On Trade Relations between Russia and the Emirate of Bukhara
(Late XVIII th To Mid XIX th Centuries)

Shokhida Khaidarovna Davurova
Head of the Central Archive of the of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan

Abstract: The article covers trade relations of the Russian Empire with Bukhara Emirate at the end of XVIII - beginning of XIX centuries. It analyzes the processes of deepening and expanding bilateral trade, import and export items between the countries.

Keywords: Russian Empire, Emirate, Bukhara, trade relations, fair, caravanserai, trade turnover.

By the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Central Asia was an arena where British and Russian interests clashed. Central Asia became an arena where British and Russian interests clashed. Central Asia was of interest to Russia as a market for Russian manufacture. The development of the Russian textile industry also depended on cotton supplied by Central Asia. In addition to cotton, silk, Karakul skins, dried fruits and many other things were in great demand in the Russian market.

According to the traveller G.N.Potanin, most Siberians wore clothes brought from the Emirate of Bukhara and China [1, pp.86-87]. Silk, cotton and linen materials brought from Bukhara were also in great demand among the common people living along the banks of the Volga River to the city of Kazan and to the Siberian territories. The Bukhara traders had large incomes from this trade in these places. In order to expand trade relations and convenient goods exchange between the Central Asian cities of Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand and Tashkent, the Russian state built necessary market squares and caravanserais in Orenburg and Troitsk [2, p.79].

For the first time in 1739-1740 a trade caravan of Russian traders with a military guard was sent from Orenburg to Tashkent. This caravan consisted of large Tatar traders selling various goods produced in Russia and Europe, such as Sh. Arslonov, S Drozdov and M. Yunusov.

Russian traders had to attract local traders to trade at the fairs in Orenburg. Orenburg traders returned after 5 months with valuable information on Tashkent and other Central Asian cities.

By 1745 trade relations between Central Asian khanates and Russia reached such a level that all expenses on administration of the Orenburg region were covered by taxes collected from different goods sold at Orenburg markets by visiting merchants from Central Asia [3, p.42-43]. Bukhara merchants, along with various goods, also brought gold and silver to Orenburg to be exchanged for goods produced in Russia.

Soon the Senate adopted a resolution on the proposal of the Russian Collegium of Foreign Affairs that Russian goods would not be sold for gold and silver in the markets of Orenburg, but would be exchanged for various Central Asian goods. In 1748 various cotton fabrics, gently worked black and grey karakul skins were brought from Bukhara and grapes of good and sweet varieties, peaches, apples, pears, dried fruit as well as gold and silver ribre were brought from Tashkent [4, p 617].

Despite the recommendations of the Board, gold coins minted in Bukhara Emirate, Iran and India continued to be imported as trade products. At the same time one Indian coin cost 6 rubles, one Bukhara gold tanga was worth 2 rubles 70 kopecks [5, p. 817]. At the same time, Bukhara...
merchants did not pay tax on gold and silver as they did on other goods. From the second half of the XVIII century trade between Russia and Bukhara saw an increase in trade of Bukhara silk, chintz and half-silk fabrics.

On 12 February 1750, I.I. Neplyuyev, the governor of Orenburg, set stable prices on the markets for different goods in order to create comfortable conditions for Middle Asia traders. According to the new pricing, they priced and sold “1 pood of light red dye of chenille for 250 rubles, 1 pood of dark blue dye of indigo for 60 rubles, red and other colours of woolen fabric from 3 rubles 60 kopecks to 4 rubles, semiwool fabric from 2 roubles 80 to 3 roubles 20 kopecks, raw cotton 10-15 kopecks per pood, cotton skein 30-40 kopecks, Dutch wool cloth 2 roubles each” [6, p. 665]. This situation revived commodity and monetary turnover in trade relations between Russia and the Central Asian khanates and greatly benefited the state treasury.

According to the resolution adopted by the Senate of the Russian state on November 25, 1764, merchants from Central Asia were allowed to trade in precious stones in Moscow and St. Petersburg [7, p. 45]. According to this regulation they had no right to sell other goods except for precious stones. Despite this, Bukhara traders sold diamonds and gems not only to Russian, but also to foreign customers.

It was established that the treasury of the Russian state received a good income from Russian trade with Bukhara. For example, from 1745 to 1774 the state treasury of the Orenburg province received 1038952 rubles from trade, and 176980 rubles from taxes for products from Central Asia. To Central Asia from Orenburg were taken out different goods in the amount of 5957426 rubles. And goods in the amount of 5047113 rubles were exported to Orenburg from Central Asia [8, p.82-89].

It is known that in 1780 Russian ambassadors led by the interpreter S.M. Bekchurin departed to Orenburg. M. Bekchurin went to Bukhara. One of the main tasks of the mission was to find out the trade opportunities with Bukhara Emirate, open Russian trading points in Bukhara city, check trade routes between the countries, etc. [9, p. 242].

By the end of XVIII century there were several trade routes connecting the Russian state with Bukhara emirate, Khiva and Kokand khanates. The first old road went through the Volga River, Caspian Sea and Mangishlak; the second one, starting from Orenburg and going through Tashkent to Bukhara Emirate and Kokand Khanate; and the third one, starting from Semipalatinsk, went through Kazakh deserts along the Sarisuv River and led to Tashkent [10, p.97].

Russia's interest in trade with Central Asian khanates is also proven by the fact that ambassadors were sent to the Emirate of Bukhara. At the same time, members of the mission collected important information on the government of the khanates, domestic and foreign policies, information on towns and villages, communication routes, economy and economic relations, trade, etc.

The works and diaries of E. K. Meyendorff, P. P. Demezon and the orientalist N. Khanykov contain important material on the Central Asian khanates, including the Bukhara Emirate.

They provide interesting information and historical facts about the geographical location of Bukhara Emirate, its social structure, the participation of representatives of different estates in domestic and foreign trade and economic relations, urban and rural markets, caravanserais, as well as about the peculiarities of trade routes.

During the studied period from year to year the import and export of goods from Bukhara to Russia were growing. Only in 1801 Bukhara exported to Russia:

Yarn skeins for 483.7 thousand rubles, cotton fabric for 42.5 thousand rubles, raw cotton for 19.5 thousand rubles, uncoated (raw-mint) skins for 101.7 thousand rubles, astrakhan skins for 45.8 thousand rubles.
In the same year the following was taken from Russia to Bukhara: gold coins worth 217.7 thousand roubles, cloth and other cloth worth 112 thousand roubles, red paint and carnations worth 83 thousand roubles [11, p. 49].

By the beginning of the 19th century, after Russia's permission to export iron, copper, steel, pig-iron and other metal, trade in metal took first place in trade relations with Bukhara. Russian copper was used in the emirate to make all kinds of utensils and coins, while iron and cast iron were used to make weapons and tools for agriculture. Trade in cotton yarn ranked the 1st, and amounted to 8 million 473 thousand 879 roubles. Cotton clothes ranked second, but the third place was taken by the raw cotton. Only in 1841 there were sold a record number of goods: net cotton for 85,938 rubles, cotton yarn for 288484 rubles, cotton clothes for 686,068 rubles, fur for 198,568 rubles. At the same time the total sum was 1,461,357 roubles [12, p.62].

Bukhara cotton fabrics of "bakhti" and "zandani" grades were in great demand among Russians (even though they were coarse). "Bakhti" was sold for 4 to 6 roubles up to the end of 1841 and 1 to 1.5 roubles for a piece up to the end of the 19th century [13, p.25].

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russia's relations with the Emir strengthened, and trade relations expanded accordingly. This was promoted by frequent visits of ambassadors and negotiations on trade issues. This is proved by the first visit to the Emirate of Bukhara in 1820 of a group of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian state, headed by A. F. Negri and including interpreter P. Yakovlev, naturalist E. Eversman and X. Pandera. The members of the Russian diplomatic mission had gathered valuable information on the cities, markets and trade of precious stones.

Bukhara Emirate was also interested in mutual relations with Russia during the rule of Emir Nasrullakhan. During that Emir's reign, the Bukharans visited Russia several times. In 1830 Bukhara ambassadors went with 30 members headed by Sultankul; in 1836 ambassador of Bukhara emir Kurbanbek Amirbek accompanied 15 people; in summer 1840 Kulibey Mulla Mukimbek headed a group of 39 people [14, p.102-103].

The purpose of the friendly visits was to restore trade and political relations between the two countries. Besides, Emir in the person of the Russian Tsar wanted to have a strong ally against British interference as well as protection against attacks of Khiva troops on Bukhara lands. During these messages Bukhara emir asked the tsar to send Russian geologists and engineers to search for minerals and their extraction in the territory of Emirate.

As a result of negotiations with Bukhara's ambassadors, the Russian state positively responded to the Emir's requests. In response, Russia sent to Bukhara in 1833 the translator of the Border Commission of Orenburg P. I. Demezon, in 1836 Warrant Officer J.N. Vitkevich, in November 1839 a geologist engineer, Captain E. P. Kovalevsky, and in 1841 ambassadors headed by engineer geologist Lieutenant Colonel K. F. Butenev.

They were entrusted with important state tasks. For example, P. P. Demezon had to study the structure of markets and all cities of Bukhara Emirate, as well as the peculiarities of local trade; Ya. Vitkevich to conduct interviews with the palace officials on the economic and political issues, clarify the relations of Bukhara Emirate with neighboring states; E. P. Kovalevsky to collect the complete set of documents. P. Kovalevsky to collect comprehensive information on resources of the Emirate, on domestic and foreign trade, on prices, quality of imported goods, and he had to solve the problem of opening a permanent Russian mission in Bukhara [15, p.236-239]. However, due to an attack by brigands, Kovalevsky's trip ended inconclusively.

In 1841-1842 the Russian government sent messengers headed by engineer K.F.Butenev to protect Nasrullahkhan from the attacks of Khan Allakulikhan of Khiva and English military forces [16, p.144-149]. This mission also included the famous Orientalist scientist N. V. Khanykov, naturalist A.A. Lehman, and topographer P. Yakovlev.

Russian ambassadors, headed by K. F. Butenev, were to conclude a treaty between Bukhara and
Russia. The draft of the treaty stipulated the following points:

- All Russian prisoners and detainees in Bukhara Emirate to be sent back to Russia;
- Equalization of customs duties between Russians coming to Bukhara and local traders;
- Full protection of Russian merchant caravans by force of local merchants of Bukhara Emirate;
- In case of robbery of merchant caravans by robbers, reimburse the damage of all goods in money in full;
- Ensure the safety of Russian citizens and their property located in Bukhara.

Consequently, under fulfillment of these conditions by Emir, the Russian state also promised to fulfill a number of specified obligations. For example,

- To ensure the inviolability of life and property of Bukhara citizens in the territory of the Russian Empire;
- To allow traders of the Emirate to trade in the whole territory of Russia;
- To search for the goods of Bukhara caravans robbed by Kazakhs and Turkmens, who are in Russian citizenship and not to undertake any military actions against Bukhara. As one can see from the draft treaty between Russia and Bukhara, the duties performed by Emir Nasrullahkhan were much more difficult.

Thus, we can indicate some peculiarities of Russian trade with Bukhara Emirate in the second half of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century:

First, during the period under study, Russia's trade relations with the Uzbek khanates were of an exchange, cross-border nature. Middle Asian merchants took away the goods bought in these markets to domestic markets;

Secondly, Bukhara traders took the initiative to expand the scope of trade and out of the country. They lead their trade caravans to big Russian cities for bartering with Kazakhs and Muslim merchants of Russia;

Thirdly, attempts of Russian traders to establish direct ties in trade with Bukhara Emirate, Khiva and Kokand khanates were unsuccessful;

Fourthly, at that time Central Asia was not yet converted into a market for Russian goods. On the contrary, the developing light industry of Russia needed Central Asian cotton;

Fifthly, the Russian trading capital began to dominate not only in markets of Bukhara Emirate, but in all the markets of Central Asia. This was because England, who was busy conquering India, could not prevent the expansion of Russian trade relations in Central Asia

Reference


4. Ignatyev, N.P. Mission to Khiva and Bukhara in 1858. - Spb. 1897. – p. 617. [Ignatev, N.P.
5. Ignatyev, N.P. Mission to Khiva and Bukhara in 1858. - Spb. 1897. – p. 817. [Ignatyev, N.P. Missiya v Hivu i Buharu v 1858g. – Spb., 1897. – S. 817].


