

## THE UNIQUENESS OF THE HISTORY OF BUKHARA KHANATE

*Djalilova Gulbahor Mamirovna*

*"Kokand University" Andijan branch, "Social humanitarian and pedagogical sciences"  
department assistant*

**Annotation:** To write a scientific article on the uniqueness of the history of the Bukhara Khanate, we delve into the rich historical tapestry of this Uzbek state in Central Asia. The Bukhara Khanate, spanning from 1501 to 1785, holds a distinctive position in the region's history, marked by political transformations, cultural achievements, and significant rulers.

**Keywords:** Bukhara Khanate, Central Asia, Abu'l-Khayrid dynasty, Manghit dynasty, Political history, Cultural contributions, Muhammad Shibani, Emirate of Bukhara, Dynastic power, Architectural monuments, Transformation

The Bukhara Khanate, which was established in the second half of the 16th century and occupied a special place in Central Asia until the beginning of the 20th century, has a special place in the development of its foreign relations with other countries. Abdulla Khan II, who founded a large centralized state, tried to develop relations with other khanates and countries to ensure the security of the country and develop trade. He paid particular attention to relations with countries that are geographically neighboring and located along the Great Silk Road [12:184]. Such countries include India, Iran, Russia, Astrakhan, Khajitarkhan, Kazan Khanates, Yorkand and Kashgar Khanates, Kazakh khanate, Khiva khanate, Ottoman Empire and many other countries. The relations of the Bukhara Khanate with Russia have been developing since the second half of the 16th century. While Abdullah Khan II was trying to improve trade relations with Russia, he also wanted to strengthen the political situation of his country. During the reign of Tsar Ivan the Terrible, the status of Russia rose, and the Khanate of Kazan, Khanate of Khajitarkhan, the Volga region and Western Siberia were occupied by Russia. This allowed Russia to control trade routes. In their place, the above countries also tried to maintain friendly relations with the Khanate of Bukhara, which had a powerful military and political power in Central Asia from the second half of the 16th century. In addition, they were interested in the development of foreign relations through mutual trade. Ambassador Antony Jenkinson, who visited Bukhara in the middle of the 16th century, testified that Bukhara was not only the political center of the country at that time but also the place where traders from different countries such as India, Iran, Balkh and China, who had large caravans, came and went between them every year. It was also a trading city where mutual product exchange took place [12:184]. Because Bukhara is located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, where trade routes to Western countries such as the Kazakh Khanate, the Yorkand Khanate, China, India, Afghanistan and Russia intersected. Bukhara was considered another port city where the merchants of the Shaibani state, in addition to selling their products, met with merchants from other countries and exchanged products. The 18th-20th century was a unique period in the system of foreign relations of the Bukhara Khanate, which is explained by the formation and development of the foreign relations of the Khanate in a unique way. During this period, the gradual development of foreign relations of the khanate continued in various forms. The representatives of various social classes living in the khanate played a major role in the establishment of diplomatic relations and trade and economic relations of Bukhara with neighboring and other foreign countries,



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as well as in their further development. In particular, it is possible to mention merchants, religious scholars and some representatives of the administrative management system. Religious scholars, including representatives of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, took an active part in the political, economic, and cultural processes of the country, as it was during the Shaybani period and the Ashtarkhani rule. Their wide-scale activities within the country had an impact on the foreign relations of the khanate. This can be seen in the example of Khojabor Khojas and other religious scholars who worked in the khanate in the position of Shaykhul Islam. By the time of Abdullah Khan II, a prominent representative of the Shaibani dynasty, the role of other representatives of the Naqshbandi order in the khanate, the Khojas of Joybor, significantly increased. Now they have become important not only in the domestic political life of the country but also in foreign political relations. These representatives of religious scholars took an active part in foreign political relations carried out through letters. In particular, there is information that many letters were received from Khoja Islam, Khoja Saad, Khoja Tajiddin and others from different countries, including India, Khorasan, Iran, Turkey, Yorkand, Kashgar, Kazakh khanates [13:25]. Information about the participation of religious scholars in foreign relations is rare in the sources of the 18th and 19th centuries. This is characterized by the decline of the influence of religious scholars not only in foreign political relations but also in internal socio-political life. In addition, by this time, the Khanate of Bukhara was on the verge of political decline due to internecine wars and struggles for the throne. In this situation, the regions within the khanate claimed independence one after another and began to separate from the khanate. In particular, the Balkh region is one of them, and historian Muhammad Yusuf Munshi's work entitled "History of Muqimkhani" reflects on the activities of Ashtarkhani Muhammad Muqimkhan (1702 - 1707), who became the independent ruler of Balkh. The work details the political processes of the Bukhara Khanate and Balkh at the beginning of the 18th century [15:207]. In particular, the fact that a group of Khorasan Shiites ("redheads") sent letters and letters to Balkh and tried to mislead the Movarounnahr and Balkh Sunnis and convince them of the truth of their religion by using false information and fabrications taken from various religious books, Maulana Mulla It is stated that Umar Akhund, a religious scholar, wrote a reply on behalf of all Balkh Sunni religious scholars and gave worthy response to this action of Khorasan Shiites [14:221]. Another source belonging to the 19th century - "Tarihi Salatini Mangitiya" - writes that the author of the work, Najmiddin Khoja Mir Asad, was a trusted ambassador of Bukhara emir Muzaffar. From the information in the work, it can be known that Najmiddin Khoja performed an ambassadorial mission between the emir Muzaffar and the Russian governors Kaufman and Chernyaev [15:67-73]

Since the first half of the 19th century, the competition between the two major colonial powers, England and Russia, for the territories of the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand Khanates has intensified and intensified. The factors that caused the increase in competition include, firstly, the attempts of England and Russia to acquire new colonies at the expense of Central Asia; secondly, it was the desire to occupy the Central Asian markets to sell their goods and get a good profit from it, and thirdly, they wanted to have the rich raw materials of Central Asia. To achieve these goals, the British colonists, who were firmly established in India, tried to move towards Central Asia through the East India (East India) Company they created [10:79]. Their goal was to destroy the influence of Russia in the Uzbek Khanates and to bring the Khanates under their sphere of influence. The British ruling circles started sending special expeditions to determine the internal and external conditions of the khanates, and the roads connecting them, and to establish contact with the khanates. At the same time, expeditions were entrusted with the task of establishing contacts with local influential forces. The first British expedition was led by W. Murkford. He arrived in Bukhara in February 1825. According to the sources, there were 70 people in the expedition, and 80 boxes of various weapons were shown to the Bukhara region. The British managed to study the Bukhara Khanate in every way and to form a pro-British group among the local rulers. The Russian ruling circles, who learned about Murkford's expedition, informed Haidar, the emir of Bukhara, that they were dissatisfied with the behavior of the British in Bukhara. In short,



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in the 16th century, three political forces came to the battlefield in the adjacent part of Asia. These were the Shaybanites in Movarounnahr, the Safavids in Iran, and the Baburis in India. In international and mutual relations, the interests of these three dynasties collided and competition intensified. Khorasan was the point where their interests collided. Because Khurasan has an important place in both military-political and trade-economic terms. In addition, Khurasan served as a kind of gate in the direction of Movarounnahr, Iran and India. There was a fierce struggle between the Shaybanites and the Safavids over the control of Khurasan. In this matter, the Shaibanis prevailed during the time of Muhammad Shaybani Khan, Ubaydullah Khan and Abdullah Khan, but almost no results were achieved during the time of the Ashtarkhanis and the Mangits. Later, the Safavids gained the upper hand and eventually managed to separate Khurasan from Mowarounnahr.

### **Cultural Heritage of The Bukhara Khanate**

Based on the search results, the cultural heritage of the Bukhara Khanate is characterized by the following key aspects: The city of Bukhara itself is a UNESCO World Heritage site, described as "the most complete example of a medieval Central Asian town" with an "intact urban fabric" [1](#). It is home to numerous architectural masterpieces from different eras, including:

- The Poi-Kalyan minaret, a "masterpiece of decoration in brick" from the 11th century Karakhanid period .
- The Ulugbek medresseh, a surviving contribution from the Timurid era [1](#).
- Celebrated buildings from the Sheibanid dynasty, such as the Poi-Kalyan group, Lyabi-Khauz ensemble, Kosh Medresseh, and Gaukushon medresseh [1](#).
- Fine 17th century additions like the Magoki Kurns mosque and Abdullaziz-Khan medresseh [1](#).

Beyond the built heritage, Bukhara was a major center of Islamic theology and Sufism, with over 200 mosques and 100 madrasahs during its peak between the 9th and 16th centuries [1](#). It was considered the "Central Asian Mecca" and a hub for Muslim scholars [2](#). The city also had a diverse population, including the unique community of Bukhara Jews who had a presence dating back to the 5th century BC [2](#). Their blending of Jewish and Tajik cultures contributed to Bukhara's rich cultural tapestry. Additionally, the Khanate produced notable literary figures like Muhammad Shibani, whose poetry in Turkic and Persian languages helped shape the region's cultural heritage. In summary, the Bukhara Khanate's cultural legacy is defined by its remarkably well-preserved medieval urban landscape, its status as a center of Islamic learning and Sufism, its architectural masterpieces, and its diverse population that included influential literary and scholarly figures.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Bukhara Khanate's history stands out for its political intricacies, cultural richness, and transformative shifts under various dynasties. From its founding in the 16th century to its transition into the Emirate of Bukhara in 1785, the Khanate left an indelible mark on Central Asian history, blending political power with cultural sophistication in a unique and enduring manner.

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