

On the 15th of June, 2013 the “Hayartun” Cultural Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia organized a pilgrimage to the Armenian medieval monasteries, which are located in Lori province of the Republic of Armenia. In the early morning the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia, His Grace Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan blessed the pilgrims. The spiritual supervisor of the “Hayartun” Cultural Center Deacon Gevorg Antonyan,

the Adviser to the Head of the Diocese Levon Isakhanyan and the Head of the "Hayartun" Cultural Center

Technical
Department
Valera
Badalyan
accompanied the pilgrims.

The pilgrims visited Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God) Church in Akhtala (10th century), Monasteries of Haghpat (10th century) and Sanahin(10th century), which are under UNESCO protection, and Odzun Church (the first church appeared here in the 6th century and in the 8th century it was reconstructed).

In Akhtala Monastery spiritual shepherd of the church Father Vigen Ghazaryan and the Mayor of Akhtala Hayk Khachikyan welcomed the pilgrims. Father Vigen conveyed blessings of the Head of the Gugark Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Sepukh Chuljian to the pilgrims; he blessed them and prayed together with the pilgrims, and then told the history of the church, he explained the meaning of many murals that adorned the walls of the church. After a warm welcome the pilgrims accompanied by Mr. Khachikyan headed to Haghpat Monastery, where they met spiritual shepherd Abegha (Monk) Aspet Balyan, he prayed with the pilgrims and then presented the rich history of the monastery and its significance as part of the world's cultural heritage. Abegha Aspet Balyan also presented

a unique
Khachkar
(
cross-stone)
Amenaprkich that is
stored
in the monastery. Under the canopy of Haghpat Monastery the pilgrims rested and had a meal.

Sanahin Monastery was the next place to visit, together with Haghpat Monastery Complex it was placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1996. Popular schools of miniature painting and calligraphy,
repository
for
manuscripts
and
books were located here in Sanahin.

After Sanahin Monastery the pilgrims headed to Holy Virgin Mary Church in Odzun, where they were familiarized with the centuries-old history and the architecture of the church, they also saw Khachkars (cross-stones) in the yard of the church and talked to the local population of Odzun village .










by Y.A.