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# THE ROLE OF CARAVAN SARAIS IN TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN BUKHARA AND AFGHANISTAN

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**Annotation:** This article scientifically analyzes the role of caravansarais in trade relations between Bukhara and Afghanistan from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Bukhara, trade, caravanserai, caravan leader, Kabul, emirate, trade center, communication, market, raw materials, Mazar-i-Sharif.

In the mid-19th century, about 60 caravanserais and dozens of bazaars in the emirate's main trading city, Bukhara, were annually transporting 15,000 camels of various goods from Russia, India, Iran, Kashgar, and Afghanistan[1].

In trade with Afghanistan, Bukhara merchants such as Sayfulla Karbonbashi, Kholberdi Karvonbashi, and Kurban Karvonbashi led trade caravans from Kabul, Rahmonkul Karvonbashi, Kholmurad Karvonbashi, and Abduvohid Karvonbashi from Maimana, Otaboy, Rahmon, and Abdurasul Karvonbashi from Akhchi, and Mirzaboy and Karimboy Karvonbashi from Andkhoy led trade caravans to Bukhara and other trading centers of the emirate[2].

In June-July 1888, Bukhara caravan leaders exported goods worth 1 million 7.81 thousand 400 soums to Afghanistan. This allowed the Bukhara treasury to receive 150 thousand soums in zakat and aminona taxes. Zakat was 2.5 percent of the value of the goods, and aminona was 5 percent of the value of the goods exported.[3]

When sending Russian goods to Afghanistan, the territory of the Bukhara emirate and its markets served as the main warehouses, and the movement of caravans was carried out along the Karshi-Kelif, Chochka-Guzar, and Mazar-i-Sharif routes.

Thus, the interests of the Russian Empire were ensured by gaining full control over the Central Asian market and raw material reserves and establishing control over the trade system. In Afghanistan, Amir Abdurahman (1880-1901) took measures to ensure the safety of the caravan routes connecting various cities and regions in order to further develop trade. To this end, the emir took drastic measures and imposed cruel punishments on those who engaged in theft, robbery and extortion on the roads. The thieves and robbers who were caught were put in iron cages and hung on tall trees along the road, where they were supposed to die from heat, cold, hunger and thirst. The procedure for introducing uniform units of measurement throughout the country was also carried out to develop trade, and the responsibility of the heads of the kafila[4] was increased. A single currency was also established, and a mint in Kabul began minting silver and copper coins. During this period, the import of goods from India decreased due to the imposition of heavy duties on transit trade across the country.

Also, when the Russian Empire turned the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva into vassal states, the customs system of these states was also transferred to the control of the tsarist government, and the Russian government also imposed a high duty on trade with Afghanistan[5]. For this reason, the centuries-old traditional trade routes passing through India and Afghanistan and Central Asia began to lose their importance from the end of the 19th century and gradually almost stopped. Amir Abdurahman, who was well aware of the huge profits from trade, especially foreign trade, despite the limited foreign policy activity, conducted extremely profitable activities for himself

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in foreign economic relations. In particular, the emir established a sole monopoly on the export of a number of leading raw materials (karakul skins) from Afghanistan.

Amir Abdurahman appointed his special trade representative for karakul products in Bukhara in 1887. Its functions were: 1-to receive caravans of karakul skins; 2-to monitor the correct determination of customs duties on them; 3-to carry out trade transactions; 4-to send the income from karakul skins to the emir[6].

They served not only as a safe place for caravans to spend the night and rest, but also as a center for exchanging goods, setting prices, making commercial transactions, and exchanging economic information between merchants from different regions. In particular, caravanserais located on the Bukhara-Balkh-Mazar-e Sharif-Kabul and other trade routes ensured the continuity of economic relations between the two countries.

Starting from the second half of the 19th century, the strengthening of the political and economic influence of the Russian Empire in Central Asia, the introduction of new customs procedures, and the change in traditional trade routes had a certain negative impact on the activities of caravanserais. However, despite this, they remained the mainstay of Bukhara-Afghanistan trade relations for a long time and played an important role in ensuring the stability of regional economic relations.

Thus, studying the history of caravanserais allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the organizational foundations of trade relations between Bukhara and Afghanistan, the stages of formation and development of trade infrastructure, and the characteristics of cross-border economic relations in the history of Central Asia. The results of this study will serve as an important scientific resource for future scientific research on the study of trade routes, caravan infrastructure, and the historical and economic heritage of the region.

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