

PAPER

THE ROLE OF THE DIPLOMACY OF THE KOKAND KHANATE IN THE HISTORICAL PROCESSES OF CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract

This article analyzes the formation of the diplomatic system of the Kokand Khanate, the features of diplomatic etiquette, the structure of the embassy institution, and diplomatic relations with the Russian and Ottoman Empires based on historical sources. Special attention is given to the religious and moral qualifications of envoys, their political assignments, reception protocols, and the system of gift exchange.

Key words: Kokand Khanate, embassy, diplomatic etiquette, Russia, Ottoman Empire, foreign policy, cultural diplomacy, diplomatic protocol

Introduction

In the political history of the Central Asian khanates, foreign relations and diplomatic ties hold a significant place. Especially in the 19th century, these processes became more active. In this context, the Kokand Khanate occupied a special position. While strengthening its internal structures, the khanate also remained active in foreign policy, shaping the embassy institution through both traditional and modern frameworks. The diplomatic policies pursued with Russia, China,

the Ottoman Empire, and neighboring states reflect the high level of the khanate's external political culture. Particularly, strict adherence to diplomatic etiquette, criteria for selecting envoys, the system of gift exchange, and hospitality protocols prove that Kokand diplomacy evolved into a complex yet consistent system. **Main Body 1. Formation of the diplomatic institution** The diplomatic system of the Kokand Khanate was mainly based on Islamic law and political customs. Although the diplomatic protocol was not strictly documented, it followed a traditional order. For example, there

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were established customs for welcoming envoys, escorting them to the palace, presenting gifts, and conducting dialogues in the presence of the khan [Topildiev, 2021: 92].

2. Appointment of envoys and religious-moral criteria

The appointment of envoys in the Kokand Khanate prioritized the candidate's knowledge, religious devotion, alertness, and intellect. In one of the early written sources, *Dastur ul-muluk*, it is stated that "vigilance and alertness" are essential qualities for an envoy [Termiziy, 2008: 42]. The envoy was regarded not only as a representative of state interests but also as a protector of religious and moral values. In *Tarixi Aliquli Amirlashkar* by Muhammad Yunusjon, it is noted that figures such as Ali Akbar Hoji Naqib and Abulqosim Eshon—religious scholars—were recommended for diplomatic missions [Yunusjon, 2015: 19].

3. Diplomatic relations between Kokand and Russia

Diplomatic relations between the Kokand Khanate and the Russian Empire began in the early 19th century and intensified from 1804 onward. Olimkhan sent envoys to Russia concerning the protection of caravan routes and trade interests [Topildiev, 2021: 93]. A delegation led by Tursunkhoja Naizakhojin submitted a petition in St. Petersburg seeking protection for Kokand merchants operating in Russia. In the memoirs of the Russian envoy F. Nazarov, it is noted that the Kokand Khanate paid great attention to diplomatic hospitality, arranging special residences, food, and security for foreign envoys [Rakhmonqulova, 2022: 34].

4. Relations with the Ottoman Empire

The Kokand Khanate's diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire were also significant. During the reign of Muhammad Alikhan, an envoy named Muhammad Zohid Khoja was sent to Istanbul. He brought with him gifts such as the Qur'an, silk fabrics, horses, rice, and other valuable items [Murodov, 2019: 49]. These gifts are recorded in the Ottoman archives, with the Holy Qur'an being

recognized as the most sacred gift. The envoys were received according to the Bukhara Khanate's etiquette, with funds allocated to each envoy and currency (*kurush*) provided for their companions.

5. Cultural diplomacy and the gift-exchange institution

Gift exchanges played a crucial role in the diplomatic activities of the Kokand Khanate. The gifts included Qur'ans, fabrics, Eastern jewelry, horses, and other valuable items. In *Riyozi ud-davla*, the diplomatic mission of Khiva Khan Allokulikhan is discussed, where envoys are described as *elchiyi kordon va sufaroyi bisyordon*—meaning experienced and capable diplomats [Ogahiy, 2006: 84]. Furthermore, *Tarixi Aziziy* states that Kokand merchants also participated in diplomatic missions, advancing the economic interests of the khanate [Marg'inoniy, 2009: 117].

6. Regional and cultural variations in diplomatic etiquette

Envoys were welcomed from the border and escorted to the palace. *Salomkhona*—a space where one enters unarmed before the khan—was considered a central element of diplomatic protocol. The respectful reception of envoys, provision of hospitality, and ceremonial presentation of gifts emphasized the unique character of Kokand diplomacy. Compared to other khanates in Central Asia, Kokand's diplomatic traditions stood out for their religious and cultural richness [Mannonov, 2004: 78].

Conclusion

The diplomacy of the Kokand Khanate was among the most well-formed ambassadorial systems in Central Asia, encompassing political, religious, and economic aspects. Built upon Islamic and moral foundations, strictly adhering to diplomatic etiquette, and incorporating gift exchange and cultural diplomacy, the external policy of the khanate stood out for its originality. Relations with Russia and the Ottoman Empire contributed to increasing Kokand's international prestige. Kokand diplomacy served as a powerful instrument not only in politics but also in promoting cultural values.

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