political, and other problems, although they recognized Islam’s significant role in the formation of laws, in the system of education and of everyday life, and its cultural and historical values. The organization began publishing the al-Islah journal that was aimed mainly at the dissemination of modern reformatory (Islahiyi) ideas. For details, see [Agzamkhojaev 1996: 23–43, 55–59; Agzamkhojaev and Babadjano 2003].
6 حقيقته غ د خلفان ترافاطان خلفان نامه غ جواب، 1917
7 حقيقته غ د خلفان ترافاطان خلفان نامه غ جواب، 1917.
Most often, these “female issues/questions” were discussed on the pages of the famous journal al-Izāh/al-Idāh (Clarification), which was the “Shurā-yi ‘ulamā” organ. I have counted approximately 20 articles dedicated to the discussion of Muslim women’s family or public status⁸. Here, I refer to only three articles.

The first article from this series (number 2, 1917. Figure 1) is titled “Rafe’ hijob natijasi zarifona” (“Intimate Results of Taking Off Hijab”). Its author, Mullah Pir-Muhammad A’lam, brought forward arguments against Tatar theologians Musa Beghiev and Riza ad-Din Fakhridin, who at the previously mentioned First Congress of Muslims of Russia, announced Muslim women’s equality. The article’s main issue focused on taking off the hijab, and the author categorically objected to the Tatar theologians’ decision, writing that they took the liberty of opening ijtihād gates.

Another article published in number 17 of the same journal was titled “Jama’ti nisa” (“Women’s Community”. Figure 2). In it, the author ‘Abdulhamid Mahdum, the son of mullah ‘Abdurasul, steadfastly rejected the Tatar theologians’ decision that had brought forward the fatwa admitting women’s participation in general praying at mosques. This fatwa was published in Vaqt, the newspaper of religious reformers in the Volga River basin.

The third article, titled “Muhākama” (“Discussion”. Figure 3), was published in number 20 of the journal. The author, Kholl-Muhammad Tura-Quli, was a theologian from Mercke town (today’s Kazakhstan). He also got into an argument with the Tatar reformer Muhammad Khanifi, who published an article in the journal ad-Din va-l-ādāb, titled “Khotunlar massa’lasi” (“Female Issue”), which he wrote under the great influence of al-Mara’ fi-l-Islam (A Woman in Islam) by Qassim Amin, the Egyptian reformer mentioned above. The article raised the issue that following Shari’ah, a woman must not be isolated at home; she must be respected, permitted to talk with strangers, and so on. Kholl-Muhammad responded sharply, rejecting these appeals for “women’s emancipation” as a complete departure from the norms of Shari’ah.

The remainder of the articles in this journal were written in the same style, refusing women the right to take part in public life or to change their mode of living or style of clothing. In brief, the Central Asian conservatives categorically refused to accept any forms of emancipation of Muslim women.

I have omitted the analysis of the authors’ theological arguments. A different circumstance, which I call the “phenomenal transformation” of the Bolshevist epoch, seems more important.

By this, I mean the circumstance that the descendants of these authors became major actors and even

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⁸ See also [Khalid 2015: 198].
"PARADISE AT THE FEET OF MOTHERS AND WOMEN":
Soviet and Post-Soviet Discourses of Muslim Women’s Emancipation

initiators of Soviet forms of women’s emancipation.

For example, I refer to the book written by the great-granddaughter of the conservative Hol-Muhammad Tura-Quli. This is the saga of his descendants—the Mahkamov family—written by his great-granddaughter Feruza Guliamova (maiden name Turaqulova) [Guliamova 2015]. As seen from the book’s content and particularly from photos and texts, the Tura-Quli family (the Turaqulovs) served as a prime example of the complete emancipation of women but, of course, in the Soviet style. At that, judging from the authors’ information and the elder generation’s reminiscences, it is completely obvious that members of this family (like many similar Tashkent families) did not become only the object of the Soviet forms of emancipation. The Turaqulov women were also initiators of Soviet forms of modernization and became the most illustrative examples of women’s changed mode of life during their epoch. The same occurred with the descendants of the authors of the other two articles. For example, ‘Abdulhamid Makhdum’s (or Makhdum-zoda’s) descendants joined the Bolshevist party and played a worthy role in the ideological propaganda. Mullah Pir-Muhammedov’s descendants also became celebrity actors of the Soviet theater and cinema and served as exemplars of the Soviet emancipation of women.

I do not want to evaluate these phenomena from the viewpoint of everyday ethics or of laws (genres) of literary essays. Instead, I want to draw attention to how Soviet reforms quite unexpectedly changed personal, family, and social ethics and even the identity of the whole families, seriously reconstructing them. We see how the religious ethics of former social and kin networks acquired completely opposite ideological forms (often atheism) that were emphatically unacceptable for their ancestors.
“A Free Woman of the East Must Remain Chaste and Faithful to Her Family!” Alternative Scenarios of Emancipation

The de facto establishment of SADUM meant the return of the religion into the social field—subject, of course, to conditions dictated by the authorities. But SADUM managed to introduce amendments into these rules in the conventional “social field” in this or that form, clashing with the aggressive forms of Soviet ideology (atheism).

SADUM theologians’ addressing the issue of gender equality in Islam is not accidental, but a response to total criticism from atheists and participants in the movement for women’s emancipation that had rather a remarkable name Hujum (Attack). I believe that SADUM participated in the movement for women’s emancipation in the context of latent conflict between Hujum theologians and activists.

Many books were published about this movement within the frameworks of Soviet propaganda and the Sovietological school.

Just as a reminder, propaganda against “religious fanaticism” slopped over onto the pages of satirical magazines. Highly influential, the famous magazine Mashrab had a substantial run of 140,000 copies (1929). A number of satirical pictures from Mashrab are shown here. Figure 4 is an illustration showing the feelings an emancipated woman following European dress code really raises in a Muslim man. Figures 5 and 6 are satirical pictures criticizing polygamy that leads to scandals within families and to the exiling of elderly wives from homes without maintenance. Publication of posters

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9 There is a quotation from the speech of Mufti Ishan Babakhan at the second SADUM plenary meeting (1947).

10 For details, see, for example, [Alimova 1989; Northlop 2004; Kamp 2006, 2014].

11 One relatively recent and recollected work by Marianne Kamp and Adeeb Khalid. There are also references to the comprehensive bibliography in that work.

12 № 3, 1929, the back of the title page.

13 Without particular finesses, the author depicted men whose mouths literally water when they see the “open woman” who should obviously be understood as the sign of sexual appeal. This simple device (also judging from the text) aimed to reveal the hypocrisy of those men who stood against the emancipation of their own wives, but were pleased to “communicate” with emancipated women.
with primitive but common symbols of Soviet women’s emancipation caused particular interest. In Figure 7, for example, there are all symbols of new life and new ideology. Perhaps, this is a shrine of the new faith (i.e., the Communist faith). Apparently, this is a copy of Zeus’s shrine in Ancient Athena, showing not Zeus’s but Lenin’s portrait. “Ma’ārif” (“Knowledge”) is written next to it. The woman in the picture has no hijab, but wears a kerchief on her head. With a peculiar gesture, she calls to knowledge. There is a globe and something symbolizing knowledge in the lower-right corner of several books. On the right, in the remote background, there are ancient buildings with domes—symbols of the Old World. The Sun also symbolizes the bright (Soviet) future.

Even more posters were published on March 8, i.e., on the Women’s Day. Take, for example, two covers of the same Mashrab journal (see figures 8 and 9). Here, symbols of the Soviet form of emancipation are even more obvious: “Free women of the Muslim East” (but notice—the kerchief is on!), red banners in hand, surrounded by extremely negatively and grotesquely depicted mullahs. These are portrait forms of criticism of the Old World in the context of the women’s emancipation movement. This is the de facto gallery of Hujum, whose members never concealed their dislike for theologians.

We find informal “answers” of the Muslim theologians in their rare diaries and memoirs. Official “feedback” from conservative Muslim ulamas came later, after the end of the Second World War. This feedback is connected with SADUM activity. The first forum (Qurultai) in which SADUM officially addressed the “women’s issue” was the Second SADUM Plenary Session (January 20, 1947) (see figures 10, 11 and 12). At this session, chief SADUM Mufti Ishan Babakhanov (Ishān Bābākhān) spoke

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14 I have a copy of the diary of the oldest worker Nodirhon domulla (d. 1978) in my archive, where the author carefully speaks about the aggressiveness of such movements as Hujum.
on the female issue himself.\textsuperscript{15} He practically repeated arguments from the journals \textit{Vaqt} and \textit{Ādāb ul-Islām} and declared that in Islam, women’s equality of property rights and some other issues were prescribed by the Prophet himself. Nevertheless, Muslims have forgotten about this. He thanked the Soviet power for the care of Muslim women and for the fact that the Bolsheviks “freed the Muslim woman from bai’s slavery and the feudal yoke, and illiterate theologies.” The report contains many Soviet propaganda clichés of this type. Clearly, the mufti’s speech was edited, and such remarks had been interpolated into it.

Moreover, the theologians insisted that despite the woman of the Soviet East taking part in social labor, she must not forget that she was a wife and mother in a Soviet family.

Simultaneously, Mufti Ishan Babakhunov carefully formulated his understanding of the forms of Muslim women’s emancipation. For instance, he said that Islam did not prescribe Muslim women’s wearing of the \textit{yasmak} (\textit{hijab}) and that wearing a kerchief (\textit{ro’mol}) was sufficient. He declared this important from the perspective of hygiene. He referred to a female’s hair quickly getting dirty without a kerchief and to frequent hair washing leading to its loss. Besides that, lost hair may fall into food being cooked, and so on. Thus, as in the photos, we see an alternative dress code for Muslim women.

Mufti Ishan Babakhunov also spoke about the positive side of the Islamic doctrines, treating a woman

\textsuperscript{15} I examined a photocopy of his speech in Arabic script (with amendments and additions in the margins) in Shaikh Abdulaziz Mansur’s archive, and I express my gratitude to him for this. The speech in the archive has been preserved as a short thesis in the Russian language. See: \textit{O’zbekiston markaziy davlat arxiivi} (OMDA), fond 2456, opis’ 1, delo 104, ll. 12–22.
as a mother, heart- and home-keeper, and major child-minder. He also declared that Islam does not oppose a woman’s involvement in social life or her right to work next to men while maintaining norms of decency and remaining modest and faithful to her husband without forgetting about her family. Thus, the Mufti carefully proposed his forms of women’s emancipation, but in his speech, gratefulness to the government sometimes sounded like routine ideological decoration for official speeches. I look upon similar Soviet ideological clichés not only as trite compliments addressed to the authorities. First, they manifest the political conformism traditional to local Hanafyah theologians. Second, I see in them SADUM’s readiness to play by the authorities’ rules, in order to legalize their participation in women’s emancipation, but by trying to introduce their own rules into this sensible game, their own understanding of forms of female dress code and of female behavior and status in the family.

Murat-kho’ja Salikhov made the next report at the same Plenum, “On Women’s Participation in Administrative and Social Work.” Judging from his short thesis, this report was fully based on Mufti Ishan Babakhanov’s report. In conclusion, Muratkho’ja said that according to the Islamic dogmas, women’s involvement with the administrative management and social life next to and on equal terms with men at factories and in agriculture is acceptable from the viewpoint of the Islamic prescriptions. Nevertheless, there was no reference to arguments either from the Qur’an or Hadith.

At the same time, SADUM seriously criticized women for their commitment to the rituals connected with the prevailing local forms of Islam. In this sense, SADUM’s criticism targeted some women attuned to criticism of the official Soviet ideology. One illustration in Mashrab (№ 12), drawn in the familiar Soviet satirical style, depicts (see figures 13 and 14), in the center, a woman wearing the veil; she has come to the grave of a holy man where the “Chil Yā-Sin” ritual (i.e., a forty-time reading of Ya-Sin surah from the Qur’an) is exercised. Usually, women exercised such rituals sincerely, believing in the abolition of misfortunes and diseases. Literally, SADUM’s great tornado of criticism (in hundreds of fatwas and instructions) wracked “Otin-oyi” women who initiated similar traditional rituals (e.g., Aqiqa and Mawlud an-Nabi). At the same time, not only women who closely adhered to religious customs performed these rituals but emancipated women also took part in them [Kandioti and Azimova 2004; Alimova and Azimova 2000]. Thousands of known SADUM documents sharply criticized women’s commitment to such rituals, asserting that they had nothing to do with Islam. On this point, criticism

16 OMDA, fond 2456, opis’ 1, delo 104. l. 27.
17 For example, I can refer to SADUM’s ordinances dated 1967, 1972, 1973–77 that replicated previous fatwas and SADUM ordinances containing criticism of “rituals and rites that had not been allowed by Islam.” Women were the main object of criticism in these documents. See our article (with references to documents) [Babadjanov 2001: 67–77].
of women by Soviet ideologists and SADUM completely coincided. However, their argumentation, naturally, differed.

Later on, the majority of SADUM fatwa related to women, their rituals, and customs were rewritten and published with new arguments. At the same time, these fatwa and SADUM “ordinances” (buyruqlar / rasporiazheniia) were replicated until the end of 1989 [Babadjanov 2001: 67–77].

In the 1950s, the number of women’s suicides rose, due to domestic dramas in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. A study of this issue revealed that conflicts emerged because some husbands, referring to “prescriptions of Shari’ah,” prohibited their wives from leaving the home, becoming employed, and communicating with other women. In such families, women (mainly the young) were actually locked up. Desperation and hopelessness spurred some of them to suicide. Many women dared to address the prosecutor’s office or party committees. Consequently, the response from the Committee on Affairs of Religious Cults required that Mufti Ishan Babakhan compose a corresponding fatwa and present articles on the issue of women’s status in Islam18 for publication. The fatwa was, ironically, composed as clarification of the prohibition of suicide in Islam19. The causes of the suicide problem, however, had not been addressed or resolved.

As previously stated, the authors in SADUM’s journal Muslims of the Soviet East did not practically, directly address the issue of forms of women’s emancipation, particularly the Soviet dress code. Obviously, discussion of the “woman’s issue” in the context of religious prescriptions was forbidden by the official authorities.20

Theologist Yusupkhon Shakirov, mentioned above, tried to violate this taboo and prepared for publication “Problems of Women’s Equality and their Resolution.” He relied on the works of the Egyptian reformers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, adapting them to his contemporary fundamentals. The context of some arguments shows that the article responded to the usual Soviet ideological apparatus attack against the “Islamic orders that humiliated and enslaved women.” As far as we know, the article was not accepted for publication for the unknown reasons, but, in brief, it was sent to some large mosques in Uzbekistan and to the neighboring republics (the article’s first printed page is shown in figure 15).21

In the article, Yusupkhon Shakirov purposefully accentuated the section “On Women’s Position before Islam” (pp. 1–2 of the article’s printed copy), trying to prove that just the introduction of the Islamic prescriptions freed a woman from the “humiliated position” she had been in previously. Following the established tradition, the author referred to the “barbarian traditions” practiced before the emergence of disorderly Islamic marriages (including close relatives and endogamy), women’s lack of economic rights, the assassination of newborn girls, and so on. In the next section, “Women’s Position under Islam” (pp. 2–3), Shakirov named the advantages and rights a woman received in Islam, particularly in a family (with references to the Qur’an and Hadith). He tried to rebut his opponents’ assertions, writing “of the scientific

18 In the Committee’s publication, this requirement replicated the style of Soviet agitation leaflets, “… prove the equality of men and women in Islam from the point of view of Shari’ah prescriptions; explode fallacy of the allegedly existing provision that the wife must be in a slavery position for her husband…” [OMDA, fond R-2456, opis’ 1, d. 162, ll. 24–25].
19 OMDA, fond R-2456, opis’ 1, d. 162, ll. 27–32.
20 Shaikh Abdulaziz Mansur confirmed this supposition of mine (he worked with SADUM from 1976 to 1990. In 1978, he opened the Fatwa Section in the structure of the Department. Nowadays, he is deputy Mufti of the Muslim Department of the Republic of Uzbekistan). Following Shaikh’s words, SADUM theologians limited themselves to oral clarifications of issues of family ethics, particularly for women (personal interview, January 10, 2016).
21 According to the information from Shaikh Abdulaziz Mansur, the Committee on Religious Affairs requested that the author discuss the hijab issue and prove its wearing to be non-obligatory. The author mildly refused to discuss this issue, and therefore the article was not accepted for publication; its first copies were destroyed (information provided by the oldest SADUM worker—K.Sh.) I managed to discover the fourth copy of the article’s typed text in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan [Shakirov 1977].
Shakirov addressed his principal arguments vis-à-vis those of atheists, as usual appealing to some *ayat* of the Qur’an that allegedly diminish the status of women and prescribe “domination of men” (e.g., 2: 223; 4: 34, 38). Shakirov interpreted them in the sense that indeed these and similar *ayat* of the Qur’an should be understood as entrusting significantly greater obligations to men (e.g., provision for the family and its protection) compared with women. However, in no sense should these *ayat* be understood as prescribing a man to “be a tyrant of the family and full proprietor of a woman” (p. 4). Shakirov wrote, “[Man’s] privilege means that a husband [in the family] bears more responsibility than a wife.” He draws attention to physiological differences between men and women that determine the specificity in their social status and role in the family. Shakirov again refers to *mufassirs* and to the works of Amin Qassim and Muhammad Abduh.

This article’s last section is most interesting—“Women’s Emancipation in the Soviet Union.” The first sentences demonstrate that it was written in the usual Soviet publication style: “The new era was open for women after the Great October Revolution and establishment of the Soviet power. For the first time in history … a woman acquired complete freedom and true equality.” Further on, the section highlights positive changes in women’s social status, privileges provided to women in the USSR, and so on (pp. 5–7). The reader notices the differing styles of Soviet agitprops and Shaikh Abdulaziz Mansur, who was aware of this article and even saw its original version in the Uzbek language. Mansur asserted that this last section was written by an employee of the Committee on Affairs of Religion and International Concord (ordered to be completed by March 8). Shakirov agreed to additions in the form of ideological decoration, usual for those times, to facilitate censorship and achieve publication. Nevertheless, despite such a compromise, the article was not approved for publication. Shaikh Abdulaziz Mansur supposed that in reality, starting with the epoch of Nikita Khrushchev (1954–1964), SADUM was dismissed from discussions of the “women’s issue.”

![Figure 15](image-url)
the rising number of prostitutes from they “Muslim nations” (i.e., Uzbek, Kazakh, Tajik, and Kyrgyz women). In the new mufti’s opinion, the reason for the growth of family and social problems lay in the forgetfulness of Shari’ah prescriptions. “We must return our women to the path of Islam,” MS MYu declared, “but through patient and persistent clarifications.” MS MYu permanently followed this principle and was the most productive (from the viewpoint of a number of publications) theologian in the region. His essays are highly popular, but limited because they are not always adapted to ordinary readers.

Between 1989 and 1991, MS MYu himself broadcast many times on radio and television and published a number of articles in local mass media on family issues, wives and husbands’ duties regarding mutual relations, attitude to children, parents, and relatives, and so on. Naturally, his speeches and articles were current and sharply focused, but always with references to the Qur’an and Hadith. In his work, MS MYu clarified norms of religious ethics in families, carefully called for their adherence; this, as he supposed, was to strengthen families, return to “the customs of fathers and grandfathers checked with the times.” At the same time, he did not raise the hijab issue or other prescriptions and ritual obligations of women, sometimes adding that on other points of interest, women could seek consultations in mosques or at the SADUM Department of Fatwa. Later on, he explained his cautiousness as due to the fact that he had to consider the wishes of contemporary newspaper, radio, and television editors. Furthermore, he was deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (i.e., of the Soviet parliament).

Simultaneously, there appeared theologians and new imams in the renewed SADUM that occupied more radical positions regarding “revival of the Islamic family.” They used for this purpose minbars of mosques, traditional rituals (meetings), and so on, to which imams were invited. Many times from 1989 to 1992, I had to listen to presentations from new-generation imams (in Kokand, Andijan, Marghilan, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Tashkent) who severely criticized the results of Soviet women’s emancipation and insisted that women should be removed from all public offices, factories, and plants, and even from educational institutions. They also insisted that the Soviet women’s holiday on March 8 should be dropped.

Particularly stormy was the discussion initiated by the Uzbekistan Government, accurately called “On Conscientious Maternity” (May 1990); following this, there was a proposal to restrict the number of children in families (depending on demographic problems) using, for instance, special medications (contraceptives) and, as a last resort, abortion at legal medical institutions. With the connivance of MS MYu mass and, often rather radical public speeches by imams with sharp objections against attempts to introduce a law opposing Shari’ah prescriptions at all the mosques, the initiative was abolished. It was the first victory by the opponents of the Soviet forms of modernism.

The “Wahhabi” occupied the most radical position in such issues; it could be qualified as an extremist. However, their proposals regarding “returning women to Islam” almost coincided with the proposals of their vis-à-vis from the “solid Hanafyah.” At the same time, the leader of the “Wahhabi” of the Fergana valley, ‘Abduvali-qori Mirzaev, insisted that a place should be allocated for females to pray in

23 Videocassette from the author’s archive.
24 See, for instance, a number of his articles in the newspaper O’zbekiston adabiyoti va san’ati, which is popular among intellectuals (numbers of 23 February, 1990, 6 June, 1990, 5 November, 1990, and so on). During the interview, MS MYu said that wearing the hijab must be an inviolable prescription of Shari’ah.
25 From my interview with MS MYu (November, 2005). Mufti remarked that Perestroika had changed attitudes to religion, “but anyhow, that was the Soviet time.”
26 I taped one of the Friday speeches (sermons) given by the Imam of ‘Abdi-Darun (Samarkand) on June 10, 1990. Imam (K.Sh.) declared, “Yet 7 or 8 years ago, Muslim theologians would not hush up insults. Now, the times have changed, and Muslim consciousness has awakened. Therefore, they do not allow biting the thumb any more at prescriptions of our holy religion Islam.”
27 For details about them, see [Babadjanov and Kamilov 2001].
his mosque (Andijan Jāmi‘). His opponents sharply objected to the involvement of women in mosques, referring to Hanafyah prescriptions.

In any case, along with the abolishment of limitations in “religious matters,” apparently, the actuality of hard-and-fast rules, symbols, and ideological clichés of Soviet times were being lost. At the end of 1990, MS MYu initiated the decision to rename SADUM’s journal Muslims of the Soviet East as Muslims of Mavara’an-nahr (Muslims of Tranoxiana), and in 1991, the journal began publication under its new name. First, it stopped submissions to the Committee on Affairs of Religion and International Concord for censorship editing and approval to print. Second, there appeared a number of articles criticizing atheism, Soviet forms of modernism, and the fashion of “Westernism.” The same criticism arose in regard to the behavior or dress (e.g., wearing mini-skirts and trousers) of contemporary women in Uzbekistan and in the region; they were accused of betraying their ancestors’ customs and religions.

The journal had one more significant feature in its articles—the use of preferably traditional argumentation appealing to provisions of the Qur’an and Sunnah (Hadith). As for the “women’s issue,” authors mainly preferred to comment on the famous ayat of the Qur’an or Hadith, fully ignoring recent obligatory Soviet ideological clichés. In other words, the editorial board of the renamed journal attempted to refit discourse about women and their status into the framework of purely Muslim tradition.

For example, let us examine the article of a theologian of the Department Muhammad-Latif Djum’an—“Qualities of an Adherent Woman” [Muhammad-Latif 1991]. The author tries to interpret the 12th ayat of the 60th Sunni of the Qur’an, which calls for taking women who “will not place the copartner under Allah’s control, will not steal, commit adultery, and kill their children, and will not lie…” Muhammad-Latif supposes that this ayat points to women having more negative features than men. Just this vests obligations in men in relation to women and places a husband over a wife (i.e., gives the right of control within the family relations). The author comments on each of the named prescriptions, mainly from the viewpoint of criticism of women, who, as he implies, adhere to “unallowed rituals” (like worshiping “holy” graves), often lie, and are unable to bring up their children correctly without the involvement of men. On the whole, the article’s style, its vocabulary, and argumentation are close to similar essays and comments from medieval times.

Unlike such a radical position among his co-workers, MS MYu remained faithful to his principle of tactical clarification of issues connected with the rights and obligations of Muslim women in the family and their behavior in society. He dedicated a number of his publications to these topics as articles and booklets that he enumerated in one of his latest books dedicated to family [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 9–10, 212–214]. This book, Happy Family (500 pages), summarizes his previous publications devoted to the Muslim family, women’s status within it, Shari’ah marital rules, resolution of internal conflicts, etc. In point of fact, MS MYu presented Muslim norms of family ethics and their role in society and in the preservation of traditions.

MS MYu does not conceal his critical attitude towards slogans about “equality,” “freedom of a personality,” “sexual revolution,” and similar Western theories and movements, whose influence upon Muslims, in his opinion, “weakened religion and century-old traditions,” “negatively influenced the stability of families,” and led to tragedies [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 4–8]. Happy Family calls for a return to ethical norms in the selection of a groom or bride, following Shari’ah prescriptions. MS MYu clarifies rules of acquaintance and marriage that, in his opinion, have been forgotten by Muslims themselves. In particular, a woman and a potential groom must meet and become acquainted before the wedding (preferably in the presence of a relative of the bride), and their decision to become a

28 See numbers 2–4 of 1991, in particular.
family must be exclusively voluntary. Parents reserve the right to advise, but without any intervention [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 18–88]. MS Myu, in detailed reference to religious tradition, clarifies terms of marriage (e.g., the size of the mahr payment), criticizes superfluity at weddings, the rude interference of relatives in the lives of young spouses, and other such difficulties [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 90–121]. At the same time, MS MYu sharply criticizes the humiliation of young daughters-in-law and claims in relation to them from young husbands and relatives (a rather frequent phenomenon in modern Uzbek families). In this context, Happy Family provides detailed clarification (based on the Qur’an and Hadith, in particular) of a husband’s duties in the family and the principles of mutual relationships of relatives with the newly married and of the bride and groom with each other. MS MYu supposes that one must not prohibit the woman from leaving home and limit her social ties. However, she must only leave after consultation with her husband or asking his permission and remembering her obligations as a mother and a wife [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 122–150].

Insisting that men, because of their physiological particularities, must dominate in the family (and the woman must be subordinate to him), the author calls on men to be milder and to treat their wives with understanding, stating a number of Alcoranic quotations and Hadith prescribing the peaceful resolution of any conflicts in the family [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 300–409].

In this respect, most interesting is MS MYu’s interpretation of the 34th ayat of an-Nisa’ Sunni of the Qur’an (Women). The ayat states, “Husbands stand above wives as Allah gave ones preference over the others … and those [wives], whose recalcitrance scares you, entreat and leave them on [marriage] beds and strike them. And if they blame themselves, do not look for ways against them…”29 The Tajik researcher L. Dodkhudoeva remarked, “For those who do not follow Islam, this ayat is the brightest evidence of Islam’s inhumanity as it opens the way to the recognized domestic violence, cruelty towards the human being knowingly much weaker” [Dodkhudoeva 2013: 260]. Nevertheless, MS MYu insists that “strike” in the ayat should not be understood as beating or maiming. To confirm this, he provides a number of Hadith verses that prescribe not scolding wives, not striking them in the face, and not using violence towards concubines. MS MYu draws particular attention to the Hadith, giving the example of the Prophet who permitted himself only to jab his excited wife with a finger or to prick her slightly with his toothpick. MS MYu writes that, in her nature, the woman is susceptible, passionate, and fussy. The man must keep this in mind and not gripe to extremes. Following the Prophet’s example, he must not escalate the situation to assault and battery. In this case, MS MYu is sure the conflict can be resolved without scandal. At the same time, he appeals to women’s reasonability, calling on them to attempt to keep quiet and acknowledge men’s natural superiority [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 415–424].

Nevertheless, my observations show that not all theologians and imams share such a delicate approach to interpretation of this ayat. My anecdotal data shows 45–50% of imams in Uzbekistan suppose that the ayat’s prescription on wives’ bodily punishment should be treated as more preferable, even within the availability of the Hadith, as their status “canceling/Mansukh” instructions of the Qur’an is not proven.

MS MYu’s address on spouses’ intimate life (for the first time in his publications) should be considered unexpected for modern theological tradition in Central Asia, because many of the region’s modern theologies preferred to avoid these topics in publications, restricting them to private discussions with men. Traditionally, MS MYu sharply rejects abortions. He insists that the only appropriate form of

29 Modern translators and interpreters of the Qur’an prefer to highlight the polysemy of the key word in the ayat “حرب” (in the ayat, we have the imperative mood of the verb—‘ءاءمضر”), and it should be translated not as “strike” but as “go away, leave.” In this translation, the ayat sounds quite different. For details, see the site of Islamic Perspectives (http://www.islamicperspectives.com/Qoran-4-34.htm). See also [Ibrahim 2007: 13].
termination of pregnancy for Muslims is the abruption of the sexual intercourse. The author speaks about permissible and disapproved forms (positions) of sexual contact, opportunities of artificial impregnation, but only by extracted sperm of the lawful husband, and so on. In the style he has established, MS MYu finds confirmations for his instructions in consecrated texts [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 153–154, 230–237, 435–441]. Addressing spouses’ intimate life “according to the Sunni” in the public environment is in itself revolutionary for Central Asia, and, according to my observations, it was perceived positively by numerous MS MYu readers. He insists that topics should not be banned from public discussion in Islam, even such delicate issues.

The entire series of MS MYu’s publications is devoted to a review of prescriptions in “bookish Islam,” related to norms of family relations and problems with them; in essence, the series is aimed at careful, but insistent recoding of the “women’s issue,” and at a complete revision of the results of Soviet modernization. At the same time, MS MYu did not separate himself from reality; instead, he tried to harmonize his style of writing, his clarification of theological issues, and even his vocabulary with the peculiar perception of his target audience, which was, and, to a great extent remains, the product of Soviet educational and cultural codes.

Nevertheless, in his writings, MS MYu diligently evaded three issues that, in his opinion, are key in global Islamic discourse. One is connected to the usual claims addressed to Islam—the issue of polygamy. During my interview with MS MYu (November, 2005), I tried to clarify why he avoided this issue and how he interpreted polygamy in Islam. He answered that having one wife is preferable in Islam. If relations are built with her correctly, “following true prescriptions of Shari’ah,” then the need for another wife or concubine falls away. He accounted for his silence on this issue, first, by the fact that he wrote for a modern audience (first and foremost, for women) and considered changes in his readers’ minds and perceptions. On the other hand, he did not want to provide Islam’s opponents with a “new motive for attacks” since polygamy is one argument in criticism of Islam. At the same time, critics are mostly amateurs, both in the historical context of polygamy’s emergence in Islam and in other mostly disputable issues of Shari’ah prescriptions. Following tradition, MS MYu criticized Western communities and other religions in which men, as a rule, have lovers and other forms of adulterous relations, and in which non-traditional sexual relations have become quite common.

The second issue is that in publications and public speeches, MS MYu completely ignored fixed and enforced state legislation, norms of family law, the rights of women, parents’ duties, and other similar issues. In essence, women, like the whole family in Uzbekistan (and in the region’s neighboring states), have come under the enforcement of two legal systems. On the one hand, legally fixed and enforced family law is secular in form and origin. On the other hand, a massive call (apparently supported by the state) to follow Shari’ah prescriptions in family relations, including relations of women and distribution of inheritance, also exists.

I also raised these issues during the interview with MS MYu. His answer was within the framework of the current situation. He stated that, in fact, secular law was formed on the basis of moral and ethical prescriptions of religious law (including Islamic law). That is why he does not see contradictions between religious prescriptions and legislation. Moreover, the law is more effective in the regulation of family relations and the status of men and women because it is based on the prescriptions of Allah and his Prophet.

And, one more disputable issue within the framework of the global Islamic discourse is that MS MYu also avoided hijab wearing by women in his statements and publications. In private conversations,
he said that according to Sunni, *hijab* wearing is the eternal prescription. Frankly speaking, he does not adhere to the return to “blank” forms of *hijab* (similar to *purdah*) and admits its form looks like a kerchief tied on the neck.

Nevertheless, he obviously offers and interprets religious prescriptions as apparent alternatives to “circular legislation” that he supposes ineffective as it was “thought out” by human beings and therefore “cannot comply with prescriptions of Allah and his Prophet.”

“Give the Floor to Women!” Muslim Women of the New Generation and Their Publications

MS MYu’s approaches have found and continue to find their successors. Even his latent opponents use (often imperceptibly to him) argumentation (adapted, of course) borrowed from his works. His approaches and interpretation techniques have been captured by the female intellectuals who studied at the female madrasa named after Khadidchay Kubro, at female departments of the Tashkent Islamic Institute, and by graduates from the Tashkent Islamic University (all three located in Tashkent). This is particularly notable in publications in the newspaper and journal of the Muslim Department (*Islom Nuri, Khidoyat Sari/Khidoyat*, published since 1996 and 1999, respectively). Female graduates from these institutions often publish different articles, short literary essays, or verses on the pages of these publications. The *Khidoyat* journal has a special rubric, “Ayollar Sakhifasi” or “Page for Women.”

Since 2006, this has become a regular page; on it, girls and women publish articles referring to norms of family and public ethics that, in their opinion, a Muslim woman must observe: from issues of children’s upbringing to the call to learn the history of Islamic law. A particular place in these women’s publications is occupied by the retelling and ethical interpretation of the old myths concerned with the lives of the Prophet’s wives, his associates, and of women who became famous in the Islamic history as exemplars of religious dedication, the love of their families, who may do with very little, and so on.

Sometimes, articles dealing with male duties in the family and norms of their attitudes towards women appear in journals. Such articles usually bring forward Hadith like “The best [Muslims] of you are those who treat their wives well.” Their authors rather sharply criticize open dictatorship by men in families (particularly young ones) [Idrisali qizi 2012: 22]. The impact of the argumentation in MS MYu publications is particularly notable in such articles.

The whole series of articles by women authors (madrasa graduates) is dedicated to criticism of extravagance during weddings and other celebrations or mournful rituals held in connection with the remembrance of dead parents or relatives. This criticism completely coincides with that in SADUM’s documents, as well as with the theologians of today’s Muslim Department of Uzbekistan.

Those who consider themselves Muslims extremely rarely (if not almost never) discuss issues of female dress code. In particular, I mean the recently actively discussed *hijab* issue. The authorities have not approved the wearing of the *hijab* at state bodies, although this issue was not discussed openly in printed publications of the Muslim Department of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

I succeeded in finding only one article of this type, published by Mukhatrama Ulughova. The article has a promising title: “Clothes Measure Spirituality” [Ulughova 2013]. The author extremely disapproves of the excessive commitment to the “Arabic forms” of black clothes, with thickly veiled faces.

31 In its turn, works of MS MYu himself were also written under strong influence of theologians of the Arab world, often as direct borrowings.

32 For example, *Khidoyat*, Nos. 2, 3, 2009; Nos. 1–2, 4, 9, 2010 and others.
M. Ulughova writes, such clothes are completely inappropriate for the Uzbek women, particularly at weddings. She supposes that while choosing clothes, Muslim women must attach preference to national traditions implying the female attire of local people, but not the hijab that this author considers to symbolize “the worst times for women.”

The author does not write a word about hijab, probably supposing from its form that wearing the hijab does not in itself require discussion. However, at the time of publication (2013), the problem of wearing the hijab at state bodies, particularly at the educational institutions (in the form of internal circulars and orders) has not been practically raised. Sometimes, this issue has led to local conflicts. Interestingly, the Muslim Department kept to a specific position, implying that hijab wearing is a personal and voluntary choice. Its prohibition would have meant provision of additional argument in favor of those criticizing Uzbekistan’s religious policy.

Obviously, theologians’ argumentation and women’s own choices forced some governmental authorities to revise their attitudes on this issue. As a result, during the last two years, state officials have become more tolerant toward those who prefer to wear hijab (or even more often, national kerchiefs—ro’mol), including at educational institutions.33

Therefore, post-Soviet phobia and views on forms of “women’s freedom,” their dress code, and role in social and cultural life are gradually changing. On the other hand, it is often necessary to speak about intolerance to women who prefer “to return to the sources” and defiantly position themselves as women who strictly follow religious prescriptions. They do not entirely approve of those who are “open,” i.e., who do not wear hijab, preferring instead European fashion, although even “open women” still wear hijab at ritual sites (e.g., Mavlud and pilgrimage to the graves of saints).

Special marks of modernity imply that significant numbers of women are attempting to select forms and limits of their emancipation by themselves, perceiving and understanding religious prescriptions differently, deciding in a different way what to wear and whether to make the hijab. All have become accustomed to such diversity by understanding that mutual tolerance toward the look of the “other” is an integral sign of the day.

At the least, the continuing process of “female re-Islamization” often turns out to be as painful as the introduction of the Soviet forms of modernization, the influence of which is not contested by anybody.

CONCLUSION

It is hardly possible to assert that general definitions of “modernity” and “traditionality,” including their use in characterizing the societies of Soviet Central Asia, have not been fully comprehended. Yet in Soviet ethnography, different definitions were applied to societies of the socialist republics of Central Asia, constantly emphasizing the adherence of local residents to the “community modes” and “traditionalism” consistently preserved during the “socialist experiment,” acquiring heterogeneous forms.34

In any case, for Muslim communities, the most exemplary indicator of both forms of “modernity” and “traditionalism” (under ambiguous interpretations of these definitions35) was and still is the “women’s issue.” The limits of perception and understanding of religious prescriptions by both women themselves and the un-unified (changing depending on ideological conjunctures) opinions of theologians retained

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33 I mainly judge by the situation at Tashkent Islamic University, where I teach from time to time.
34 Sergei Abashin offered a short bibliographical review and criticism of various theories, approaches, and markers of Soviet ethnology (ethnography) in his magnificent monograph [Abashin 2015: 13–22].
35 See, for instance [Tipps 1973; Hobsbawm 1983; Eisenstadt 2002].
principally unchanged configurations. Women understood and fulfilled religious prescriptions in their own ways, and their views did not and still do not agree with those norms (particularly related to family rituals) that local theologians declare “the only correct ones.” It is hardly sensible to reject the serious influence of grand-sized Soviet projects (especially educational or those connected with “national construction”) on local communities, including women. Of course, Soviet forms of ideology to a great extent borrowed clichés of the European revolutions and reformations. A particular place among them was attached to the issue of women’s equality. Bolshevik power preferred to solve this issue, as usual, in a nihilistic and maximalistic style. But force has not always been the single source and synopsis of promotion of Soviet forms of emancipation of Muslim women [Kamp 2006: 120–125; Babadjanov 2014: 260].

Within the Muslim environment of the former Russian Empire, discussion of the “women’s issue” began well before the Bolsheviks took power and was initiated by the religious reformers (Jadids). Evidently, Jadids appeared to be under the influence of the Egyptian reformers like Qassim Amin, whose ideas turned out to be realistic even in the Soviet times.

Theologies adherent to mazhaba (conventionally “conservative”) prescriptions that did not adopt reformers’ ideas could not pass over this problem in silence. Nevertheless, conservatives first extremely disfavored the authorities’ reforms, although they gradually relinquished their positions and looked for compromises and adaptations. There are no doubts that external criticism (first and foremost, atheistic) induced Soviet theologians to revise the “women’s issue”, to look for and present arguments prescribing, indeed, a mild attitude toward women in the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

SADUM revealed a magical loyalty to the authorities and a readiness to cooperate with them. They have undertaken functions of mediators in some reforms of Soviet power, first and foremost in the issue of women’s emancipation. However, SADUM managed to defend its own understanding of the forms and types of women’s emancipation.

Simultaneously, SADUM took part in the movement for women’s emancipation in the context of latent opposition by theologians and activists of various atheistic societies—direct successors of the Hujum movement. In other words, theologians tried to reduce atheist movements’ aggressiveness by offering scripts of emancipation considering, from their viewpoint, ethical norms and forms of identity connected with the usual religious minimalism.

Moreover, during the Soviet times, Islam as part of identity was not forgotten. Thus, religion could not be finally pushed from the public to the private area; this was fixed, together with the establishment of SADUM. After issuing a number of sponsored fatwas that declared non-obligatory wearing of hijab, SADUM was excluded from discussion of the “women’s issue” because theologians’ understanding of emancipation forms during the Soviet era did not coincide with the vector of the official ideology.

Nevertheless, as seen in Shakirov’s articles, despite the taboo, the Soviet theologians strived to defend their viewpoint on the prescriptions of the Qur’an and Hadith regarding the familial and social status of women, their interrelations with men, the resolution of family conflicts, and the attempt to separate women’s lack of rights before the revolution from their own religious prescriptions.

At the end of Perestroika, we saw massive rehabilitation of the Islamic norms regarding women. However, the process was also undifferentiated. As it has been shown, there were theologians committed to radical changes, including those within the SADUM that had changed not only its signboard (“Muslim Department of Mavara’an-nahr/Uzbekistan”) but also its working style. Since then, the theologians

36 See the short review offered by Seyfettin Ersahin [Ersahin 2005].
have tried to compensate for the losses of their positions in the course of social and cultural revolutions and the ideological recoding of the most of the population. They began revising the Soviet past, which implied an attempt to reject the results of Soviet modernization.

Abolishing limitations in religion coincided with the crisis of the official ideology. Theologians of various perspectives first tried to exploit this circumstance, i.e. the disappointment of the majority of the people. Despite the internal split, all the theologians (especially those of the new generation) tried to present the illusive picture of the prosperity of the Muslim world guided by Shari‘ah. Nevertheless, the real morality crisis of the religious prescriptions and the actually downgraded position of women at the beginning of the 20th century, which coincided with the “socialist experiment,” were forgotten or completely ignored. As L. Dodkhudoeva successfully noted, “endless (handwritten) sources are full of examples of the far from cloudless existence of the community in the middle of the century” [Dodkhudoeva 2013: 78-79].

At the beginning of independence, there was one more attempt to return Shari‘ah into the general area of the ideological discourse and into “women’s modernization” in particular. Again, some theologians presented Shari‘ah as a unique code of norms and rules guaranteeing stability, prosperity, the revival of family morality and social ethics, and collective religious memory.

As a result, the family law (e.g., the status of women and their family rights) became one of those rare legitimate spaces where Shari‘ah prescriptions can act as an alternative and, simultaneously, as an addition to official family legislation. However, limits and spaces of eligibility of Shari‘ah prescriptions in various families differ and depend on a multiplicity of circumstances, including the degree of “modernization” of an individual family, their conflicts, and so on.

MS MYu became the most productive (from the viewpoint of publications) theologian of the last years of Perestroika and the epoch of independence. He tried to make the full use of fruits of the crisis of Soviet ideology and the beginning of the actual re-Islamization of the society. A solid foundation of published books and articles allowed him to claim presentation of the truth to the last degree. These claims for the final and only correct resolution of public discussion on the “women’s issue” are, first and foremost, connected with the attempts to return women from Soviet emancipation and modernization to conventionally “traditional” norms of life and ethics adapted into contemporary forms.

MS MYu suggested a new form of Shari‘ah actualization, including through the “women’s issue.” He presented Shari‘ah as the only legitimate and reliable source of moral and ethnic forms in family life, trying to restore this complex synthesis of normative prescriptions into community life and family, in particular. However, he tried not to lose his sense of proportion and did not mention a return to medieval reality, although he mentioned several times about violations of these prescriptions by Muslims themselves, long before the establishment of the Soviet power. At the same time, he did not deny the possibility of the contemporary Muslim woman socializing in public, but in the context of man’s domination and with his permission.

Actually resorting to *ijtihad*, MS MYu claimed the presentation of “renewed Islam.” However, in reality, his argumentation resembles the emanation of contexts and prescriptions of previous epochs’ scholastic texts, formally appealing to modern (actual) Islamic discourses.

37 My personal experience of investigations, e.g., of the Kokand khanate, also lead me to the conclusion that Shari‘ah prescriptions (as norms of social and personal ethics, or in the area of women’s rights) were not regularly followed. See [Babadzhanov 2010: 367–420].

38 E.g., *imams* of quarter (*mahalla*) mosques are involved with conflict management and actively apply this right to promote Islamic norms in family life, women’s status, etc.
While analyzing the “women’s issue” from the viewpoint of Shari’ah prescriptions, MS MYu attempted to prove the humanistic mission of the Islam in which rights and duties of women are concerned with sacred prescriptions superior to all forms of legislation conceptualized by human beings. Probably because of this, MS MYu ignores the legislative and constitutional rights and guarantees of citizens in his works “as something formal and, apparently, illegitimate from the point of view of religious prescriptions.” At the same time, he actively quotes (in the form of annexes to sections of Happy Family) documents of the Islamic Council of Europe, the General Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (VIDPCh), and the Constitution of the Islamic State (adopted in Paris on December 10, 1983). Even in divorce conditions (talaq), he completely ignored existing legislation and insisted that problems in that situation should be solved by following Shari’ah prescriptions [Muhammad-Yusuf 2011: 187-189, 245-247, 309-311].

Women of the new generation in Uzbekistan (and throughout the region at large) are not uniform, although none of them denies the religious component of identity. To begin with, their exterior (or dress code) can be conventionally divided into three types: (1) preferring “European attire” and not wearing the hijab (mainly residents of large cities); (2) preferring “national” forms of clothing and wearing kerchiefs (ro’mol) and national dresses, but not accepting the “Arabic” types of hijab and clothing (mainly residents of districts, villages, and old parts of cities; these seem to form the majority); and (3) finally, preferring forms of hijab and dress that have spread in the modern Arabic world (the “Arabic dress code”).

But irrespective of dress code, degree, and their form of commitment to Shari’ah prescriptions, women desire to be not only the object but also the subject of changes; they themselves attempt to identify forms and limits of their emancipation, e.g., by discussing these issues in published articles and Internet space.

The authorities’ official position on Islamization of the “women’s issue” is rather unstable, but cautious. The state’s critical attitude toward Soviet modernization does not in any way indicate a full refusal of its results and heritage. Despite criticism of the Soviet project of overcoming gender inequality (in the sense of de facto limitations on women’s rights), it was successful to a certain extent. Its results within the framework of Soviet ideology are not only argued in contemporary Uzbekistan (as they are in the region’s neighboring countries), but are actively supported. Women’s involvement in the country’s social, political, and scientific life is still stimulated, and this introduces corrections into the real position of women in society.

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Such a position complicated his relations with official authorities, as MS MYu did not fit into the corps of ulemas and imams cooperating with the state although nobody challenged his authority. Simultaneously, his refusal to accept terrorism made him the natural ally of Uzbekistan and many CIS countries.
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Introduction

This paper attempts to show the relationship among women’s lives, marriage, and the market economy in contemporary rural Uzbekistan. More specifically, I focus on the process of marriage and how it has changed—from the perspective of the transition to a market economy, namely, the increased presence of money and manufactured goods in the rural population’s everyday life.

The outline of this paper is as follows. First, I present an overview of previous studies concerned with the Soviet modernization of women and the transition to a market economy. Next, I describe the research area in Kashkadarya province. Third, based on field data, I examine the current marriage process in the region and the changes it has undergone. Finally, I share my conclusions.

1. Paper’s Viewpoint: Reproduction of Women’s Role in the Home

During the Soviet period, women began to work outside their homes. However, as recent studies on the Soviet modernization of women have indicated, even though women became workers, they were still expected to serve as mothers and wives at home. In other words, Soviet modernization did not reach the sphere of the home, and this situation continues till today.

The government of the Soviet Union tried to establish socialism in Central Asia, a backward area where patriarchy was the chief obstacle. Therefore, to advance socialism, the government attempted to emancipate women oppressed by patriarchal households; however, viewpoints differ. Insistence that women should be emancipated was the official reason; the original, underlying intention was to increase productivity via women’s empowerment.

In the 1920s, the department of women (Zhenotdel) was established in some areas, and many women belonged to clubs whose members were enlightened local women. Moreover, the government established factories for women. Among these policies toward women, Hujum was an incident worthy of mention. Beginning in 1927, Hujum aimed to achieve complete emancipation of women Hujum was a campaign to rid women of the veil (paranji in Uzbek), which the government regarded as a symbol of women’s oppression. However, Hujum was suspended after two years; men who opposed getting rid of the veil used violence against women who actually unveiled themselves. Hujum could not be accomplished overnight. Instead, women entered the public sphere gradually. During the outbreak of World War II, however, women rapidly became workers when men were sent to the front.

Nevertheless, differences remained in occupation and the content of work according to gender. Women worked mainly as teachers, doctors, nurses, and unskilled workers. For example, Kamp showed that at a farm in the suburbs of Shahrisabz, men worked in the fields, but women worked at a silk mill or an embroidery factory [Kamp 2006: 220]. Keller observed that men decided the work’s content; women seldom managed a farm or a factory [Keller 1998: 21]. Furthermore, women had to perform domestic

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1 Hujum means “attack” in the Uzbek language.
chores and care for the children; consequently, they were forced to shoulder a double burden. Obiya [2012] quoted Tokhtakhdzhaeva’s description of a woman losing an unborn baby, because even nine months into her pregnancy, she was forced to do fieldwork to achieve the norma [Tokhtakhodzhaeva 2000].

After the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991, gender equality was denied by the new system. Simultaneously, the transition to a market economy increased the importance of money in daily lives. Women continued to shoulder the double burden, but now to earn sufficient money for their households. Kandiyoti suggested that the handsome Soviet social security, a new type of patriarchy, preferred women not to be emancipated. After the paternalistic Soviet system collapsed, women began to adapt themselves to traditional patriarchy reevaluated under the new system [Kandiyoti 2007]. For women, marriage is an important safety net that provides them social and economic security. In the current situation, traditional values still dictate that young women should marry.

In this paper, I aim to clarify the current method of reproduction of traditional values regarding women and the family, maintained throughout the Soviet period, from the perspective of the transition to a market economy in rural areas.

2. Transition to Market Economy and Changing Life in Rural Areas

I focus on the transition to a market economy for the following reasons. According to preceding studies, on the one hand, the transition to a market economy following Uzbekistan’s independence made people’s lives difficult in rural areas. Researchers have described how people coped with poverty through social networks [Hiwatari 2008; Kandiyoti 1998]. I conducted field research from 2010 to 2011, 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I saw that local bazaars were expanding and increasing in number each year. Then, I realized that the transition to a market economy, in one respect, has brought material wealth to rural living. Of course, people continue to have needs, and problems remain in the living environment. However, since Uzbekistan gained independence, residents of rural areas can engage in economic activity relatively freely, and more commodities are available at local bazaars. In other words, residents can live a life of abundance if they earn enough money. This is the current state of life in rural areas, as the living environment has changed in the 20 years since the Soviet Union’s collapse. I argue that we can clearly see how traditional values regarding women have been maintained in the new living situation by focusing on the relationship between the prevailing market economy and the process of marriage.

3. Outline of Field Research

In the west central part of Chiroqchi district, Kashkadarya province, I conducted field research from May 2010 to November 2011. During this time, I lived in a settlement in Chiroqchi district, where I researched conditions of carpet weaving and women’s lives.

The settlement where I lived is about 45 kilometers northwest of Chiroqchi city center. According to village residents, their families were originally hunters and cattle breeders. In 1938, Andreev kolkhoz was established. People started to settle down in places where they now live. In 1954, Andreev kolkhoz was reorganized into Yoshot Sovkhoz, where, mainly, qaraqli sheep were bred. Additionally, I suspect that a certain number of people in the settlement came to work as members of the Sovkhoz during the Soviet period.
After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Voshot Sovkhoz was privatized, and now people earn a living by securing multiple incomes. Breeding and selling livestock serves as the main income for family budgets. The average family size in the settlement is five or six people, and a family seems to need about 150,000 per month to live. People need cash to buy vegetables, fruit, processed food, and clothing; they pay their cell phone bills in the local bazaar. In addition, weddings and circumcision ceremonies require many foodstuffs and gifts for guests, which can place a heavy financial burden on families.

4. Outline of Marriage

(1) The circumstances of marriage through household research

I would like to explain the circumstances of marriage in the area through household research. For this research, 248 women older than 16 (age of beginning secondary education), who had not entered higher education, were selected. In the research area, the average age at which a woman first marries is about 18. In terms of education, two women of the 248 surveyed had obtained higher education, 32 had secondary technical education, 206 had received compulsory education (11-year system), and 6 had not finished compulsory education.

Also for this research, 239 men were selected. Of them, 29 had a higher education, 48 had secondary technical education, 147 had received compulsory education, and 6 had not finished compulsory education. According to these results, both men and women generally received compulsory education. However, two times more men than women received secondary technical education and higher education.

The author never heard anyone in the research area remark that women should not receive education. Actually, women who received higher education were proud of studying at institut, and people seemed to think that educated women, “o’qigan qiz,” could find good partners despite their “advanced” age. In other words, people want their sons and daughters to receive an education from a koreji or institut, but these schools are expensive, so parents tend to provide their sons higher education, especially because

5 I conducted household research from June to November 2010. I gathered basic data from 143 households (909 people, 466 males, 443 females). I visited every household and, as I completed a questionnaire, asked questions (family members’ names, dates of members’ births, occupations, private cultivated land, numbers of livestock, and existence of any rug producers).

3 Uzbekistan’s educational system following: The term of compulsory education is 9 years, but an 11-year elementary-secondary education school, Maktab, also exists. The latter part of secondary education is koreji or litsey (2- or 3-year system). After secondary education, there is higher education or institut.
sons (usually the youngest) must take responsibility for the family.

Women graduate from the 11-year system at around 18 years old. So, in the research area, they tend to marry after graduating. People sometimes view marrying young as a problem, but generally speaking, marrying is a social duty, regardless of sex. However, this is especially the case for women, who cannot live alone. In short, the belief is that women must marry to live in the area.

(2) The process of marriage

1). Sending a go-between (sovchi kuzatish)
The marriage process begins when parents ask their son, “Is there anyone you like?” If the son does have someone he likes, his parents collect information about the young woman (e.g., her family’s reputation, her appearance, and her character). They consider her suitability for their son. If the son does not have anyone he likes, his parents rely on their relatives or acquaintances. When the parents have decided on the bride, someone from the groom’s concerned—sovchi in Uzbek—visits the bride’s family. On the first visit, the bride’s father generally tells the s ovchi that he would like to ask his daughter. On the second visit, he tells the s ovchi that he would like to consult his relatives. Finally, he tells the s ovchi to plan the wedding ceremony. When the bride’s father accepts the marriage offer, the proposal is finalized. Bride’s and groom’s families talk about, for instance, the rough date of the marriage, the number of ceremonies, and the gifts to be exchanged. The scale of the marriage ceremony depends on the economic power of the bride’s and groom’s families.

2). The wedding ceremony
If a relative (grandfather or grandmother) has died within the past few years, a mourning ceremony, in Uzbek called “ro’mol tashlash (scarf throwing),” is held. This ceremony is small, just for close relatives. Furthermore, if the groom’s family has the budget for it, they present a gold ring or earrings to the bride. The engagement ceremony, called “fotiha to’yi,” informs people that the couple plans to marry. The period from the engagement ceremony to the wedding ceremony varies. For example, Shahnoza had her engagement ceremony in August 2010. At the ceremony, the groom’s family told Shahnoza’s parents that the wedding ceremony would be held the next year. But after the engagement, the groom’s mother wanted the bride to begin housework as soon as possible, so the wedding ceremony was held in some haste in November 2010. In Gulhayo’s case, the wedding ceremony was held two years after the engagement ceremony because her fiancé went to work in Russia.

The ceremony held when the bride leaves her parents’ home is the “bride’s ceremony (kelin to’yi).” As this ceremony approaches, the groom’s family makes a gift of cotton, with which the bride’s mother, relatives, and neighbors make cushions and bedding. The two families discuss and decide, at least a month in advance, on the date for the wedding ceremony. After that, they distribute invitations (to’y bildirish).

The day before the wedding ceremony, a casual ceremony is held at the bride’s home, with the bride’s school friends and near relatives invited. In the middle of this ceremony, a religious marriage ceremony is sometimes held. In this ceremony, the groom comes to the bride’s home, they enter a room decorated with the bride’s dowry items, and they lie in bed, pretending to sleep. Elderly women “wake” them by saying curious words. After that, the bride’s relatives give some small amount of money to participants from the groom’s side. This ceremony means that the bride and groom can sleep together. On this day, the groom returns to his home.

4 The bride takes these things to the groom’s home. Generally in the research area, quilts and mattresses—10 each—are prepared for the dowry.
The next day, the groom comes to the bride’s home to take her back to his home. They leave the bride’s home and visit the square of Shahrisabz with their relatives and friends. After that, they go to the groom’s home, and many people visit both families’ homes to celebrate. When the bride arrives at the groom’s home, the ceremony of the “bride’s greeting (kelin salom)” is held. With her courtesy mother, called “oldiga chiqqan inasi,” the bride bows to the women participants. After the bride’s greeting, the ceremony is temporarily closed, and participants return to their homes. After dark, at the wedding feast (vecher), relatives and friends congratulate the families and dance to loud music.

3). Ceremonies after the wedding ceremony

The day after the wedding ceremony, a “face opening (bit ochirish)” is held. With her head and face covered with a large scarf, the bride enters the kitchen in the groom’s home and stands on a transport bag. Then she sifts flour and cuts meat on a seat made from goat- or sheepskin (po’stak). Next, a child removes the bride’s scarf with a stick; her “face is opened.” After that, women from the groom’s side present the bride with dishes and scarves as gifts.

A period of 40 days after the wedding ceremony is called chilla, and during this time, the bride cannot return to her parents’ home. After the 40 days of chilla, the chimildiq olish ceremony is held. In this ceremony, a chimildiq, hanging where the bride and groom sleep, is removed, indicating that the shame of the newly married couple sleeping together is removed.

Unless the bride is officially invited, she cannot visit her new relatives’ homes. When part of the groom’s family happens to be a neighbor, the bride sometimes goes there to borrow or lend cooking utensils, but she does not stay long. After her new relatives invite her, she can visit freely. This invitation is called the “bride’s tea (kelin choyi)” and in this ceremony, the groom, the bride, and the host’s relatives dine together.

(3) Recognition of marriage

How does the process of marrying reflect recognition that marriage is a social duty? First, I explain from the perspective of the bride’s and groom’s families. During my research, I often heard that if the sovchi comes to a young woman’s parents to propose a marriage, the parents generally accept the proposal even if they worry that their daughter is too young to marry. They believe it better to accept a proposal rather than reject it and risk not receiving any other offers. That is, if a young woman’s parents decline a marriage proposal, they might be exposed to the risk that she will not be able to marry later because the proposed groom’s family might speak ill of them. Therefore, I suspect that the bride’s side wants a good marriage partner as the first proposal.

The groom’s side focuses on whether the bride is a “good girl” or not, specifically, a girl who seldom goes out and does not wear jeans (wearing jeans is “city style”), a girl who wears a traditional one-piece and trousers, called ko‘ylak va ishton. In particular, the social standing of the bride’s father is important. Thus, a daughter and her father should practice being a traditional “good girl” and “good father” to attract a good groom. Conversely, the groom’s side recognizes that a “good girl” might receive offers from other potential grooms. Therefore, they hurry to secure the engagement. In addition to hosting the marriage ceremony, the groom’s family bears expenses of preparing a room or a house for the bride and groom, clothes for the bride, and so on. Recently, marriage ceremonies have become increasingly luxurious, and of course, expenses are also on the rise. I suspect that marriages are becoming more difficult for the bride’s family in terms of social reputation and for the groom’s family in terms of economic power.

In summary, there is competition in the selection of marriage partners. People believe they must hurry
to find a good partner. This competition, for the bride’s family, is based on the fear that if they hold out too long, their daughter might miss the opportunity to secure a marriage and, thus, her livelihood. For the groom’s family, competition is based on impatience; if they want to secure a good marriage partner, they have to enrich themselves economically in order to take a bride as soon as possible.

5. Increasing Dowries and Pressures

(1) Dowry content

People recognize that marriage ceremonies and dowries are becoming more munificent year by year. Tables 1 and 2 show a comparison of contents of a mother’s dowry from 1980 (table 1) and another from her daughter in 2010 (table 2), although we must keep in mind that these lists are composed from the brides’ recollections.

In comparison to the mother’s marriage, when the daughter married, tea bowls, plates, cosmetics, baby clothes and machine-made carpets were becoming predominant. From these tables, we can also see that dowries are larger. New dowry items—tea bowls, plates, cosmetics, shoes, and carpets are ready-made, showing that people buy ready-made products and add to dowries due to their increasing opportunities to earn money. According to a man in his sixties, in the 1970s, marriage ceremonies were very simple. He remembered the bride just riding a horse and apple several participants. At this stage, I cannot verify changes in the marriage ceremony, but according to people’s memories, it seems likely that marriage ceremonies are becoming more lavish.

(2) Pressure on hosts

Holding marriage ceremonies is not a heavy expenditure just for the hosts (especially for groom’s family). Families also worry about what the guests will say about the ceremony. But why do they worry about guests’ evaluations? I believe this issue relates to marriage ceremonies becoming larger each year, fueled by the transition to a market economy. I illustrate this with the following case.

1). The case of Abduqobil

First, I will clarify whether the case of Abduqobil’s frustration is exemplifying the burden of holding marriage ceremonies. Abduqobil is Sharaf’s eldest son. I stayed at Sharaf’s house during my field research. Sharaf, Abduqobil’s father, had long worked as a teacher at a maktab in the settlement, and people

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Table 1. The dowries of Haytgul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Uzbek</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rug</td>
<td>Qattiq</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt</td>
<td>Ko’pa</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattress</td>
<td>Ko’pacha</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillow</td>
<td>Yostiq</td>
<td>15, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large oblong chest</td>
<td>Sandiq</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onepiece (with trousers)</td>
<td>Ko’ylak</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarf</td>
<td>Ro’mol</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacket</td>
<td>Jamper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long robe</td>
<td>Xalat</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>Tufli</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>Galpoq</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The dowries of Nasiba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Uzbek</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rug</td>
<td>Qattiq</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet (machine weaving)</td>
<td>Magazin gilam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt</td>
<td>Ko’pa</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattress</td>
<td>Ko’pacha</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillow</td>
<td>Yostiq</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large oblong chest</td>
<td>Sandiq</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onepiece (with trousers)</td>
<td>Ko’ylak</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarf</td>
<td>Ro’mol</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long robe</td>
<td>Xalat</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-piece</td>
<td>Kostyum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>Tufli</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>Galpoq</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowl</td>
<td>Kosa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacup</td>
<td>Piyora</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate (big)</td>
<td>Tovq</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate (small)</td>
<td>Tovq</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>Adyol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>Patnis</td>
<td>1set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablecloth</td>
<td>Daastunxon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handkerchief</td>
<td>Sochoq</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth for baby</td>
<td>Bolalarga kiyim</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5 Because I stayed at Sharaf’s house during my field research, I could understand everyday life in the research area from living with his family and associating with his extended family.
trusted him and his family.

Abduqobil works as a police officer, drawing a salary of 400 dollars a month. In this area, his household income is above average. In November 2010, his elder daughter Shahlo married the son of a private farm owner in the neighboring settlement. The house she married into has directed the sovhoz for generations, and even now they have a large private farm. Thus, the household is one of the most eminent in the area. So, Abduqobil and his wife do not worry about their daughter’s life with her in-laws because Shahlo’s only work is to milk the cow. The year after she married, Shahlo had a baby boy. A beshik to’y, a ceremony to wish the baby growth, was planned for November 15, Shahlo’s birthday. Traditionally, the bride’s parents pay the cost of the beshik to’y, and prepare clothing, many toys, and so on for the baby. One day, Shahlo’s father-in-law told Abduqobil that he wanted to bring forward the date of the beshik to’y. Abduqobil and his wife replied that they would not have enough money in time for an earlier date.

Abduqobil complained to me about the hardships they faced due to Shahlo’s marriage to a wealthier family. He said that this was not the first time he had been burdened financially. When he was preparing for the marriage, he went through great hardship to buy a large oblong chest, called a sandiq, for the dowry. One day, Abduqobil heard from the groom’s family that they had bought a sandiq. Customarily, the bride and groom prepare the same type of sandiq. Therefore, Abduqobil and his wife went to a local bazaar to buy the same sandiq, but it was too expensive. After that, they looked in Chiroqchi and Shahrisabz cities, but they could not find the same one. Finally, they bought the same sandiq at Qarshi, the capital of Kashkadarya province. After Abduqobil told me this story, he added that he would marry his younger daughter Nargiza to a man of the same economic level as his family.

2). Remarks of Anora and Oysoat

Why did Abduqobil complain about preparations for the wedding and beshik to’y? When female guests came to the marriage ceremony, they looked at the sandiq that Abduqobil had gone to so much trouble to acquire; the bedding, called kurpa or kurpacha in Uzbek; the decorated cushions on the sandiq; and the bride’s clothing on the wall of the room for the bride and groom. At the marriage ceremony, Anora, Sharaf’s younger son’s wife, and I were shown into the room for the bride and groom. When we sat down, Anora told me that there were ten kurupacha, ten kurupa, two pillows, and four carpets. At the time, I did not understand why Anora counted the number of items in the dowry. Next, Anora confirmed the numbers with women sitting near her. Then, she told them that she finally understood the customs involved in attending a marriage ceremony. Anora was born in a settlement in Chiroqchi district and then, due to her father’s work, lived in Tashkent until she was 12 years old. After that, her family returned to Chirakchi district, beginning a new life in a different place.

Anora said that their new life had many hardships because her family was used to Tashkent life. Moreover, she said that when they came to the settlement (research area), they had no relatives there, so she seldom attended marriage ceremonies. Consequently, she had not learned how to assess dowries. According to her account, I noted that when female guests go to a marriage ceremony, they evaluate the dowry and talk about it at the banquet.

Why do women assess dowries? My explanation is based on the following case. At a settlement in Chiyal, Oysat, who lived in Chiyal, and I attended a marriage ceremony. Two brothers were each marrying. Oysat said that the grooms’ family had become rich since the two sons had begun working in Tashkent. The elder brother’s bride was from a rich family, but the younger brother’s was from a standard family. Oysat looked at each dowry and then evaluated the brides’ closets. According to Oysat, the closet of the younger brother’s bride was very nice, but the other closet was not so nice. The
closet of the younger brother’s bride was priced at approximately 15,000,000 sum, while the other’s was priced at approximately 13,000,000 or 14,000,000 sum. It seems that the parents of the younger brother’s bride had bought an expensive closet so as not to be embarrassed. In other words, dowries show how eager hosts (both bride and groom’s parents) are, and the wedding guests form an impression of their eagerness from the price of the dowries. In short, wedding guests pay attention to dowries bought at the bazaar with cash.

To summarize, first, people in the area see marriage as a duty. Second, they recognize that marriage ceremonies show the hosts’ economic power. This means that hosts must make the marriage ceremonies as beautiful as possible so as not to bring shame on the family. Therefore, I suspect that a disparity between people who can marry easily and people who cannot marry is appearing in rural areas.

3) A sign of change? The case of Feruza’s marriage

Then, we might ask, if there is marital disparity, how do people who cannot easily marry find a marriage partner? To answer, I will describe the process of Feruza’s marriage. Feruza was unmarried due to her unfortunate family situation. She did not have a supporter who could help her arrange a marriage because her mother had passed away and her father was o’qimagan, meaning “not studied” in Uzbek. A niece of Urus, Sharaf’s wife, she was working as a helper at Sharaf’s house. As mentioned previously, women in the area generally marry at around 18 years old, so because Feruza was 25, she was in danger of having missed the opportunity. Despite the challenge of her family situation, in October 2010, Feruza married a younger man whom she “dated” by mobile phone. Her case represents a new marriage process enabled by the growing tourist industry, widespread technology, and the transition to a market economy.

Sharaf’s family makes and sells hand loomed rugs for foreign tourists. Their business is rare, in that they make handlooms only in the settlement, without running a shop in a tourist city. However, their success can be attributed to their location. An asphalt road connecting Samarkand and Shahrisabz, two popular tourist cities in Uzbekistan, runs in front of Sharaf’s house, and therefore, many sightseeing buses pass the house.

The handloom business was begun in 1998. When Sharaf’s fourth daughter was weaving a carpet at home, a bus of Korean tourists happened to pass. Catching sight of her weaving the carpet, a tourist stopped the bus and came to the house. The Korean tourist bought the carpet from Sharaf, and that was how the business began. After that, foreign tourists sometimes bought handlooms, and as a result, the family business grew little by little. Now, during the busy season, April and May, and again from August to November, foreign tourists visit almost every day. Sharaf built a handloom factory where young women, about 20 years old, make handlooms. Sharaf’s family are often featured in newspapers, journals, and on television, so they are famous not only in Chiroqchi district, but also throughout Uzbekistan.

To return to Feruza’s marriage—it is quite novel. In the area even now, arranged marriage is common. However, Feruza met her husband Zafar through her friend Gulmila who worked at the handloom factory. Gulmila gave her Zafar’s mobile phone number. Feruza associated with Zafar by mobile phone, and, eventually, they married. Mobile phones were introduced to the area around 2003, and they spread rapidly among the populace. Young women who work at the handloom factory often buy clothing and mobile phones; they then receive young men’s telephone numbers from their friends. They talk with their “telephone boyfriends,” as Feruza did. In other words, Feruza’s marriage was realized through creation of waged work for unmarried women in response to expanding tourism and the transition to a market economy.
Furthermore, not only Feruza’s way of meeting her husband, but also their marriage process is novel. For example, Sharaf’s family received a marriage proposal from a go-between, but in Feruza’s case, the marriage proposal came from the groom’s (Zagfar’s) parents, with Feruza’s father being consulted. At the first visit, the groom’s parents strongly desired to meet Feruza, so she appeared before the sovchi. In general, a prospective bride should never appear before the parents of a prospective groom. In addition, Feruza was older than Zafar, and as a result of the meeting, Zafar’s parents decided to announce Feruza’s age as less than it actually was. They would decide whether to proceed with the marriage after Feruza and Zafar met. For the second visit, Zafar came to Sharaf’s house with his parents. When Feruza met Zafar, they decided to proceed with the marriage, with everyone’s consensus. Anora said that in general, before marriage, a prospective groom never officially visits the bride’s house. Sharaf’s younger brother reflected on this process and remarked that all past marriages were antic, meaning old-fashioned. Thus, the marriage process itself seems to be changing due to new and different living conditions.

In this way, Feruza married Zafar. After they were married, she stopped using her mobile phone. Feruza explained, “Now, a mobile phone is not necessary for me. My father-in-law has a mobile phone; it is enough. So you can call my father-in-law if you want to talk to me.”

Feruza’s marriage demonstrates that the marriage process is changing. As I have explained, Feruza had problems finding a marriage partner due to her family situation. Evaluation of the bride’s family by the groom’s is an important point in the search for a bride. However, Feruza arranged her own marriage using a mobile phone, bypassing the usual social evaluation of the family. Certainly some significant social changes occurred as background to her marriage. Sharaf began offering handloom weaving as paid work to single women, and weavers can now purchase goods, such as clothing and mobile phones, with their wages. In other words, the transition to the market economy in rural life enabled Feruza to be independently involved in arranging her own marriage. Yet Feruza stopped using her mobile phone. Thus, she recognized her novel marriage process not as an ongoing way of living as an independent woman, but as a new way of achieving marriage and becoming a traditional wife.

6. Conclusion

I have shown that in the rural area where I conducted field research, people compete to find good marriage partners and to hold expensive marriage ceremonies. As part of this competition, women are expected to be “good girls” and to come from “good families,” based on traditional images of women and families. Conversely, men are expected to have economic power. I believe that this situation means some people have difficulty securing marriages. However, the growing importance of marriage as a safety net and the increasing quantity of manufactured goods also present new opportunities for arranging marriages. Furthermore, we see signs of changes in the way a prospective marriage partner is found. At this time, I believe that the new way of arranging marriage does not reform marriage customs or women’s lives, but rather helps women gain a “good” status based on traditional values.

Although this paper depicts some interesting and illustrative examples, more information is needed. I would like to conduct further research, especially analyzing the concepts of “good girl” and “good family”; I would also like to verify the relationship between “good status” and marital disparity.
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One of the essential aspects of Sufism (taṣawwuf) is zikr (lexically, the remembrance of God), which is the devotional ritual used to aim toward reaching the mystic experience called ḥanā′ (annihilation of the self in God) and wajd (union with God).¹ In Central Asia, there are generally two ways of performing zikr. One, which involves repeatedly reciting the names of God aloud, is known as jahri zikr. The other is to repeatedly recite the names of God silently in one’s mind, or khafi zikr. This paper focuses on the former method, especially as performed by women.

The term jahri zikr requires further elucidation, because there is no consensus among scholars as to how to describe this ritual for women. Some scholars have regarded it not as zikr but as a local custom from old times related to Sufism, while others have treated it as zikr.² The informants in my research area—a village in the Namangan region of Uzbekistan—call it zikr, zikr-suhbat, or jahri zikr. For this reason, I will refer to it as jahri zikr here.

This paper attempts to characterize the recent (since 2007) relationship between Sufism and so-called “official Islam” [Benningsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1980] by focusing on the practice of jahri zikr by women. In addition, I seek to contribute ethnographic information on jahri zikr by women as it has survived through the years of Soviet anti-religious policies, thereby adding to the limited research conducted previously on Sufism in post-Soviet Uzbekistan.

This paper consists of four parts. First, I will locate my paper relative to previous research on Sufism in Central Asia and indicate the purpose of this paper. Second, I will explain the situation of Sufism and jahri zikr in Soviet Central Asia and post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Third, I will describe my field research at a village in the Namangan region of Uzbekistan. The concluding section will sum up my arguments.

I have divided accessible previous research on Sufism in Soviet Central Asia and post-Soviet Uzbekistan into three categories.³ The first is the body of work on the social and political history of Sufism and tariqa, consisting mainly of historical studies.⁴ I have included research on the revival of Islam and

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¹ The word Sufism, formed by adding Ṣūfī in Arabic (a man in wool rags) to the suffix –ism, is usually described as “Islamic mysticism.” However, many have objected to the use of this term to represent the phenomena known as taṣawwuf in the Islamic world [Ahkohori 2005; Chittick 1992, 2000; Ernst 1997; Schimmel 1975; Sedgwick 2000; Tonaga 2005, 2013]. For example, Yasushi Tonaga, a leading authority on Sufism, has pointed out that taṣawwuf are not always related to mysticism (extraordinariness) and should be understood as encompassing aspects of ethics and popular belief. He has therefore redefined Sufism as “a three-axis framework” consisting of mysticism, ethics, and popular belief [Tonaga 2013: 17-47].

² For example, Bakhtiyar Babadjanov [2001a], a leading authority on Sufism in Central Asia, has regarded this ritual by women, which he observed in Kashkadarya region in Uzbekistan, not as zikr but as a local custom similar to zikr. Meanwhile, other scholars have regarded the ritual, as observed in the Andjian and Ferghana regions of Uzbekistan, as zikr [Ashirov 2007; 201; Sultanova 2000, 2011, 2012]. The determining criteria for whether an observed practice should be classified as jahri zikr will not be discussed here, because I am not equipped to resolve this issue.

³ Pasilov and Ashirov [2007: 170] proposed a somewhat different categorization of three groups of research in this field: (1) history of Sufism and tariqa, (2) problems associated with the relationship between a spiritual master and disciple (murshid), and (3) jahri zikr.

⁴ This paper focuses only on Sufism and tariqa in Central Asia since around the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. Works on this topic include, for example, Babadjanov [2003a, 2003b], Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay [1980], Bennigsen and Wimbush [1985],
Sufism since the late years of Gorbachev’s perestroika around 1989 and studies of silsila (the genealogy between a spiritual master and a disciple) in this category. The second category includes ethnographic works on Sufism and its practices as found in the fields of ethnology, history, anthropology, sociology, and ethnomusicology. The third category entails textual analysis of Sufi poetry.

Among these three bodies of previous research, the first two are related to the present study. In the first group, I am particularly interested in the revival of Sufism and tarīqa since 1989, especially from the perspective of the relationship between Sufism, tarīqa, and official Islam. In the second body of research, my interest lies in those that examine ritual practices among women, especially jahri zikr (see photo).

In the first category, a series of outstanding works by Bakhtiyar Babadjanov is of great significance. In one of his works [Babadjanov 2001b], he examined how the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia (SADUM) controlled Sufism and tarīqa in the Soviet period, mainly by analyzing fatwās (legal opinion) issued by SADUM itself. He then compared these statements to the actions of the new SADUM, that is, the Directorate of the Muslims of Uzbekistan, which assumed this role when Uzbekistan became an independent country. In other works, Babadjanov [2001a, 2008b] showed that the new SADUM had not officially expressed a positive or negative attitude toward Sufism and tarīqa.

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5 Works in this category include, for example, Fathi [1997, 2006], Kandiyoti and Azimova [2004], Kikuta [2013], Peshkova [2014], Sultanova [2011], Tamura et al. [2009], Wazaki [2015], Абашин [2004], Аширов [2007], Бабаджанов [2008a], Сухарева [1960], and Троицкая [1928].
6 Works of textual analysis include, for example, Гўзал [2014], Жўрабоев [2010], Ҳасан [2012], Ҳаққулов [1991], and Ҳаққул ва Ҳасан [2006].
8 See, for example, Basilov [1988], Rasanyagam [2011], Snesarev [1974], Sultanova [2000, 2012], Аширов [2007], and Бабаджанов [2001a, 2008b].
9 SADUM is the acronym for “Среднеазиатское Духовное управление мусульман,” which is the Russian name for this organization. This name was later changed to “Духовное управление мусульман Средней Азии и Казахстана” (the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan) [Babadjanov 2001b].
10 The name in Uzbek of this organization is “O‘zbekiston Musulmonlar Idorasi.” I have used the term “new SADUM” for this organization here, consistent with the usage by Dr. Babadjanov at the workshop “Islam and Gender in Central Asia: Soviet Modernization and Today’s Society in Central Asia,” held at the Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University, on December 26, 2016.
**Jahri zikr as Practiced by Women in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan:**
*The Survival of a Sufi Traditional Ritual through the Soviet Period and Its Uncertain Future*

in post-Soviet Uzbekistan and that the relationship between the two was very sensitive. He reached this conclusion by conducting interviews with imāms (leader of prayer) in the new SADUM, Sufi shaykhs (male religious leader), and members of tarīqa. However, Babadjanov focused on the period up to the year 2000, and the relationship between the new SADUM and tarīqa (or Sufism) since then has received little attention after his works.

In the second category, Troitskaia’s [1928] work and a series of outstanding studies by Razia Sultanova [2000, 2011, 2012] should be noted first because of their very rich ethnographic description. However, in general, there is little ethnographic research of any quality focused specifically on jahri zikr by women. Even Sultanova’s latest publication is based on fieldwork only through 2004

The present paper’s purpose is to examine the recent relationship between Sufism (not tarīqa) and the new SADUM, by focusing on the practice of jahri zikr by women in a village in Uzbekistan.

### Islam, Sufism, and *Tarīqa* in Soviet Central Asia

The Soviet Union was established as a secular state, based on Lenin’s 1918 decree on the “separation of church and state and separation of school and church” [Szczesniak 1959: 34-35]. One feature of this separation between government and religion in the Soviet Union was the goal of not just secularizing but eradicating religion in all spheres of society [Hirooka 1997]. Following this decree establishing atheism, various legislative measures against religion were enacted. In this way, the onslaught against Islam began in the mid-1920s and continued into the 1930s.

Because of this Soviet anti-religious emphasis, many maktabs (elementary religious school), madrasas (advanced religious school), and mosques in Central Asia were closed, and most of them were diverted to other uses such as cowsheds, workshops, and industrial warehouses [Keller 2001: 89–95; Khalid 2003: 577]. *Waqfs* (property given as endowment) belonging to the above-mentioned religious schools and mosques were confiscated by the Communist party, and the revenues from them were also diverted to education for the working masses [Keller 2001: 71; Khalid 2003: 577]. Besides, many ‘ulamā’s (scholar of Islamic law) and Sufi shaykhs were jailed, sent to labor camps, or killed [Khalid 2003: 577; Pasilov and Ashirov 2007: 165].

However, the entry of the Soviet Union into the Great Patriotic War (the local name of the Second World War) led to some relaxation of these strict policies against Islam [Babadjanov 2003b: 171]. The increased accommodation was intended to gain support from the local ‘ulamā’s and the general population for the war effort [Hilgers 2009: 20]. SADUM was established in Tashkent in 1943 in this historical context. Actually, SADUM was in charge of registering reopened mosques and imāms, the training of imāms [Ro’y 2000: 106–107], and controlling matters of religious dogma through *fatwās* [Babadjanov 2003b: 172–173]. SADUM was formally an independent, self-governing organization; however, it was in fact a governmental organ, and local Muslims regarded its *fatwās* as “the ordinary judge of the state lacking the religious meaning” [Babadjanov 2003b: 172–173]. In other words, Islam in Central Asia was guaranteed freedom of worship only to the extent that it was permitted by SADUM—that is, by the Soviet government.

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11 Among previous research on jahri zikr by women, Rasenayagam’s work [2011] was based on fieldwork from 2004 (see page 22). This is also true of Ashirov’s [2007] study, according to a private message from the author.

12 I could not access any *fatwās* and decisions issued by the new SADUM on the topic of the present paper.
Seika WAZAKI

Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay [1980] described this Soviet-tolerated Islam as “official Islam,” differentiating it from “parallel Islam,” which continued to exist unofficially as a potential source of protest actions against the government, mainly in the form of Sufism and tarīqa.¹³ In the official view of the government, tarīqa was declared to have ended in the 1920s¹⁴ [CIÊ 1971: 969–970]. However, tarīqa and the traditional customs of Sufism were not totally eradicated, as many scholars pointed out during the Soviet period.¹⁵

Therefore, after the Second World War, SADUM was enlisted once again by the government to participate in the struggle against the “harmful survivals” of religion [Babadjanov 2001b].¹⁶ In response, SADUM issued various fatwās and decisions criticizing traditional customs (such as Sufi rituals and the saint veneration) that the Hanafī school dominant in Central Asia had historically considered legitimate [Babadjanov 2001b]. It is clear from Babadjanov’s work that some of these fatwās and decisions criticized as bidʿa (innovations) and gafla (distractions) anything not present in the time of Prophet Muhammad and the first four Caliphs, whom they viewed as his rightful successors. They instead relied on the theories of the Ḥanbalī school and Salafism, according to which only the Qurʾān and ḥadīth are important.¹⁷ In general, the Sufi rituals and other traditional customs that had been considered legitimate by the Hanafī school came to be officially prohibited in Soviet Central Asia.

Babadjanov [2001b] examined in particular the fatwā titled “About the Incompatibility of ‘Ishanan’ and ‘Muridism’ with Islamic Dogma and Sharīʿa,” issued in 1952 and prepared by Ziyauddin Babakhan, who was the muftī (head) of SADUM at the time. This fatwā represented an important attack against Sufism and tarīqa. In it, not only the activities of the īshān (the spiritual master) but also the organizational structure of tarīqa based on the relationship between īshān and murīd (disciple) were criticized [Babadjanov 2001b]. Thus, both Sufism and tarīqa were officially prohibited in the Soviet period.

However, Soviet policy on Islam, Sufism, and tarīqa changed markedly under Gorbachev and perestroika. Specifically, the representative of the Soviet government declared that the worship and customs of Islam would be free and inviolate and promised a new relationship between Islam and the state at the 4th Central Asia and Kazakhstan Congress, held in Tashkent in 1989 [Komatsu 1994: 45]. Because of this formal ending of anti-Islamic policy, Islam came to be widely revived. Moreover, this change of policy also created favorable conditions for the revival of “parallel Islam”—that is, Sufism and tarīqa [Babadjanov 2001b].

Sufism and Tarīqa in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan became independent on August 31, 1991 following the breakup of the Soviet Union. It has nevertheless maintained two key aspects of the Soviet legacy of a secular state: the principle of the separation of government and religion and SADUM. The former has been reaffirmed in Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.¹⁸ The latter, as noted earlier, has been renamed the

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¹³ These terms are analytical, academic concepts that were never used by local people in Soviet Central Asia. However, they are still considered useful in analyzing Islamic societies in this region, including post-Soviet Uzbekistan, because of their effectiveness in explaining some features of these societies.

¹⁴ Tarīqa (especially Naqshbandiya) was one of the biggest enemies of the rulers of the time, because it had fought against the Russians during the imperial period and against the Bolshevik government in the early years of the Soviet Union. On this point, see for example Komatsu [1986, 2003, 2014], Obiya [1995 ], and Бабаджанов [2001b].

¹⁵ See, for example, Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay [1980], Snesarev [1974], Демидов [1984], and Сухарева [1960].

¹⁶ I received this from the author himself in a Word file via e-mail. Therefore, I have not written the quoted page of the work.

¹⁷ Babadjanov’s work [2001b] has shown that in the fatwās and decisions of SADUM, for example, “Musnad” by Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal, “Ahkam al-ahkam” by Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, and “Minhaj al-muslim” by Abū Bakr Jābir al-Jazā’iry were quoted.

¹⁸ The article states, “Religious organizations and associations shall be separated from the state and equal before law. The state shall...
The new SADUM reconsidered the relationship with Sufism and tarīqa in the midst of the change in state ideology that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union. That is, Sufism acquired a status as the way of Allāh and became a component of the “Golden Heritage” (oltin meros) in the independent Uzbekistan. This happened because parts of the Sufi religious legacy (such as the Sufi philanthropist philosophy) became highly esteemed amidst Uzbekistan’s search for a new national identity and national history [Babadjanov 2001a, 2001b]. This change of status led to a widespread revival of activities related to Sufism and tarīqa [Babadjanov 2001a, 2001b].

In particular, Naqshbandiya rapidly spread throughout post-Soviet Uzbekistan, as many scholars have pointed out.19 As a result, the new government came to take some precautions regarding tarīqa, mainly with respect to Naqshbandiya [Babadjanov 2001a]. For example, in 1997, the new SADUM issued a fatwā entitled “About Some Incorrect Activities at the Time of Giving Hands to Pīr” [Babadjanov 2001b]. The idiom of “giving hands” (qo‘l berish) in this fatwā means the initiation ritual to become a disciple of the pīr (the spiritual master) of Naqshbandiya. The purpose of this fatwā was to attempt to prohibit the relationship between a pīr and a disciple so Naqshbandiya would not spread further within Muslim society in Uzbekistan. However, not all Sufi rituals were prohibited by the fatwās, and the decisions made by the new SADUM and their legitimacy within Islamic dogma have been frequently discussed in post-Soviet Uzbekistan [Babadjanov 2001a, 2001b]. In general, the new SADUM has not taken an official stance on tarīqa yet because there are opponents, supporters, and even members of tarīqa among the representatives of the new SADUM and because Sufism has been considered a component of the “Golden Heritage” within the new national ideology of post-Soviet Uzbekistan [Babadjanov 2001a].

Otin-oy, Sufism in the Women’s World, and the State

The otin-oy is a female religious figure specific to Central Asia who has significant education in Islamic texts in Arabic and the classics of Central Asian literature or Sufi poetry from old Turkey20 [Fathi 2006: 309–311; Kandiyoti and Azimova 2004: 333–334]. Otin-oy have become leaders in the preservation of traditional Islamic knowledge, which has been one of the most important cultural heritages and hallmarks of Central Asia since its nations gained independence in 1991 [Sultanova 2012: 137–138, 141]. Therefore, otin-oy are held in great esteem by local populations from the point of view of social life because they uphold Islamic knowledge and guard traditional rituals [Sultanova 2012: 137].

Before the emergence of the Soviet Union, the status of the otin-oy was legitimized by political authorities and was subordinate to Islamic law21 [Fathi 2006: 308]. Muslim women in Central Asia led a relatively gendered social life, and they established highly developed social networks among themselves in their own mahalla (residential neighborhood) [Fathi 2006: 307]. An otin-oy was a well-educated woman from a respected family in the mahalla and such a woman would be invited to perform a religious ritual on the occasion of a death, various feasts, or women gathering to recite the Qur‘ān and chant poems [Fathi 2006: 307]. As an example of a religious ritual held as part of a gathering of women, Troitskaia

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19 See, for example, Brill-Olcott [2007], Pasilov and Ashirov [2007], Абашин [2004], and Бабаджанов [2001a, 2001b, 2008b].
20 An otin-oy is called a bibi-khalife among the Tajik-speaking populations in Central Asia [Fathi 2006: 303].
21 With regard to this point, Fathi further noted, “This was reflected in the religious courts, which regulated socio-religious life in the emirate of Bukhara and the khansats of Khiva and of Kokand. Muslim religious officials represented a powerful, hierarchical class which was at the emirs’ service. Most otin-oy belonged to this class, but some were also from equally influential milieus such as the class of merchants or secular ruling elites. Education in this period was founded on Islamic learning, and among women was confined exclusively to those from the wealthy strata of society” [Fathi 2006: 308].
It is also significant that the *ishān-bibi*, who was the wife of the *ishān* belonging to *Qādiriya*, performed the *jahri zikr* with four *otin-oy* chanting Sufi poems in Tashkent during the early years of the Soviet period. Fathi [2006: 307] also noted that *otin-oy* oversaw the religious life of women and provided the girls in the *mahalla* with two to five years of religious education in their houses at that time.

Afterwards, the status of the *otin-oy* was forcibly changed, because the Soviet authority treated their existence as illegal [Sultanova 2012: 138]. Therefore, the *otin-oy* was positioned on the outside of the official religious structure [Fathi 2006: 311]. Fathi [2006: 308] explained that the sphere of activity of *otin-oy* came to be restricted exclusively to their houses, and lessons teaching Islamic knowledge to women in the *mahalla* became sporadic in the Soviet period. The social role of *otin-oy* changed to simply giving women advice about education, not Islamic instruction [Fathi 2006: 308]. However, *otin-oy* preserved the religious rituals and traditions of their families, passing Islamic knowledge mainly to their own children [Fathi 2006: 308; Sultanova 2012: 138]. Importantly, the fact that *otin-oy* were less exposed and thus less vulnerable to the Great Purge of the early Soviet period than the religiously learned men enabled them to do this [Sultanova 2012: 138]. According to Sultanova [2012: 138], Sufi poetry beyond the *Qurʾān* and ḥadīth also had been taught, and one of the main rules of master-disciple behavior in the *yasaviya*, “Nobody should be respected more than the murūd’s master,” was highly esteemed at lessons secretly given by an *otin-oy* in the 1960s.

Generally, there is little doubt that the *otin-oy* played a crucial role in maintaining Sufi traditions throughout the Soviet period [Sultanova 2012: 138]. Today, *otin-oy* are invited to perform various religious rituals within the *mahalla*’s social life, such as reciting the *Qurʾān* and chanting Sufi poems and other Islamic texts, and the number of women who want to study traditional religious knowledge from them has increased [Sultanova 2012: 137–138]. Notably, modern *otin-oy* are not associated with a certain kind of *tarīqa*, but with a mixture of various *tarīqas* [Sultanova 2000: 537; 2012: 139]. Therefore, the *jahri zikr* by women in post-Soviet Uzbekistan should be understood as an *udum* (custom), not as the ritual of a particular *tarīqa*.

It is also significant that the *otin-oy* were allowed to teach in the official Islamic educational institutions of major cities under the new SADUM’s jurisdiction in 1991 [Fathi 2006: 310]. Granting the *otin-oy* official status within the new SADUM as teachers of Islam was akin to recognizing their role in defending Islam under Soviet rule; thus, this act was viewed as a form of social recognition, and it helped to reinforce the prestige of the *otin-oy* among the ordinary Muslim population in Uzbekistan [Fathi 2006: 310]. Meanwhile, at the same time as the *otin-oy*’s status was legitimized by the new SADUM, reformist *otin-oy* who interpreted Islam based on the *Qurʾān* and *sunna* (the practices of the Prophet Muhammad) emerged widely in Uzbek society and started openly criticizing their more traditional colleagues who affirmed and performed Sufi religious practices not based on the *Qurʾān* [Fathi 2006: 305, 309–312]. As a result, the reformist *otin-oy*, through their greater learning, gradually replaced the traditional ones in the women’s madrasa of the new SADUM [Fathi 2006: 311]. In this dispute among religious women, the government supported the traditional *otin-oy* and started cracking down on the reformist ones around 1995 [Fathi 2006: 311]. Thus, the religious activity of the newly emerging reformist *otin-oy* was severely curtailed both inside and outside the institution of the new

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22 The term “official religious structure” as used here by Fathi refers to SADUM.

23 However, there are individual differences with regard to the knowledge of Sufism, or *taqwawuf*, possessed by the *otin-oy* [Sultanova 2012: 138–139; Babadjanov 2001a]. Some had very little knowledge of *taqwawuf*, whereas others knew it well.

24 Fathi [2006: 310–313] noted that most of the reformist *otin-oy*, who were much younger than the traditional ones, had turned to a scripturalist interpretation of Islam based on the *Qurʾān* and *sunna* in the 1990s and had studied Islam primarily in Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. On the conflict regarding the position of teacher of Islam in the official Islamic educational institutions, see Fathi [2006: 310–313].
SADUM after 199525 [Fathi 2006: 310].

In this context, the traditional otin-oyys have once again taught Islamic knowledge and the performance of various rituals to women outside the formal institutions of the new SADUM, such as in their houses or at neighborhood ritual places [Fathi 2006: 313]. The main reason for this development is the exclusion of women from the institutions of the new SADUM [Fathi 2006: 313]. For example, there are very few official Islamic educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the new SADUM in which women have taught or studied Islam26 [Fathi 2010: 312]. Additionally, the otin-oyys do not hold any key positions in the new SADUM [Fathi 2006: 314]. It is certain that these factors have pushed the traditional otin-oyys outside the institutions of the new SADUM, as Fathi [2006: 313] has also pointed out, but they can perform their religious practices without fear of being arrested. In sum, the new SADUM, on behalf of the government of Uzbekistan, has allowed the traditional otin-oyys to engage in religious activity in their mahalla, outside the new SADUM’s purview [Fathi 2006: 314].

Field Research at a Village in Namangan, Ferghana Valley

The Ferghana valley has long been the most strictly Muslim portion of Uzbekistan. At the village where I conducted my field research, a few men had participated in an initiation ritual ("giving hands") to become disciples of Ibrahim Mamatqulov (1937-2009), who was the very famous ishān of Naqshbandīya-Muzhaddidīya-Husaynīya in Central Asia and who had lived in a village near Kokand city. However, Islam is not as powerful amidst the local people of the village, as reflected in their lifestyle, as it is in Namangan city and the Kasansay district of the Namangan region. The village population is about 15,000 to 16,000, and it consists mainly of sedentary Uzbeks. The ethnographic data contained in this paper are based on several field research visits to the village from 2007 to the present.

Jahri Zikr by Women as a Custom

The otin-oyys at the village in Namangan where I conducted field research explained to me that women can practice jahri zikr whenever they wish to do so and that they had practiced it several times on the occasion of a death, Ro’za hayiti (the Festival of Breaking of the Fasting), Qurbon hayiti (the Festival of Sacrifice), and gatherings of women in the Soviet period. However, between 2007 and 2009, the otin-oyys of the village had primarily performed jahri zikr with women who wanted to participate in the ritual on the day of Qurbon hayiti, which takes place once a year. In addition, they sometimes performed it at qada’, one of the funeral rites, which usually begins 20 days after a person dies and continues over the course of one year. However, it is not an obligatory custom in the village for local women to practice jahri zikr at qada’. The (female) family members of the deceased, if they wish, may ask otin-oyys living nearby to perform it.27 According to my field research during 2007–2009, only a few women asked them to perform this ritual at qada’, whereas in a neighboring village it was almost always practiced by women on that occasion. In addition, jahri zikr was practiced at tasbih namazi (collective prayer among older women on Thursday once a year, according to a local otin-oy) in 2009. It was not practiced by women on any other occasions in this village, as far as I know.

25 Of course, they still exist in Uzbekistan today, but it is unquestionably very difficult for them to act vigorously in the public sphere as they did previously.

26 There are two madrasa for women in Tashkent and Bukhara (out of 12 in Uzbekistan) and one institute in Tashkent where women can study today. The history of taqwawuf has been taught at the institute recently, according to a scholar in Tashkent.

27 For example, Mehrnisa, who was born in 1939 and whose husband died in a traffic accident, asked otin-oyys living nearby to perform “jahri zikr” at her house on qada’ in 2007.
According to a local otin-oy, there are two reasons why women at the village moved away from practicing jahri zikr as often as they had previously. First, they became afraid of engaging in the practice when Islamic reformists (wahhabi in the context of Central Asia) became more active after Uzbekistan gained its independence and when the government began strictly regulating religious activity in general around the late 1990s. Second, the most habitual practitioners of jahri zikr were older women, and some of them have died.

This paper focuses only on the jahri zikr conducted on the day of Qurbon hayiti, because this custom had become popular in the village’s social life; I will reserve discussion of the other two occasions for another article. On the day of Qurbon hayiti, jahri zikr by women usually began after Qurbon hayit namazi (the collective prayer at the mosque, performed only by men when the sun has risen after the first prayer of the day). It took place at a location that includes the older of the two Friday mosques in the village (which is ordinarily closed), mazārs (tomb of Islamic saints), and a cemetery. When I observed the ritual on a rainy day in December 2007, jahri zikr was performed in a house with two rooms on the northern edge of the mosque, where the family of a shaykh (here, the male keeper of the mosque) lived. The total number of women who gathered there (not counting one baby) was 33: four teenagers, six in their twenties, five in their 30s, seven in their 40s, five in their 50s, and six over age 60. Three otin-oy, all over 60, were in the group.

The otin-oy took a ro’mol (traditional headscarf) and knotted it under their chins or just pulled it over their heads, not knotting it anywhere. The rest of the women also took a ro’mol in one of the above-mentioned two ways, or they knotted it behind their heads in the more popular way. The ro’mols were of various colors. Three otin-oy sat on the seats of honor at one end of the wider main room, younger women sat near the door of that room, and teenage girls sat with their mothers in the other, narrower room. Older women were randomly placed near the ends of both rooms. Before the ceremony, girls and younger women helped bring tea, bread, soup and osh (a traditional pilaf) with the mutton presented as ehson (voluntary alms-giving to the mosques and to society in general) and sacrificed on behalf of all comers to the mosque to all women at the house from the cooking place in front of the mosque.

The jahri zikr ceremony began with the chief otin-oy reciting the 67th sūra (Sovereignty) of the Qur’ān in the main room where the otin-oy sat, while the men finished Qurbon hayit namazi at the mosque and all the women ate the food. At the end of the recitation of the Qur’ān, the otin-oy said a few words praising God and the Prophet Muḥammad, wishing for the peace of the spirits of the other prophets, the Islamic saints buried in mazārs, and their ancestors at the village, and asking God to protect the health and peaceful life of all participants, their family, and their relatives in du’ā’ (supplication).

Next, everyone stood up, and the younger women moved to the edge of the room or the narrower room. The twelve older women (one in her 40s and eleven in their 50s and 60s), including three otin-oy, remained in the center of the main room in a circle. The chief otin-oy gave advice on how to practice jahri zikr to some newcomers and then started to sing the poetry of Aḥmad Yasavī, the eponym of Yasavīya. At the same time, another otin-oy started to chant the words. The third one, not chanting, practiced jahri zikr, leading the other participants. The first part of the chanted poetry can be found in Appendix 1. As soon as the two otin-oy started to chant Aḥmad Yasavī’s poetry, the chief otin-oy instructed participants with a hand gesture to begin their actions in the circle. Five women began...
turning round and round, saying “hu” (strongly breathing out) with the action of swinging their hands down from their chests toward the ground. After the otin-oy finished chanting the words contained in Appendix 1, the chief otin-oy started to sing the poetry by Aḥmad Yasavī’s disciple and another joined in this chant (see Appendix 2). In similar fashion, they continued on to the anonymous poetry (perhaps by Aḥmad Yasavī) in Appendix 3, which is of the anonymous, and then additional poetry of Aḥmad Yasavī (Appendix 4) as the last part. At this point, all participants except the two otin-oy chanting the poetry began turning around, strongly breathing out and making the same hand action described above. Impressively, some women in the audience were crying when the ritual reached this point.

When this part of the jahri zikr was completed, everyone sat down, expressing their gratitude to the three otin-oy. Finally, the ceremony finished with the chief otin-oy reciting the 95th sūra (the Fig) of the Qurʾān in the main room. At the end of the recitation of the Qurʾān, she spoke in duʿā’ as follows: “God. The light of faith (the Prophet Muḥammad). Oh, God the Evolver, the Everlasting who gives us bread, upon thy consent, my Allah, accept the zikr-suhbat we made, with thy dargāḥ (court). We dedicate this zikr first, God, on thy own road, and finally to the pure soul of Zakarīyā, to the soul lost in this place and the souls of all in hope, for Allah. Let the zikr we made be praised, God, in front of God. Lastly, may Naqshbandiyya, my Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband, pīr—my savior—give us support and discipline us as today’s protectors. Let the family members of those who made the zikr not go through hardships. Let their bodies and minds be in health, let them live long and have wonderfully rich lives. Give their gains the grace of God.” Then, everyone expressed their gratitude again to the three otin-oy and left the shaykh’s house.

Some Features of the Women’s Jahri Zikr and Its Uncertain Future

We can observe some features of the women’s jahri zikr from this case study of the village in Namangan region. First, the poetry of Aḥmad Yasavī and his disciple was chanted by otin-oy. Second, the jahri zikr was performed standing in a circle, generally called zikri davron (zikr of a circle). This was usually regarded as the way to perform the zikr of Qādirīya. Finally, Zakarīyā, from whom Aḥmad Yasavī learned how to perform zikr according to Babadjanov (2008b: 232), and Bahāʾ al-Dīn Naqshband, the eponym of Naqshbandiya, were mentioned in the final duʿā’ by the chief otin-oy. Accordingly, it can be pointed out that the jahri zikr performed by women at the village in Namangan region was a mixture of Yasavīya, Qādirīya, and Naqshbandiya, as Sultanova also observed from case studies in Andijan [Sultanova 2012: 139].

Some comments by the women themselves as to why they practiced jahri zikr are noteworthy. A participant in her 50s explained, “Zikr makes a heart light and expiates its trespasses (gunoh). More people cry, don’t they? It is said that it is helpful for developing good conduct (sawab) if we practice zikr where we live.” A woman in her 60s said zikr “has gradually come to be a ritual (rasm) for us. It has become the custom (urf-odat) of Uzbeks and a heritage from our ancestors (ota-bobo). So we go” [to zikr]. I would suggest that the main reasons for the continuation of jahri zikr by women in the village were that this ritual touched the practitioners’ hearts, and that it was recognized as a national legacy by older female villagers.

However, women’s practice of jahri zikr, which had survived the Soviet anti-religious policy, ended in 2010, apparently because it was banned. In this regard, an otin-oy in the village told me, “A rumor not to do [jahri] zikr came out. So we stopped performing it, because we were afraid. We had been

31 The otin-oy there could not explain well why these two sūras were recited at this jahri zikr ceremony, simply stating, “We learned like this from the people of former generation.”
able to do it in the Soviet period. But now … .” I have not been able to confirm the official reason yet. According to one scholar in Uzbekistan, no fatwā banning jahri zikr by women (or men) has been issued by the new SADUM. In any event, some type of decision was presumably pronounced from above, because jahri zikr has been discontinued in not only the village in Namangan region where I conducted field research but also other areas of Uzbekistan, from 2010 to the present.

**Conclusion**

Although the new SADUM in Uzbekistan has endorsed the existence of official Islam, the practice of Sufism has been kept out of “official Islam” since 2010, at least in terms of the continuation of the practice of jahri zikr by women. This relationship between the two groups should be understood as having the potential to change again should the new SADUM—that is, the government of Uzbekistan—continue to redefine what is desirable or proper Islam. I wonder if the day will ever come when this traditional Sufi ritual, which survived the Soviet period, will again be practiced by women as part of their social life in the mahalla. In the meantime, I hope that this paper will contribute to the scarce ethnographic information available on jahri zikr as practiced by women, thereby adding to the previous research in this field.

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Tamura, Yukio, Hisako Matsuda and Seika Wazaki

Tonaga, Yasushi

(田村行生 ・ 松田妃佐子 ・和崎聖日 「ナクシュバンディー教団における 『定めの夜』 ──フェルガナ盆地での 遊覧記」 『日本中央アジア学会報』 日本中央アジア学会.)

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Appendix: Full text of the poetry chanted on the jahri zikr by women

1. The poetry of Aḥmad Yasavi

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Antal-hodi, antal-haqq, laysal-hodi illahu} & \times 2 \\
\text{Hasbi robbi jallalloh, ma fi qalbi g`ayrulloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Nur Muhammad salalloh, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 1 \\
\text{La ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Sanga soldim o`zumni, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Yolg`on qilma so`zumni, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Arshdin arshga uchirgil, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Gunohimni kechirgil, la illaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Sirottingdin kechirgil, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Sharobingdin ichirgil, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{Jannatinga yetirgil, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 1 \\
\text{Jannatingga kirgizgil, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 1 \\
\text{Jamolingni ko`rsatgil, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{La ilaha illalloh} & \times 1 \\
\text{Doim sani ayturman, la ilaha illalloh} & \times 2 \\
\text{La ilaha illalloh} & \times 2
\end{align*}
\]

Thou art the Guider, thou art the Truth, none can lead us other than He (God) \times 2
My Lord - shall the dignity of Allah be evermore - is all I need, my heart will erase everything else but Allah \times 2
The light of Muhammad - may Allah send blessing -, there is no God but Allah \times 1
There is no God but Allah \times 2
I entrusted myself to thee, there is no God but Allah \times 2
Never take my words as a lie, there is no God but Allah \times 2
Send my words from `arsh (God’s seat at the top layer of heaven) to `arsh, there is no God but Allah \times 2
Forgive my trespasses, there is no God but Allah \times 2
Let us cross thy sīrāt (narrow bridge the width of a hair over the fires of hell), there is no God but Allah \times 2
Let us drink thy šarāb (an incomparable drink in heaven), there is no God but Allah \times 2
Jahri zikr as Practiced by Women in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: The Survival of a Sufi Traditional Ritual through the Soviet Period and Its Uncertain Future

Let us reach to thy heaven, there is no God but Allah ×1
Let us enter thy heaven, there is no God but Allah ×1
Let us see thy face (its beauty), there is no God but Allah ×2
There is no God but Allah ×1
I will always mention thee, there is no God but Allah ×2
There is no God but Allah ×2

2. The poetry of Āhmad Yasavī’s disciple

Hu halqasi qurildi, ey do’stlar kelinglar ×1
Haq sufrosi yoyildi, andin ulush olinglar ×2
Hu Alloh ×6
Qol ilmini o’qubon, hol ilmiga yetibon ×2
Yo’qluq ichra botibon, yorliqlardin olinglar ×2
Hu Alloh ×6
Hu arrasini olibon, nafs boshiga solibon ×2
Tuni kuni toliblar, jonni qurban qilinlar ×2
Hu Alloh ×8
Halqa ichra hu denglar, ishq o’tiga yoninglar ×2
Tan jon birla toliblar, takbir boshlab aytinglar ×2
Hu-hu teyu zor ingrab, hu demaqda ma’no bor ×2
Diydoridin umidvor, rahmatidin olinglar ×2
Hu Alloh ×6
Qul Xoja Ahmad qul bo’lg’on ×2
Toliblarg’a mul bo’lg’on ×1
Yo’l ustida kul bolg’on, andin ibrat olinglar ×1
Hu Alloh ×6

The circle of *hu* (expiratory sound) has been made here, oh friends, come around ×1
The pedestal of the Truth is now scattered, from it take your share ×1
He is Allah ×6
Learn the wisdom of words, reach to the wisdom of silence ×2
Sink into nothing, obtain the mercy of God ×2
He is Allah ×6
*Hu* took a saw and expelled vicious desires ×2
Seekers, learn night and day; sacrifice your life ×2
He is Allah ×8
Say *hu* in the circle, burn yourself into the flame of love ×2
Seekers who devote your lives, say it to taking measures ×2
Growl *hu-hu*, which means a lot ×2
Pin my hope on God’s profile and obtain God’s gratitude ×2
He is Allah ×6
Slave Khvāja Aḥmad (Yasavī) became a slave ×2
He became *šarāb* for seekers ×1
He became ashes on the street, follow this example ×1
He is Allah ×6
3. The anonymous poetry (perhaps by Ahmad Yasavi)

Qaydan sani toparman, jonni qurbon etarman ×2
Qurbon bo’lib ketarman, la ilaha illaloh ×1
Hu hu olloh, hu olloh ×3
Ahmad ogli Ibrohim, ishbu so’zni ko’paydi ×1
La ilaha illaloh ×3
Hu hu olloh, hu olloh ×3
Tur tog ’ida turibman, qolinda tesha Olloh ×1
Chopsam qo’rqaman Olloh, chopmasam bo’lmaso ×2
“Qorongu g’org’ a yo, kirgin” deydilaro ×1
Kirsam qo’rqaman Olloh, kirmasam bo’lmaso ×2
“Kafan to’ nini yo, quchgin” deydilaro ×2
Kiysam qo’rqaman Olloh, kiymasam bo’lmaso ×2
“Siroat sarig’a yo, yurgin” deydilaro ×2
Yursam qo’rqaman Olloh, yurmasam bo’lmaso ×2
“Mansurni dorini qurgin” deydilar-o ×2
Qursam qo’rqaman Olloh, qurmasam bo’lmaso ×2
“Oshig larimni yo, suygin” deydilaro ×2
Suysam qo’rqaman Olloh, suymasam bo’lmaso ×2
Yurakda, do’sitlar, voh ko’pdur tugunlaro ×1
Yechsam qo’rqaman Olloh, yechmasam bo’lmaso ×1

Where will I find thee, I will dedicate my life ×2
I will sacrifice myself and leave, there is no God but Allah ×1
Hu hu Allah, he is Allah ×3
Ahmad ibn Ibrahīm repeated this word ×1
There is no God but Allah ×3
Hu hu Allah, he is Allah ×3

Standing on Mount Sinai, I have an adz in my hand, Allah ×1
I’m scared of digging (the soil), Allah! (But) I will have to dig ×2
“Go into this dark cave (of your grave)”, say thou ×1
I’m scared of entering (into the cave), Allah! (But) I will have to enter ×2
“Hold a kafan (ceremonial robe worn after death)”, say thou ×2
I’m scared of wearing (the robe), Allah! (But) I will have to wear it ×2
“Step forward to ṣirāṭ”, say thou ×2
I’m scared of stepping into (ṣirāṭ), Allah! (But) I will have to step there ×2
“Weave a hanging rope for Manṣūr (al-Ḥallāġ)”, say thou ×2
I’m scared of weaving (the rope), Allah! (But) I will have to weave ×2
“Adore my oshiqs (devotees to God, such as Sufi)”, say thou ×2
I’m scared of adoring (them), Allah! (But) I will have to adore ×2
In my heart, my friends, ah, so many tuguns (wrapping cloths) ×1
I’m scared of unwrapping (tuguns), Allah! (But) I will have to unwrap ×1
4. The poetry of Aḥmad Yasavī

Beshak biling, bu dunyo barcha eldin ʻtaro ×2  
Inonmagil molingga, bir kun qoʻldin ketaro ×2  
Oto-ono, qarindosh, qayon ketti? Fikr qil ×1  
Toʻrt ayogʻlig choʻbin ot bir kun sanga yetaro ×2  
Dunyo uchun gʻam yema, Haqqdin oʻzgʻani dema ×2  
Kishi molini yema, sirot uzra tutaro ×2  
Ahli ayol, qarindosh, hech kim boʻlmaydur yoʻldosh ×2  
Mardona boʻl gʻarib bosh, umring yeldek oʻtarо ×2  
Qul Xoja Ahmad, toat qil, umring bilmom necha yil ×2  
Asling bilsang, obi gil, yana giţga ketaro ×2

Learn not doubt, this world will pass everyone by ×2  
Don’t believe in fortune, it will likely disappear from your hands one day ×2  
Where did your parents and relatives go? Think ×1  
A four-legged horse in cast iron (bier) will come to you one day ×2  
Don’t grieve for this world, don’t talk of anything but the Truth ×2  
Don’t deprive others of their fortune, you will be caught at ṣirāt ×2  
No one, not even close family or relatives, will accompany you (on your journey) ×2  
Be brave, lost people, your life will go by like the wind ×2  
Slave Khvāja Aḥmad, go in allegiance (to God), no one knows for how many years you will live ×2  
If you know your origin, you will be gone to water and earth, and earth again ×2

Acknowledgments

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This international workshop was very fulfilling and meaningful because each presentation was original and spread awareness of issues about Islam and gender in Uzbekistan. Although English is not the mother tongue of every speaker and commentator, the discussion in English was very lively and fruitful. It depended much on the organizer, Prof. Obiya’s faculty. Four representatives from Uzbekistan were top-ranking researchers in their fields, and they seemed to be satisfied by seeing how under the instruction of Prof. Komatsu, who has built a base of Japanese research for Central Asian Society, new generations of scholars are maturing, and discussions are sometimes held in Uzbek.

My comments and questions for each speaker are as follows.

**For Prof. Obiya:** We should be very careful about whose viewpoint the discussion is based on. In her presentation, clearly, she analyzes official discourse on the veil in Uzbekistan. However, if we try to break through the existing dichotomy of the veil’s meanings, we should make it obvious that the meanings of veiling are wide-ranging among Muslim women themselves or maybe even among officials at various levels. Prof. Obiya answered that her next paper would contain some voices of Muslim women who wear veils, and I’m looking forward to reading it and obtaining another perspective on veiling.

**For Prof. Babajanov:** What is the relationship between SADUM and *otines*, who teach Islamic knowledge and hold various rituals among Muslim women at the grass root? According to Profs. Azimova and Kandiyoti (2004), the government of Uzbekistan tries to control *otines’* activities and their operations. He answered the first question that in the Soviet era, *fatwas* by Ishon Bobojonov did not refer to *otines*, maybe because his wife herself was an *otine*. However, his son Ziyauddin gave *fatwas* that criticized *otines’* activities as non-Islamic customs. He attacked various nationwide customs such as *Aqiqa*, *Bibi-Seshanba*, and *Mushkurkushod* etc., but it did not affect society much. To the second question, he told us that there is a madrasa for *otines* in Uzbekistan now. There are three types of degrees there. Today’s SADUM or O’MI has released two *fatwas* opposing such a Mawlid, i.e., one held without permission.

**For Prof. Azimova:** In my research field, it seems that young couples depend heavily on their parents financially and physically in everyday life, even if they live separately from them. So what is the meaning of nuclearization in your presentation? Does it not indicate only change of housing? She answered that in recent years, more and more young couples can make decisions by themselves without instructions from their parents in rural Uzbekistan. She sees the beginning of nuclearization in this phenomenon and predicts that after one or two decades, the society of Uzbekistan will change drastically even in rural areas.

**For Dr. Sono:** The meaning or content of “good girl for bride” and “our traditional value” might have undergone change in recent years in Uzbekistan. As in my research field, girls who do not study much and sit at home are no longer much regarded as “good girl for bride” because many people now prefer brides with careers, who can support their family financially and give their children a good education. She answered that in a village of rural Kashkadarya, there are no higher educational institutions, so most girls do not enter a higher-level school and the meaning of “good girl for bride” remains unchanged at present. After hearing this answer and Prof. Azimova’s prediction, I think they show the different speeds of globalization and urbanization in urban and rural Uzbekistan.
For Dr. Wazaki: According to some works of Razia Sultanova, there are men’s zikr in the Namangan region. Did you see them? I. M. Lewis analyzed zikrs in West Africa and said that women get catharsis from their emotional zikrs, while men refrain from showing their emotions in Islamic gatherings. Is this structure of religion also applicable to Uzbekistan? He said that he had heard about men’s zikr in Namangan, and the participants attested that they obtained ecstasy or emotional relief from their zikrs, so that Louis’s framework does not fit the case of Uzbekistan.
One message of the speakers at today’s workshop is that what seems to be the revival of the tradition is in fact a part of modernity. Phenomena such as women’s veil in Prof. Obiya’s paper, the reproduction of conservative family values in Dr. Sono’s paper, or the practice of *jahri zikr* by women as pointed out in Prof. Wazaki’s paper, which adopt facets of purely Islamic or Uzbek traditions, are actually a part of the modernity of today’s Uzbekistan. Prof. Babadjanov’s paper pointed out how SADUM theologians tried to compromise Islamic values with Soviet ideology in order to formulate moderate emancipation of women. Prof. Azimova showed us economic factors behind the nuclearization of the family unit, which is often associated with modernization in general. All the papers understand modernity as something ambiguous and multilayered, evolved out of a cross-interaction of pre-Soviet Islamic tradition, Soviet modernity, post-Soviet Uzbek nationalism, and a market economy. They carefully avoid dichotomous thinking such as “modern versus tradition,” or “progress versus backwardness.”

In Turkey too, women’s new veil similar to *hijob* in Uzbekistan has appeared, while the modernizing reforms of women’s status by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the charismatic leader of the Turkish revolution and first president of the republic, have been reassessed since the 1980s. The discussion has resulted in the deconstruction of the myth of the liberation of women by modernizing reforms. I would like to share some of these discussions with you. I hope it helps us discuss Uzbekistan’s case from a wider perspective.

Soon after the republic’s founding in 1923, Mustafa Kemal and his followers, the enlightened governing elites, launched extensive modernization reforms. A secular Civil Code that introduced equality in the husband–wife relationship and women’s enfranchisement was quickly enacted. Reforms were supported and defended by upper- and middle-class women who had succeeded in gaining a place in the public realm.

It was in the mid-1980s that the nature of the modernizing reforms by Mustafa Kemal and his followers began to be reconsidered under the influence of the second wave of Western feminism. While agreeing with the reformist legacy of gender equality and women’s advancement in the public sphere, feminists criticized the indifference of the reformist elites to women’s position within the private realm, where they had been and still are expected to be self-sacrificing mothers.

Tracking back to the discourses of modernizing reformist elites, Deniz Kandiyoti explored the roots of the problem and noted that women’s emancipation under reformist ideology was part of a broader political project of nation building and secularization. Kandiyoti argues that improvement of the status of women was always connected with the improvement of society. In other words, women were assigned the role of cultural boundary markers of a collectivity [Kandiyoti 1989].

While Kandiyoti noted the integration of women into nationalist projects as icons of modernity and/or bearers of tradition and authentic culture, a series of studies by Nükhet Sirman highlighted how women were incorporated into the nationalistic project as gendered subjects. In analyzing a series of works by Halide Edip Adivar, a famous woman novelist, Sirman noted several interesting themes. In early works written toward the end of the imperial period, women appeared as vacillating, subject to short-lived passion, and who lost her head over a lover for whom she felt sexual passion. Later, following the establishment of the republic, the woman was depicted as a subject appealing to reason or soul and choosing a partner who would allow a lasting relationship. The appearance of this kind of subjective heroine implied that the new femininity (of being a chaste wife and mother of the nation), was not

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**Comment 2**

**Kaoru Murakami**

Institute of Developing Economies, Japan

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Comment 2

applied to women forcefully, but was rather an identity that women themselves desired, undertook, and internalized [Sirman 2002].

Feminists’ re-evaluation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s modernizing reforms has effectively pointed out the limits of the reform, as well as women’s own commitment to it. These women were not always passive objects of the reform, but could be active participants in it. The discussion reminds us of the need to look into women’s desires, subjectivity, and agency. Both in Turkey and Uzbekistan, the ambiguous and multilayered nature of contemporary modernity could be better understood by looking into the social world of the people.

References

Kandiyoti, Deniz

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Introductory Remarks. This paper is a kind of case study, based on the author’s personal experiences of meeting with prominent Uzbek women who played important roles in transformations of Uzbekistan from the viewpoint of gender and development within the last 100 years. The main focus here is on the personality of one of the organizers of the “Hujum” campaign in Tashkent, Khabibakhon Abdurakhmanova (1886–1966), and her impact.

From 1927 to 1932, Kh. Abdurakhmanova served as head of the Women’s Department of Starogorodskoi District Party Committee in Tashkent and head of the Council of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan’s (“Uzsovprof”) Secretariat, responsible for work with women.

### Personality

Khabibakhon Abdurakhmanova was a true believer. In fact, from her early childhood to her death, she led the traditional way of life, but due to the circumstances, became involved in the transformation process in Uzbekistan and contributed to the country’s social and human development, especially women’s emancipation.

Khabibakhon lost her parents in early childhood and was adopted by her uncle, whom people called “Abdujabbor-emchi” (“emchi” meaning “vaccinator”). He was close to Jadids and became one of the first Uzbeks to vaccinate children and adults. An educated and well-to-do man, he used his cows to produce a vaccine against smallpox. Helping him, Khabibakhon learned how to read, write, and, in practice, became acquainted with the basics of medicine. Most importantly, she learned lessons of selfless service to others and became a true supporter of Jadids’ ideas of enlightenment.

### Marriage and Family

Khabibakhon was always a tall girl. Nice, neat, and industrious, she always coped with entrusted tasks. At the age of 14, Khabibakhon Abdurakhmon-qizi married Islamhodja Yunushodja-ogly. Their first children died in their infancy. Of 12 children, only four survived and three outlived her: daughter Karamatkhon (1908–2007), and sons Anvar (1911–1994) and Nishon (1914–1981).

1 Tursinkhon, the first child to survive, was born five years after their marriage. They prayed to Allah that she would survive. The very name “Tursin” is an invocation that stands for “stay” (with the meaning “don’t die”). She grew up to be an intelligent and healthy girl. However, at the age of 16, she became the victim of epidemic.
When her husband died in 1916, Khabibakhon was forced to go to work. As a literate woman, she worked at printing shops in Eski-Juva almost a decade. Karamatkhon looked after her brothers and performed all the household chores. The children grew up in the Shaykhantokhur neighborhood. Soon, her elder son went to school where, along with secular sciences, the Qur’an was taught. Khabibakhon was proud of him; he was an excellent pupil and the best reciter of the Qur’an among district schoolchildren.

In the printing shop, Khabibakhon worked diligently and responsibly, without avoiding overtime assignments although conditions there obviously affected employees’ health. She developed asthma because of the vapors of lead and printing dust. Moreover, the long hours of reading proofs deteriorated her vision. These illnesses sharpened especially in her old age.

However, Khabiba-khon never left her work incomplete. Most of all, she was happy that they produced manuals and textbooks for schoolchildren and adults attending “likbez” (“liquidation of illiteracy”) courses. Using these textbooks herself, she organized a circle for girls who worked in the printing shop and taught them how to read and write. Her attitude toward work had a beneficial effect on other women. All who knew Khabibakhon treated her with respect.

Khabibakhon was promoted to Chief of Women’s Department of the Eski Shakhar District Party Committee in early 1927. From the first day, she carried out systematic work among parents, persuading them to permit their boys and girls to go to school, actively advocating for equal opportunities for men and women in education and work. She was well accepted by ordinary people in the old city of Tashkent.

Khabibakhon was among the first Uzbek women who dropped the veil and replaced it first with a dark and then with a large white kerchief. This occurred even before the “Hujum” campaign. In her life and behavior, she demonstrated to other women that these actions were not against the essence of religion. Observing the norms of Islam, she tried her best to convince people that absence of the veil did not mean a rejection of religion and morality. During her entire life, she strongly condemned immorality, especially among women.
The “Hujum” Campaign began on March 8, 1927—Women’s Day. In the republics and regions with a large Muslim population, the campaign for women’s emancipation began with an attack against “paranjî,” rather rigidly enforced from above. Even many years later, children in the street shouted “8 (sakkizinchichi) Mart paranjini tort” (“8th of March—pull paranji out”).

Habibakhon disliked her children shouting such slogans with other pupils, explaining that “Hujum” stood against old prejudices connected with inequality of women in order to give them more opportunities to study and work. Paranji was just a symbol. However, the decision not to wear was to be taken voluntarily by each woman herself, not by force or by strangers in the street.

Such an approach was in contradiction to government and party bureaucrats, many of whom, as they say, if “ordered to bring ‘duppi’ (national scullcap) were ready to bring it together with a head.” She did not like the organization of demonstration fires to burn paranjî, nor the demand to speed the process of unveiling at any cost. This attitude made her local supervisors think that Khabibakhon was not strong enough to implement party decisions. Soon, she was recommended to work in the “Uzsovprof” and use softer measures by convincing, rather than ordering women. She accepted this position with pleasure although it meant moving from Tashkent because the capital city of Uzbekistan was moved to Samarkand.

Literate and accurate in doing everything, she worked efficiently at the republican level too. At the beginning of the 1930s, Khabibakhon Abdurakhmanova was awarded a trip to Moscow for a conference on Oriental women’s emancipation. The participants of the conference were received in the Granovitovaia Chamber of the Kremlin by N.K. Krupskaia (Lenin’s wife), who appreciated their contribution not only in the unveiling of Muslim women, but for giving them equal opportunities to study and work.

She was inspired by the conference, but soon in Moscow and Tashkent, hardliners began to prevail. As an honest person, she could not accept repressive measures with “peregiby,” especially in rural areas. When Tashkent was again made the capital, all Republic-level institutions, including Uzsovprof, returned there. New cadres with university diplomas, better command of the Russian language, and Stalinist ideology started to replace colleagues her age. In Tashkent, Khabibakhon decided to retire too and concentrate on her family. Still, she was active in the formation of the new mahalla in “Rabochii Gorodok.”

By that time, her son Anvar had graduated from the Pedagogical Academy (now Samarkand State University), majoring in higher mathematics. He also returned to Tashkent and began to teach at the Transportation Institute. Because his students did not have sufficient knowledge [Islamov 2011: 17], he, on the advice of Habibakhon-aya, organized extra classes and helped students obtain firm knowledge and character, among them Yodgor Nasretdinova.²

Habibakhon was very proud that her elder son was working as a professor of mathematics, rector of Tashkent State Pedagogical Institute (1946–1951), vice-rector of Tashkent Institute of Electrotechnical Communications (1959–1972), and continuing her tradition, served to enlighten people and participated in preparation of thousands of young male and female engineers and teachers. He taught for almost 60 years, and after the country’s independence, published five manuals on higher mathematics in the Uzbek language to help a new generation of students study this subject.

² In the 1960–70s, she served as a Chairwoman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Uzbekistan in Tashkent and then as the Chairwoman of the Chamber of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. She was the first and only woman of the Soviet period who worked in these positions.
In Independent Uzbekistan, where the secular state supports gender equality, the deeds of Habibakhon Abdurakhmanova continue to bear fruitful results. It is symbolic that Farida Akbarova, a granddaughter of Kosima-aya Gadoiboyeva from mahalla Rabochii Gorodok was Head of the Women’s Committee and served among five other women as the Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan. D. Tashmukhamedova was the Chairwoman of the Legislative Chamber of the Uzbek Parliament from 2008 to 2014. In Tashkent and all regions of Uzbekistan, there are women Deputy Khokims—heads of regional Women’s Committees. In Uzbekistan, the level of female economic activity is rather high, especially in healthcare, sports, social protection (78%), education, culture, science (68%), trade, forestry, and agriculture (51–53%). Overall, women compose 48% of the employed population and about half of all university students [Abdurakhmanov and Zakirova 2014: 227-228].

Globalization and growth of aggressive, politically motivated Islam in the region and the world has led to an increase of “hijob” (new veil) wearers and sellers in Uzbekistan. The government banned wearing religious clothing in public (1998) and selling it in shops and bazaars (2012). The Muslim Board welcomed unveiling. Why are both the government and Muslim Board of Uzbekistan against hijob?

For most women, especially young girls, hijob is like a new fashion symbolizing faith and purity. For a few, it is a challenge against ugly forms of marketization. However, for conservatives who promote the “hijobization” campaign, it is a method of spreading their ideas in order to split societies and achieve political changes in expansion of the Islamic State (khalifat).

The anti-hijob campaign in Uzbekistan is not against religion, but against any sign of solidarity with extreme forms of Islam. The absolute majority of the Uzbek people, the State, and the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan are not in favor of radical political Islam. Modern Uzbek society is for such forms that are adequate to our traditions, mentality, and historical and cultural heritage. They do not want to return to the Middle Ages.

3 The Constitution of Uzbekistan states, “Women and men have equal rights.”
4 See C. Obiya’s article in this discussion paper.
Progressive Muslim women, for instance, Asra Nomani, of Indian background, authored *Standing Alone: An American Woman’s Struggle for the Soul of Islam* and journalist Hala Arafa, born in Egypt, also argues that hijab is not compulsory from the viewpoint of the Qur’an, that it is a creation of contemporary conservatives to maintain discrimination against Muslim women. They stress that hijab is not a symbol of Muslim women’s faith and dignity and call on women not to wear it [Washington Post 2015].

**Concluding Remarks.** Muslim women in Uzbekistan are much like Khabiba Abdurakhmanova who unveiled herself and actively participated in the *Hujum* campaign, but not at the expense of her faith and principles. The majority of people support unveiling not only because they have been forced to but also because they want better educated and healthy children—boys and girls—to have equal opportunities in jobs and careers.

According to Yoji Yamamoto, “Changes in style of clothing lead to changes in style of life.” The transformation in Uzbekistan in the 20th century illustrates this. Now, in the 21st century, the problem is not in the veil itself, but in proper expression of religious and social feelings. It is important *not* to import political Islam via hijab and *not* to reverse achievements with a new systemic transformation.

Uzbek people managed to maintain their religion as their spiritual, moral, and cultural values even in a rigid atheistic society. After independence, the secular state provides freedom of faith, but it does not mean freedom for political and extreme forms of Islam or any other religion. It does mean freedom for an individual to exercise religion without harming society, its stability, progress, and happiness.

**References**

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*Washington Post*  

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5 Quoted from [Bagdasaryan 2016]
International Workshop
Islam and Gender in Central Asia: Soviet Modernization and Today’s Society
Program

Date: Dec. 26 (Sat.), 2015  Time: 10:00-17:30
Venue: Middle sized meeting room, 3rd floor, Inamori Building
(Inamori Zaidan Kinenkan), Kyoto University
Language: English

Moderator: KOMATSU Hisao

10:00-10:15 Opening Remarks
OBIYA Chika

10:15-11:05 Presentation 1
“The Politics of the Veil” in the Context of Uzbekistan
OBIYA Chika

11:05-11:55 Presentation 2
Paradise at the Feet of Mothers and Women:
SADUM in the Struggle for Emancipation of Muslim Women
Bakhtiyar BABADJANOV

(11:55-13:30 Lunch Break)

13:30-14:20 Presentation 3
Modern Uzbek Family: Marital Relations
Nodira AZIMOV A

14:20-15:10 Presentation 4
Women, Marriage and Market Economy in Rural Uzbekistan
SONO Fumoto

15:10-16:00 Presentation 5
“Jahri Zikr” by Women in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan:
Survival of a Sufi Traditional Ritual through Soviet Policies and Its Future
WAZAKI Seika

(16:00-16:15 Coffee & Tea Break)

16:15-16:45 Comments
Bakhtiyor ISLAMOV / Shakhzoda KARIMOVA / KIKUTA Haruka / MURAKAMI Kaoru

16:45-17:30 Discussion

17:30 Closing Remarks
KOMATSU Hisao
List of the Participants

AZIMOVA, Nodira
Senior Researcher, Vice Chief of the Section of Ethnology, Institute of History, Academy of Sciences, Uzbekistan

BABADJANOV, Bakhtiyar
Professor, Leading Researcher, Center for the Study of Oriental Manuscripts, State Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

OBIYA, Chika
Associate Professor, Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University, Japan

SONO, Fumoto
Research Fellow, National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

WAZAKI, Seika
Lecturer, Division of Interdepartmental Education, Faculty of General Education, Chubu University, Japan

ISLAMOV, Bakhtiyor
Professor, Tashkent Branch of Russian University of Economics named after G. V. Plekhanov, Uzbekistan

KARIMOVA, Shakhzoda
Researcher, Sharkh va Tavsiya Sociology Center, Uzbekistan

KIKUTA, Haruka
Research Fellow, Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, Hokkaido University, Japan

MURAKAMI, Kaoru
Senior Research Fellow, Middle Eastern Studies Group, Area Studies Center, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan

KOMATSU, Hisao
Professor, Institute of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan