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## THE “TOSHMASJID” COMPLEX

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### Abstract

The Toshmasjid complex is one of the most remarkable historical and architectural monuments of Uzbekistan. It is located in the Toshmasjid neighborhood of Kiziltepa district, Navoi province, in the town of Vangozi. The monument has long been considered an important religious, educational, and cultural center of the region.

### Historical Background

The complex has deep historical roots dating back to the **16th century**, when it was established during the reign of the Shaibanid ruler **Abdullah Khan II**. According to historical sources, the construction of the mosque began around the **1580s** upon the decree of Khoja Kalonkhoja and was completed in **1585–1586** after six years of continuous building work. The main materials used were well-baked bricks, which ensured both strength and durability.

Over the centuries, the mosque served as a major place of worship and also a center of Qur’anic and Hadith studies. It played a vital role not only in the spiritual life of the local Muslim community but also in the dissemination of religious and scientific knowledge across the region.

### Architectural Features

The mosque is a monumental structure built on a **high platform of about 70 cm**. Its overall size is **24 x 40 meters**, and the building is covered with **two large domes** and **16 smaller domes** of various sizes. The interior is supported by numerous columns, creating a unique column-domed composition that reflects the finest traditions of Central Asian Islamic architecture.

One of the most striking features of the complex is its **minaret**, which rises to a height of **24 meters**. This minaret is one of the tallest and most elegant surviving examples of 16th-century architectural works in Central Asia. The base of the



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minaret is made of stone, with a foundation diameter of **3.8 meters**, demonstrating the engineering mastery of its builders.

The mosque's walls are decorated with **geometric and floral motifs**, while the doors and windows display exquisite **woodcarving**. The large blue dome at the center gives the complex an imposing and majestic appearance, symbolizing the harmony between faith and art.

### **Later Developments and Restoration**

By the 18th–19th centuries, the Toshmasjid complex continued to serve as both a mosque and a madrasa, with additional structures such as an ablution hall and a hammam (bathhouse) built on the southern and western sides. Over time, some of the old buildings were damaged or destroyed, especially in the early 20th century.

In **1935**, part of the madrasa was demolished, and by **1949** architect A. Balayev created a detailed plan of the site. The complex was officially taken under state protection in **1982**, when the Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR ordered partial restoration works with the support of the “Moscow” collective farm and local district leaders.



During the years of independence, special attention was given to the preservation of this cultural heritage. In **2002**, President Islam Karimov highlighted the importance of the Toshmasjid complex, after which large-scale reconstruction



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works were initiated under the leadership of the Navoi regional governor. The restoration lasted for five months, reviving the original grandeur of the mosque.

### **Religious and Cultural Significance**

Throughout history, Toshmasjid has not only been a place of prayer but also a **center of learning and community life**. Scholars taught Qur'anic sciences and Islamic law, while local youth acquired religious knowledge and moral upbringing. The mosque became a spiritual hub for generations, symbolizing unity and faith.

Today, Toshmasjid is not only an active mosque but also a **sacred pilgrimage site and a tourist attraction**. Visitors admire its architectural beauty, its towering minaret, and its historical value as one of the finest monuments of Central Asian Islamic civilization.

### **Conclusion**

The Toshmasjid complex is a unique cultural and architectural heritage site that reflects the rich history of Uzbekistan. Built in the 16th century and preserved through centuries of change, it remains a **bridge between past and present**. Its towering minaret, elegant domes, and scholarly traditions embody both the artistic achievements and the spiritual strength of the Uzbek people. Toshmasjid continues to inspire respect for national values and serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of Islamic architecture in Central Asia.

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