

## POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC LIFE DURING THE KARAKHANID DYNASTY

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### Abstract

This article examines the political life of the Karakhanid State, which emerged in the second half of the 8th century. The study analyzes the unification of Eastern Turkestan and Transoxiana, as well as the impact of internal dynastic rivalries on political stability. In addition, the article explores the Karakhanids' foreign relations, particularly their interactions with neighboring states such as the Seljuks and the Ghaznavids.

**Keywords:** Karakhanid State, political life, Eastern Turkestan, Transoxiana, dynastic rivalry, political stability, foreign policy, Seljuks, Ghaznavids.

### Introduction

The state of the Karakhanids occupies an important place in the history of medieval Central Asia. This dynasty is of great importance in history as the first Muslim state of the Turkic peoples, and during their time there was a great rise in political, economic and cultural life. From the second half of the 8th century to 1212, the Karakhanids ruled the regions of Movarounnahr and Eastern Turkestan.

By the second half of the 10th century, as a result of increasing internal conflicts and modernization, the Somani state began to weaken. The rebellions against the government in Khurasan, the provinces subject to the Samanids, brought the crisis of the Samanid state to a close. Tribes living in Yettisuv and Kashgar took advantage of this situation. In the second half of the 10th century, the state of the Turkic tribes of Chigil and Yagmo and the Karluk tribes living in this area was created. In 840, the leader of the Qarluqs, the governor of Isfijab, Bilgaku Qadir Khan, called himself Khagan and claimed the supreme power. But the Samanids captured Isfijab as early as 840. Turkic tribes were forced to retreat to the western Kashgar lands after Ismail Samani captured Tarozi in 893.

Sotuq Bugrokhani expanded his influence among the Turkic tribes with the support of the Somonites. He captured Tarozi and Kashghar, occupied Bolasugun in 927 and declared himself the supreme ruler. After his death, his son Musa took power. During the time of Musa, in 960, 200,000 Turkish residents of tents converted to Islam. Musa made Kashgar his residence. Bolasogun was once again in the hands of the Somani state.

The word "Korakhan" is interpreted in different ways. Many scholars admit that the word "kara" means strong, nation, ruler, khan, ruler. Harun Bugrokhani was the first ruler of the Karakhanids who accepted Islam and was named Abdulkarim in Muslim. In some sources, it is called Bug'rokhan at - Turki. Ibn al-Asr in his "Kitab al-Kamil fit Tariq" reports that the lands from Kashgar, Bolasugun to Chin border were under the rule of Bugrakhan al-Turki. After occupying the entire Tyan-Shan and Yettisuv, the Karakhanids also organized military



campaigns to Movarounnahr, which was part of the Samanid state. They manage to conquer Ferghana and Isfijab. In 990-992, Karakhani Harun Bugrokhan conquered large properties in Central Asia belonging to the Somonites<sup>1</sup>.

It was natural for the Karakhanids, who were expanding their military and political position, to move further west and conquer the Samarkand and Bukhara regions. After all, the center of their political opponents in the region at that time, the Somonites, was located here. The first attempt towards this goal took place in 992. In the same year, Karakhani Bugrokhan won a battle with Samani Nuh ibn Mansur (976-997) and occupied Bukhara. In 992-993, Bukhara and Samarkand passed into the hands of the Karakhanids<sup>2</sup>.

Abu Ali Simjuri, the governor of Khurasan and another commander of the army, Faqi, the governor of Balkh, who has great influence in the Samanid state, openly sided with the Karakhanids. Simjuri conducts negotiations with Harun Bugrokhan. Faqi, however, surrendered to Bugrokhan near Rabati Malik, although he had an all-round advantage. After Harun Bugrokhan conquered Samarkand and Bukhara, he could not continue the war due to his illness. He died in 993 in a place called Kochqorbashi on the way back to Kashgar, according to A.S. Sagdullayev's book "History of Uzbekistan". However, according to Shohista Oljayeva, the grave of Abdulkarim Sotuq Bugrokhan is located in Uzbekistan, Tashkent region, Qibrai district, Yangiyol MFY. Abdulkarim Sotuq Bugrokhan first stays in Bukhara, and then his condition worsens here. Then he goes to Samarkand.

His illness worsens day by day. Due to the heat, Abdulkarim Sotuq Bugrokhan wants to go to a cold country and decides to go to Kashgar. According to historical data, it is said that he died on the road. According to Muslim customs, the body is buried in one day. Now this grave is called the grave of Bugro father. In it, the year of Bugro's father's death is indicated as 995. Historically, there was a mosque here along with a grave. During the Soviet era, the mosque was demolished in 1943 for the purpose of planting cotton. In the past, a branch of the Great Silk Road passed through this village. Based on this and taking into account the fact that he died on the way, there is a high probability that his grave is in our country. Because in Islam, the corpse is buried on that day.

After the death of Harun Bugrokhan, his nephew Ali ibn Musa took the post of great khan. But he does not sit on the throne for a long time. The throne is occupied by Karakhani Nasr Elikhan. In the year 996, the Karakhanids, who were closely watching the internal conflicts and disagreements between the Samani rulers and the Turkish commanders, started a new march to Bukhara under the leadership of Nasr Elikhan. Samani ruler Nuh II calls for help from the governor of Khazna, Sabuktegin. Sabuktegin, who arrived from Balkh with a large army, settled between Kesh and Nasaf and sent an ambassador to Nuh II asking him to come and join with his troops. But the ruler of Bukhara, who did not trust his "vassal", agreed with his minister O'Zairni, refused this proposal and invited Sabuktegin himself to Bukhara. Annoyed by this, Sobuqtegin sent his son Mahmud to Bukhara with an army of 20,000. He himself conducted negotiations with Nasr Elikhan and presented the Karakhanids with certain territories belonging to the Samanis. In 999, Bukhara was occupied by Nasr Elikhan<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Sagdullayev A.S. O'zbekiston tarixi. I kitob. –T.: "Donishmand ziyosi" 2021. –B.360-361.

<sup>2</sup> Azamat Ziyoy. O'zbek davlatchiligi tarixi. –T.: "Sharq nashriyoti" 2001. –B.104-105.

<sup>3</sup> Сагдуллаев А.С. Ўзбекистон тарихи. I-китоб. –Т.: "Донишманд зиёси", 2021. –Б.362.



There was almost no difficulty in the march to Bukhara. By ordinary people, the occupation of Bukhara by the Karakhanids was accepted as the replacement of one dynasty by a second dynasty. Although the medieval historians explain the reason for this by the fact that both dynasties belonged to the same religion, without denying it, it is more correct to consider that the fact that the regions of Yettisuv and Eastern Turkestan are not strangers in terms of historical and cultural unity was one of the main reasons for the cities and regions of the region, such as Bukhara and Samarkand.

In 1005, the Somonites completely disappeared from the political scene, and from that time on, the Karakhanids ruled Bukhara, Samarkand, and the entire region up to Amudarya. In other words, at the beginning of the 11th century, Turkestan was ruled by several political forces. Eastern Turkestan, Tashkent, Isfijab, Ferghana Samarkand, Bukhara, Chaganiyan, Khuttalon regions were ruled by the Karakhanids, the lands on the left bank of the Amudarya up to Ghazna, Khorasan, Seistan regions were ruled by the Ghaznavids, and Khorezm by the Khorezmshah-Mamunis, the lands east and north from the Aral Sea were ruled by the Oghuz Union<sup>4</sup>.

In the 11th century, two serious changes took place in the political activities of the Karakhanids. As a result of internal conflicts, in 1040, the government was divided into two, and the western and eastern khanates were formed. That is, power is divided. The eastern part included Yettisuv, Kashkar, Taroz, Isfijab, Shosh and Eastern Ferghana. The capital was Bolasug'un, and the cultural center was Kashgar. The western part includes the lands from Movarounnahr to the western border of the Ferghana Valley. The center is Samarkand. As if this was not enough, the Western Karakhanids began to have a tense relationship with the Seljuks, a dynasty that began to rise to power in Khorasan at the same time. It is known that the Seljuks defeated the Ghaznavids in the 40s of the 11th century, and from the 50s they conquered the territory from Khurasan to Baghdad. There will be a struggle between these two dynasties to gain dominance in the region<sup>5</sup>.

Kadir Khan (1026-1031) and Arslan Khan (1010-1025) began to march towards Balkh with the aim of attacking the state of Mahmud Ghaznavi (998-1030) and capturing and dividing its properties. Mahmud Ghaznavi, who learned about this, went against them with his army. As a result, there will be a fierce battle between the two sides and the Karakhanids will be defeated. Embassy relations have also been established between the two countries.

The following information shows what gifts the Ghaznavids sent to the Karakhanids: "They included two gold goblets decorated with flint stones and coral threads, gold-plated fabrics, many other types of Rumi, Baghdadi, Isfahani, Nishapouri fabrics, various gazlams, Indian dishes, musk, aloy, anbar, two necklaces called Yakdonas and other as gifts, intended to be presented to the khan, his son Bugrotegin, his wife and daughters-in-law, uncles and aunts, and all the things indicated in the list were taken out of the treasury and returned to the embassies for inspection." As a result of this embassy, Sultan Mahmud (998-1030) married Elikhan's daughter<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Азамат Зиё. Ўзбек давлатчилги тарихи. –Т.: “Шарқ наширёти”, 2001. –Б.106.

<sup>5</sup> Asqarov A., Maqsudov F.A., Pidayev Sh.R. va boshqalar. O'zbekiston tarixi. I-qism. –Т.: “Ma'naviyat”, 2023. –Б.147-148.

<sup>6</sup> O'sha joyda. –Б.74-75.



After the death of Nasr Elekhan, the power in Movarounnahr passed into the hands of Alitegin, a member of the Hasani family of Karakhanids. He also patronized Movarounnahr. For example, in 1066, a hospital in Samarkand presented two caravanserais with all their buildings and stalls. According to the document, the income from these two caravansary was used to provide the sick with food, medicine, doctors and all kinds of service providers with appropriate salaries. In another document, in order to support the madrasa established in Samarkand, Ibrahim ibn Nasr donated the income from three hotels, a men's bathhouse, water dispensers, a vineyard, a number of agricultural lands, etc<sup>7</sup>.

It should be noted that the relationship between Ibrahim ibn Nasr and the Seljuks was not good. He managed to repulse several attacks of the Seljuks. After the death of Ibrahim ibn Nasr in 1068, a struggle for the throne began between his sons, in which Shamsmulk won and took power (1068-1080). Taking advantage of the death of the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan in 1072, Karakhani Shamsmulk occupied the territories of Termiz and Balkh belonging to the Seljuks. But soon the Seljuks, led by Sultan Malikshah, the successor of Alp Arslan, expelled the Karakhanis from these lands.

In 1080, Shamsmulk died and Karakhani Ahmad took the throne. During the reign of Ahmad Khan, the struggle between Muslim clerics and Turkish generals escalated. Taking advantage of this, the Seljuk Malikshah crossed the Amudarya and captured Bukhara and Samarkand in 1089. Ahmad Khan is taken for a century. Malik Shah made peace with Ahmad Khan before he could keep Movarounnahr in his hands and returned with a large booty. Ahmad Khan was killed in a conspiracy in 1095.

At the beginning of the 12th century, Arslon Khan (1102-1130) sat on the Karakhanid throne and ruled the state in a semi-independent capacity, but he made efforts for full independence. However, due to disagreements with scholars, he handed over the throne to his son Nasr. As a result of the conspiracy, Nasr was also killed. In this situation, Arslan Khan asks Seljuk Sultan Sanjar for help. In the same year, Sultan Sanjar punished the conspirators and captured Samarkand, and from then on, the Karakhanid state lost its independence and became completely dependent on the Seljuks. Arslan Khan, who was sick, died in Balkh. But soon there was a threat of an attack by a new nomadic tribe, Karakhitay (Kidan). In the 30s of the 12th century, the Karakhitas conquered Eastern Turkestan and Yettisuv, that is, the state of the Eastern Karakhanids. Eastern Karakhanids cannot protect their property due to their weakness. The situation was not good in the Western Khanate either. In the battle near Khojand in 1137, the army of the Karakhanids defeated the troops of the Karakhanid Mahmud Khan. After Samarkand was plundered and extorted with a large compensation, the Karakhitas returned. Not long after that, i.e. in 1141, the Karakhitas invaded the lands of Movarounnahr again. To stop them, Sultan Sanjar arrived near Samarkand with a large army. This time the battle will take place in the Qatavon desert near Samarkand. In a decisive battle, the combined forces of Sultan Sanjar and Karakhani Mahmudkhan were defeated by the Karakhitas.

The Karakhitai, who occupied Samarkand, Bukhara and the entire central Movarounnahr, returned with large booty. The Karakhitas left all the lands in the hands of the Karakhanids, except Bolasug'un. The Karakhanids were dependent on the Karakhanids and sent tribute every

<sup>7</sup> Azamat Ziyov. O'zbek davlatchiligi tarixi. –T.: “Sharq nashriyoti”2001. –B.106.



year. After the Khorezmshah defeated the Karakhitai in 1210, the Karakhanids became dependent on the Khorezmshahs. The last representative of the dynasty, Osman Khan, married Khan Sultan, the daughter of Muhammad Khorezmshah. In 1212, Osman Khan led the uprising against the rule of Khorezmshahs in Samarkand. After the uprising was suppressed, Osman Khan was executed. All members of the Karakhanid family are killed. In this way, the Karakhanid dynasty will end<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, the state of the Karakhanids is one of the medieval Turkic dynasties that played an important role in the formation of political, economic and cultural processes in the history of Central Asia. They territorially united Movarounnahr and Eastern Turkestan and created a stable state administration system in the region. During the Karakhanid era, Islam took firmer roots among the Turkic peoples, and this process became the main component of state policy and culture. The era of the Karakhanids is distinguished by literature, science and culture. Especially Yusuf Khos Hajib's "Qutadgu Billigi" and Mahmud Kashgari's "Devoni Lug'ati Turk" are unique sources that reflect the socio-political views of that time and the richness of the Turkish language.

The state of the Karakhanids played a decisive role in the formation of the Turkish political culture in the Middle Ages, the expansion of Islamic and educational development, and the revival of economic life in the region. Their political legacy had a certain influence on the formation and management system of the next dynasties, the Seljuks and Khorezmshahs. Therefore, the state of the Karakhanids is one of the most important states that left a mark in the history of Central Asia.

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<sup>8</sup> Sagdullayev A.S. O'zbekiston tarixi. I-kitob. –T.: "Donishmand ziyosi", 2021. –B.366-367.

