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# Trade Routes Connecting the Bukhara Emirate and India In the Second Half of the 19th - Early 20th Centuries

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**Abstract:** This article provides information about the trade routes and their branches that were considered important in the commercial relations between the Bukhara Emirate and India. The study also examines issues such as trade centers, types of imported and exported products exchanged between the two countries, and customs duties collected along the trade routes.

**Keywords:** Bukhara Emirate, India, trade routes, directions, mountain passes, trade centers, markets, imports, exports, products.

**Introduction:** The Bukhara Emirate was one of the major centers of the Eastern commercial world in Central Asia. In particular, by the 19th century, the Emirate's position in the commercial sphere had grown even stronger. When we examine the trade relations between the Bukhara Emirate and India from the second half of the 19th century to the early 20th century, we witness their rapid development. During this period, the Emirate's major cities such as Bukhara, Karshi, Samarkand, Sherabad, Hisar, Guzor, and others conducted regular trade with Indian commercial hubs like Peshawar, Multan, Calcutta, and Shikarpur. Commercial operations between the two countries were carried out via major caravan routes passing through Kabul, Herat, and Kandahar in Afghanistan.[1] Caravan routes played an invaluable role in conducting trade, as merchants were keen on ensuring the safe and swift delivery of their goods to their destinations.

Merchants always strived to travel along safe and smooth roads. And road safety served as one of the

most crucial factors for them.

## METHOD

When we examine the history of trade between the Bukhara Emirate and India, we see that trade routes played a significant role and were divided into several branches. By the second half of the 19th century, we can observe that trade relations between the emirate and India were conducted through multiple caravan routes and their directions. For instance, a trading caravan departing from the Indian city of Peshawar would travel for 3 days through the Khyber Pass to reach the city of Jalalabad, and then proceed to Kabul. Here, the merchants would pay zakat tax for the goods they brought and continue on their journey. As the road passing through the Hindu Kush mountains consisted of mountainous terrain, crossing was quite challenging and posed several weeks of risks. The main problem for merchants was the tribes living in the Khyber Pass. They constantly attacked trade caravans. To protect themselves from their attacks, the merchants used the armed forces of the Povinda tribe, who lived in the Khyber Pass. The Povinda tribe not only ensured the safety of caravans but also engaged in trade themselves. Members of the Povinda tribe brought and sold "muslin" (thin) fabric woven in southern India, nectar dye, gauze, tea, brocade, dyeing roots, medicinal herbs, black pepper, shale, and other trade goods to the markets of Bukhara [2].

The caravan that departed from Kabul (Peshawar) traveled to Bamiyan for 16 days. During this period, merchants stopped in Sarychashma, Khulm, and Bamiyan to pay zakat again. The caravan from Bamiyan traveled to Balkh in 2 days, and from Balkh to Karki in 7-9 days, paying zakat in these cities as well, and reached the city of Karshi. From here, merchants going to Kokand and Tashkent traveled to their destinations through Samarkand, while those going to Bukhara traveled to various regions of the emirate [3].

Caravans traveling in this direction, upon returning from Bukhara to India, paid customs duties in Karshi and Karki and entered Afghan territory. The merchants paid tribute again in the cities of Balkh, Khulm, Bamiyan, and Kabul and went to Jalalabad, and then through the Khyber Pass to Peshawar. P.I. Nebolsin emphasized the importance of the Peshawar road, passing through the Khyber Pass, in connecting the Bukhara Emirate with the Indian cities of Shikarpur, Multan, and Peshawar. He also described that trade caravans came to Kabul through Lahore, Peshawar, and the Khyber Pass, where all trade caravans united and went to Bamiyan, Oybek, Tashkurgan, Mazar-i-Sharif, crossed the Amu Darya, and then came to Kalif, and then to Bukhara, covering the journey from Kabul

to Bukhara in 27 days"[4].

By the second half of the 19th century, silk occupied a special place among the products exported from Bukhara to India. Camels loaded with silk from Bukhara reached Khulm in 15 days, and merchants paid a duty of 1.5 gold for each pood of cargo. In general, merchants paid a duty of up to 250-300 rupees per camel loaded with silk before reaching Indian cities. The main part of the silk sent from Bukhara was processed into finished products in the city of Multan and distributed to various cities of India. Shikapur merchants were the leaders in delivering silk fabrics to shopping centers [5].

Trade caravans departing from the city of Karshi to India traveled in two directions: Ajirim-Sho'rbozor-Ayritom-through villages in the western part of Kungirtau[6], while the second route passed through the Jom-Sho'rquduq-Qoratikon well along the southeastern slopes of Kungirtau[7]. V. A. Petrov provided information about the Bukhara-Karakul branch leading to India, according to which the road passed along the second stream of the Zarafshan, passing through the village of Chandir, passing through the sands 40 versts from Karakul, continuing through the villages of Bitik and Farab, and then to Chardzhou, and then to Afghanistan [8]. Merchants also used the network of internal local roads in the direction of Karmana-Karshi-Kelif. These networks were also an important transit route to the main trading cities of Afghanistan and India.

By the middle of the 19th century, trade relations between Bukhara and India were conducted along two main routes. The first route involved trade caravans departing from Calcutta or Bombay, passing through the city of Peshawar to Kabul, and then on to Bukhara. The second route came by sea from India to the Persian Gulf port of Bandar Busheht in Iran, and from there proceeded to Isfahan, Mashhad, Merv, Chardzhou, and finally to Bukhara. Although transporting Indian products to Bukhara through Iranian routes was relatively shorter, the cost of goods imported to Bukhara via Iran was 4 rubles and 30 kopecks cheaper than those imported through Afghanistan. Nevertheless, merchants rarely used the route leading to Bukhara through Iran. They were forced to use this route only during emergencies, internal conflicts within states, or when the security of the caravan route was not adequately ensured.

By the end of the 19th - beginning of the 20th century, the existing roads connecting cities and districts did not lose their significance. 1. Bukhara-Kashgar, 2. Bukhara-Merv, 3. Bukhara-Manqishloq, 4. Roads such as Bukhara-Saray[9] are among them. Among these branches, the Bukhara-Saray road was an important trade route for the import of Anglo-Indian goods into

the emirate. From Sarai, the caravan arrived in Kurgantepa, from where it led to the Kazakh Mazar, Saray, Chubek, Bagarak, Kulyab, Hisar, and Kabadiyan regions of Eastern Bukhara [10].

The Bukhara-Kashgar road also played an important role in Bukhara-India trade relations. Caravans departing from Bukhara reached Kashgar through Samarkand, Khujand, Osh, Margilan, and the Bulatog Pass. Due to the well-developed trade, this city was also called "Little Bukhara." This road network served as an important exit point for merchants from cities like Merv, Mangyshlak, and Sarai. Here the road was again divided into branches, through the first of which it was possible to reach China, and through the second - India. The advantage of this road was that the distances between the roads were close and inexpensive. The disadvantage is that, since these roads were mountain roads, the road sections were washed away by rains, which made it difficult to safely transport cargo caravans [11]. It was through the Kashgar route that Indian merchants supplied Central Asia with green tea [12].

The Bukhara-Karshi-Termez-Saray road, like other trade routes, has served merchants since ancient times. D. Logofet also provided information about this road network: "Since ancient times, local and foreign merchants have continuously used this road. Through this route, caravans traveled to Europe and India, from which the Bukhara Emirate received large profits" [13]. I. Yavorskiy also noted the importance of this road for conducting trade. It also states that "the road is smooth and convenient for movement, which indicates the constant movement of caravans" [14]. A. Vambéry, describing the safety of these roads, writes: "The roads were under strict control by the Emir of Bukhara, and not only large and small trade caravans, but also individual travelers could freely travel on this road" [15].

The Bandi Sultan-Herat-Kandahar trade route also played a significant role in the Bukhara Emirate's international trade relations. Sources indicate that caravans have used this trade route since ancient times. By the 1860s-1880s, the Bukhara-Chorjo'y-Marv caravan route was still highly influential in Bukhara-India trade relations [16].

The Bukhara-Chorjuy-Merv and Bukhara-Karshi-Termez-Saray routes served as the main trade arteries for merchants traveling between Bukhara and India. In addition to these land routes, the Amu Darya waterway, which stretched from Chorjuy through Karshi to Saray, was also utilized in Bukhara-India trade relations [17].

For instance, on the Karshi-Termez-Saray route from

Sherabad to Karshi-Bukhara, it was possible to hire up to 500 camels for transportation during a one-month period, and up to 1000 camels in winter. The cost of transporting goods by camel varied. From Sherabad to Karshi, the price ranged from 3 rubles 40 kopecks to 4 rubles; to Kalif, from 3 rubles to 3 rubles 50 kopecks; to Guzar, from 2 rubles 60 kopecks to 3 rubles; and to Chuchkaguzar at the Amu Darya crossing, from 1 ruble 60 kopecks to 1 ruble 90 kopecks [18].

E.A. Lusternik pointed out that in Bukhara-India trade, a network of three trade routes stretched along the banks of the Panj and Amu Darya rivers to Bukhara, from which trade caravans also traveled. The first was a road network from Bukhara to Calcutta, the distance between which was 7674.4 km, and the trade caravan reached the destination in 181 days. Due to the long distance of the road and the great difficulty it required from merchants to cross the passes, Bukharan and other merchants practically did not use this road. The second was another additional branch of the road from Bukhara to Calcutta, with a total length of 7,165.6 km, and caravans reached it in 169 days. This road network was also inconvenient for merchants, so few people used it. The third was an urgent route from Bukhara to Calcutta, considered the trade center of India, the length of which was 7716.8 km, which could be covered in 172 days [19].

India played an important role in the trade of the Bukhara Emirate with foreign countries. For example, the caravanserais of Abdurashid, Badriddin, Barran Kuhna, Domlasher, Ismailkhoja, and Mirzagul in Bukhara served as warehouses for tea brought from Peshawar. In these caravanserais, 16 varieties of tea were sold. N. Petrovsky, having collected information about the Anglo-Indian trade since the beginning of 1870, characterizes it as follows: "Based on my two-year observations of Central Asian trade, I am convinced that Bukhara is the main center of this trade" [20].

## CONCLUSION

The importance of trade routes for the states of Central Asia was very great, and along these routes, in addition to Bukharan merchants, merchants from Khiva, the Kokand Khanate, and Eastern countries also conducted active trade. Despite the fact that Bukharan-Indian merchants were repeatedly forced to pay zakat on caravan routes, trade between the two countries did not cease; on the contrary, trade relations developed year by year. With the introduction of railways into the emirate, the importance of trade routes between the two states decreased, and the use of these routes practically ceased. Now Bukharan-Indian merchants began to use the new trade route - the road to Bandar-Bushir, Mashhad, Batumi, or Krasnovodsk.

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