

Knowledge and Society in the Nineteenth Century

The three and a half centuries between the collapse of the Timurid order and the Russian conquest constitute the least understood period of Central Asian history. The literary production of the period still remains largely in manuscript form, and scholarly attention focuses on the more glamorous Timurids or the more accessible Russian period. In the absence of systematic research, we are left to struggle with V. V. Bartol'd's dictum that "in the nineteenth century, in contrast to the Middle Ages, Turkestan was among the most backward countries of the Muslim world."¹ Soviet scholarship tended to focus on the centralization of states in the nineteenth century as a positive sign (and to contrast it to the feudal dissension of the eighteenth); however, its judgment on the culture of this period was no more generous. Yet, if we are to understand the politics of cultural production that obtained on the eve of the Russian conquest, politics that the Jadids set out to reform, we need to rescue the topic from the domain of aesthetic judgment and place it firmly in the realm of social practice. This is a crucial task in its own right, but it is also of fundamental importance for understanding the politics of culture during the tsarist period.

1. V. V. Bartol'd, *Istoriia kul'turnoi zhizni Turkestana* (1927), in his *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1963), II/1: 297.

KNOWLEDGE, LITERACY, AND CULTURE

A sharp critique of traditional Muslim education in nineteenth-century Central Asia is perhaps the only area of scholarship in which all observers, scholars and officials, tsarist and Soviet, agreed with Jadids and émigré nationalists. The maktab and madrasas of Central Asia were the clearest sign of the stagnation, if not the degeneracy, of Central Asia. Judged by criteria these observers brought with them, the maktab and the madrasa not surprisingly appeared as inefficient, pointless, and even harmful. Yet, if we are to understand the logic of the practices surrounding the transmission of knowledge in pre-Russian Central Asia (many of which continued well into the twentieth century), we have to examine them in their own right, and not by the modernist criteria of observers standing outside the tradition.²

The tradition of learning replicated in the maktab and madrasas of Central Asia was common to many premodern Muslim societies. It was characterized by two overriding concerns: the transmission of knowledge (*ilm*) and the cultivation of proper modes of behavior and comportment (*adab*). The primary impulse was conservational, the transmission to future generations of the finite, fixed truths revealed by God.³ This tradition was marked by rigorous discipline, including severe corporal punishment, and often the insistence on memorization without explicit explanation. As Dale Eickelman has suggested, "‘Understanding’ (*fahm*) in the context of such concepts of learning was not measured by any ability explicitly to ‘explain’ particular verses [of the Qur’an]. . . . Instead, the measure of understanding was implicit and consisted of the ability to use particular Quranic verses in appropriate contexts."⁴ The finite and fixed nature of knowledge by no means precluded a dynamic tradition of interpretation, for it was only through an act of interpretation that divinely revealed knowledge could become meaningful for human beings. This interpretation required a carefully inculcated scholarly *habitus*, a set of predispositions and habits of mind that allow "practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence

2. The following discussion of the social uses of knowledge owes a great debt to Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994).

3. Dale F. Eickelman, "The Art of Memory: Islamic Knowledge and Its Social Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1978): 490.

4. *Ibid.*, 494.

taken for granted."⁵ The *habitus* reproduced in the maktab, and especially the madrasas, of nineteenth-century Central Asia cultivated a certain relation to texts and to the world beyond them that provided the framework for life. The distinction between religious and secular knowledge in this world would have been impossible, for all knowledge emanated from God and was consequently imbued with a certain sacral value. Different crafts and sciences were similarly deemed to have been invented by various prophets. Noah, for instance, was the inventor of woodwork and David of metalwork.

If the transmission of knowledge (*ta‘lim*) was one concern of the maktab, the other was the inculcation of proper modes of behavior and conduct (*tarbiya*). *Adab* as mimetic practice occupied a central place in Muslim societies. Originating in pre-Islamic Middle Eastern traditions of civility and refinement, *adab* was thoroughly Islamized after the eighth century through the works of such Muslim writers of Iranian origins as Ibn Muqaffa' (d. 756) and Firdawsi (d. 1020). In later centuries the term "*adab*" came to be understood in a more restricted fashion to denote knowledge necessary for a certain profession or station in life (and so it became possible to speak of *ādāb al-mufti*, the *adab* of one who holds the office of *mufti* [jurisconsult]).⁶ In nineteenth-century Central Asia, proper *adab* marked the boundaries of civility and status and was a crucial element in cultural capital recognized in urban society. Manuals of civility existed,⁷ but the primary arena for its transmission remained the maktab.

We have a number of descriptions of the Central Asian maktab, although most of them are the hostile views of outsiders.⁸ Fortunately, in

5. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, 1990), 58; see also Bourdieu, "Systems of Education and Systems of Thought," *International Social Science Journal* 19 (1967): 344.

6. F. Gabrieli, "Adab," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 1 (Leiden, 1960), 175; Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Adab," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. 1 (New York, 1982), 431–439. On Iran's long tradition of ethico-didactic writing (*pand*, *andarz*, *nasihat*, etc.), which in Islamic times assimilated Muslim ethics as well, see *Encyclopædia Iranica*, II: 16–22, s.v. "Andarz." See also, Barbara Metcalf, "Introduction," in Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, 1984), 1–4.

7. For example, the *Ādāb us-sālihīn* of Muhammad Sālih Kāshghari, translated from a lithographed edition by N. S. Lykoshin, "Kodeks prilichii na Vostoke," *Sbornik materialov po musul'manstvu*, vyp. 2 (Tashkent, 1900).

8. On the Central Asian maktab, the following are the most significant: V. P. Nalivkin, "Shkoly u tuzemtsev Srednei Azii," *Sbornik materialov dlia statistiki Samarkandskoi oblasti, 1887–1888 gg.* (Samarqand, 1889), 294–303; Nalivkin, "Chto daet sredne-aziatskaia musul'manskaia shkola v obrazovatel'nom i vospitatel'nom otnosheniakh?" in *Turkestanski literaturnyi sbornik v pol'zu prokazhennykh* (St. Petersburg, 1900), 215–278; N. P. Ostroumov, "Musul'manskie maktaby i russko-tuzemnye shkoly v Turkestan-

the writings of Sadriddin Ayni (1878–1954), we possess a unique source on the maktab and the madrasa as they existed in this period. Born in a small village outside Ghijduvān, Ayni was among the last generations of Central Asians to receive a traditional education. A prominent Jadid, he had an illustrious career after the revolution in education and publishing in which he helped found modern literatures in both Tajik and Uzbek. One of the few Jadids to survive the 1930s, he was greatly honored as a national hero of Soviet Tajikistan. This stature allowed him to publish in 1949, at the height of Stalinism, his reminiscences of old Bukhara, a text remarkable for its sensibility.⁹ Although Ayni wrote of the period when Bukhara was a Russian protectorate, much of what he describes can safely be projected back to much of the nineteenth century, for the impact of the Russian presence on the internal life of Bukharan maktab and madrasas was minimal in the 1880s and 1890s.

The education of a Central Asian boy began when his father took him to a teacher (*maktabdār, dāmlā*) and left him behind with the formula, "You can beat him as long as you don't kill him; the meat is yours, but the bones are ours."¹⁰ As Ayni later recalled: "When my father left, the teacher sat me down close to him and ordered one of the older students to work with me. This pupil bade me look at my writing board as he said aloud, 'Alif, be, te, se.' I imitated him and repeated the names of these letters. Having taught me how to pronounce them, the student went over to other kids and started teaching them. The children called him *khalfa*."¹¹ The pupil was thus immediately thrust into a set of hierarchical social relationships. In addition to knowledge, the child acquired *adab* from direct contact with the teacher. The maktab had neither formal division into classes nor any examinations. The student progressed through school at his own pace, his status determined by the number of

skom krae," *ZhMNP*, n.s. 1 (1906): otd. nar. ob., 113–166; K. E. Bendrikov, *Ocherki po istorii narodnogo obrazovaniia v Turkestane (1865–1925 gody)* (Moscow, 1960), 36–48; Jiří Bečka, "Traditional Schools in the Works of Sadriddin Aini and Other Writers of Central Asia," *Archiiv Orientální* 39 (1971): 284–321; 40 (1972): 130–163; R. R. Rakhimov, "Traditsionnoe nachal'noe shkol'noe obuchenie detei u narodov Srednei Azii (konets XIX–nachalo XX v.)," in *Pamiatniki traditsionno-bytovoï kul'tury narodov Srednei Azii, Kazakhstana i Kavkaza* (Leningrad, 1989).

9. Sadriddin Ayni, *Yoddoshtho*, 4 vols. (Stalinabad, 1948–1954). There exist numerous editions of this work, of which perhaps the most readily accessible is a 1984 Persian edition (*Yaddashthā*, ed. Sa'idi Sirjāni [Tehran, 1984]), which I have used throughout.

10. Hāji Muin, *Eski maktab, yāngi maktab* (Samarqand, 1916), 17. This ritual phrase was common throughout the Islamic world; on its use in Morocco, see Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco* (Princeton, 1985), 63.

11. Sadriddin Ayni, "Eski maktab" (1935), in *Eski maktab* (Tashkent, 1988), 109.

books he finished. Although the students sat together in a "class," their relation to the teacher was individual and direct.

Having memorized the names of the letters of the alphabet, the student was introduced to vowels, which again he learned through memorization. "The lessons on 'zer-u zabar' were interesting. . . . I was taught to say, 'Alif zabar—a, zer—i, pesh—u.' . . . Thus I learned the letters from the beginning to the very end of the Arabic alphabet."¹² At the end of the year, Ayni started on the *abjad*.¹³ He was told: "'Say: 'Alif bā be zabar—ab; jim bā dāl zabar—jad; abjad' . . . Once my father said, 'Now that you can read the *abjad*, I'll teach you how to count according to it,' and put in front of me a slate with the *abjad* written on it. Pointing to a letter, he asked, 'What [letter] is this? And this?' I could not answer a single question. I had absolutely no idea; nobody had ever shown me the letters."¹⁴

After the alphabet, the child started with the *Haftyak*, a compilation of selected verses from the Qur'an, beginning with the shortest *suras* usually located at the end. These too were memorized. The child was thus familiarized with the alphabet at the same time as he or she started the process of memorization of key texts. Of course, the Qur'an was taught in the Arabic, with no translation provided and no attempt made at explanation. The rules of the proper recitation of the Qur'an (*tajwid, tartil*) were taught from this stage, so that the child could recite the Word of God in an acceptable manner. Upon memorization of the *Haftyak*, the boy received the title *kitabkhwān* (reader of [a] book).¹⁵ He then proceeded to the *Chār Kitāb*, an anthology providing basic information about Islamic ritual. As the name suggests, the anthology contained four works: *Nām-i Haqq*, a tract in verse by one Sharifuddin Bukhāri (fl. fourteenth century), dealing with rules for the fulfillment of ritual obligations of ritual purity, fasting, and prayer (*namāz*); *Chār Fasl*, by an anonymous author, providing a statement, in prose, of the bases of belief, the five pillars of Islam, and ritual purity; *Muhimmāt ul-Muslimin*, another anonymous work providing information on four things that are important to all Muslims (the unity of God [*tawhid*], fasting, prayers, and ritual purity); and selections from the *Pandnāma* of Fariduddin Attār, a

12. Ibid., 128–129.

13. The *abjad* was both a mnemonic device for learning the Arabic alphabet and a system for counting in which each letter of the alphabet was assigned a numerical value (allowing the use of the alphabet in cabals, etc.).

14. Ayni, "Eski maktab," 129.

15. Rakhimov, "Traditsionnoe nachal'noe shkol'noe obuchenie," 122

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major work in the *adab* tradition.¹⁶ After finishing the *Chār Kitāb*, the student encountered poetry, both in Persian and Turkic, by Hāfiz, Sufi Allah Yār, Fuzulī, Bedil, Nawā'i, and Attār. The works of these poets constituted the canon of Central Asian literature, and acquaintance with them (and the ability to recite verses from memory at appropriate times) was *de rigueur* for an educated person.

Itinerary
The instruction up to this point was entirely oral. Students used written texts, but they were meant to be used as visual mnemonic aids. Having finished the *Haftyak*, the *Chār Kitāb*, and the Qur'an, Ayni "could still not read anything, except for what I had read with the [teacher]. For example, I could always read those verses of Hafiz which I had read at school, no matter whose hand they were in. But I could not read others that I had not [already] read—I was illiterate! Writing I did not know at all."¹⁷ Although children were introduced to the alphabet, the acquisition of functional literacy was not the goal of their maktab experience. In a society organized around direct, face-to-face interaction between social agents, writing was of limited use and tended to become a specialized skill. The ability to read and write (and the two were different skills, separately acquired) was necessary for only a few spheres of endeavor, whereas vast spheres of life remained untouched by writing. Even in trade, large-scale transactions were carried out purely orally, with the personal guarantee of special intermediaries (*qāsids*) taking the place of written documents as late as the 1870s.¹⁸ At the same time, culture was transmitted largely orally. Central Asia, of course, boasted a vibrant tradition of oral poetry, but oral transmission also extended to texts that could be read aloud in various formal and informal settings. Itinerant reciters and storytellers (*maddāhs*, *qissakhwāns*) were a common phenomenon in Central Asia, as were evenings (*mashrab*) devoted to reading aloud from manuscript texts.¹⁹ The ability to read was there-

16. For a description of a printed edition of the *Chār Kitāb*, see O. P. Shcheglova, *Katalog litografirovannykh knig na persidskom iazyke v sobranii LO IV AN SSSR*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1975), nos. 600, 640, 650. A very similar anthology from Afghanistan is described by M. Nazif Shahrani, "Local Knowledge of Islam and Social Discourse in Afghanistan and Turkistan in the Modern Period," in Robert L. Canfield, ed., *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1991), 170–175.

17. Ayni, "Eski maktab," 132.

18. E.g., N. Stremukhov, "Poezdka v Bukharu," *Russkii vestnik* 117 (1875): 667.

19. A. L. Troitskaia, "Iz proshlogo kalendarov i maddakhov v Uzbekistane," in *Domusul'manskie verovaniia i obriady v Srednei Azii* (Moscow, 1975), 191–223; Karl Reichl, *Turkic Oral Epic Poetry* (New York, 1992), 87–89; for contemporary descriptions, see F. H. Skrine and E. Denison Ross, *The Heart of Asia* (London, 1899), 400–401; O. Olufsen, *The Emir of Bukhara and His Country* (Copenhagen, 1911), 434.

fore not a necessary precondition for participation in the literary tradition of Central Asia, and indeed, the audience for written texts was always far greater than the number of competent readers. The high rates of illiteracy and the inability to write prevalent in Central Asia in the nineteenth century did not indicate a lack of education, let alone ignorance.²⁰ Rather, the emphasis on memorization and learning by rote emanated from a different concern: Knowledge was to be embodied by the learner so that his or her body could be marked by sacred knowledge.²¹

Writing was a separate skill altogether, not taught at all by many *maktabdārs*. When taught, it usually took the form of calligraphy. Just as students were left to learn their native language on their own while the maktab concentrated on Arabic and Persian texts, they were left to their own devices to learn the cursive hand, and only calligraphy was taught at the maktab. Calligraphy and the possession of a fine hand were thus analogous to rhetoric and the ability to quote verses as marks of a civilized individual. As with reading, calligraphy was acquired through imitation. Ayni recalled that he had acquired the rudiments of calligraphy before he could read fluently, having copied letters of the alphabet from a relative who had returned to the village for the summer from his Bukharan madrasa.²² Many more people could read than could write.²³ At the same time, writing had significant ritual uses. Books were used not merely for reading the text but for divination and as charms and amulets.²⁴ Writing could be venerated in its own right as embodying the holiness of the message. The *Majmu'a-yi nurnāma*, an anthology of various prayers, promised, "Whoever reads this *Nurnāma* or carries it with him will be saved from the troubles of both the worlds."²⁵ Members of various craft guilds

20. Many scholars of Central Asian intellectual life of the period have seen the high rates of illiteracy in Central Asia as a grave indictment of the maktab and a sign of the stagnation of Central Asian life. See, for instance, Nalivkin, "Chto daet," 235. Criticism of the maktab on this account was, of course, a staple of Jadid discourse.

21. Frederick Mathewson Denny, "Qur'an Recitation: A Tradition of Oral Performance and Transmission," *Oral Tradition* 4 (1989): 13.

22. Ayni, *Yaddāshtha*, 90–92.

23. Iuldash Abdullaev, *Ocherki po metodike obucheniia gramote v uzbekskoi shkole* (Tashkent, 1966), 79–86. Reading-only literacy was a common phenomenon throughout the world until the rise of universal schooling in the nineteenth century. In France, as late as 1866, 11.47 percent of the population (9.73 percent of men and 13.21 percent of women) could only read. (32.84 percent of the population could neither read nor write.) See François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry* (Cambridge, 1982), 17.

24. Divination through books (*fālbini*) was a common practice; see N. S. Lykoshin, "O gadanii u sredneaziatskikh tuzemtsev," *Spravochnaia knizhka Samarkandskoi oblasti* 9 (1907): 163–242.

25. *Majmu'a-yi nurnāma* (Tashkent, 1914), 12.

were similarly exhorted to know the *risāla* of their guild by heart, or else to carry it on their person; failure to do so could bring dire consequences. As the *risāla* of the guild of grooms stated, "If a groom does not know this *risāla* or has not heard it, all livestock is more forbidden than the flesh of the swine; he will be tortured in his grave by snakes and scorpions, and his face will be black on the day of judgment."²⁶ Writing had many ritual uses, but the ability to read fluently was a skill required only in a few, very specific niches in society.

The maktab was not a school at all in the sense of an institution set apart from other practices but a site for the acquisition by children of basic elements of culture and modes of behavior through interaction with an older, learned man. It existed wherever the teacher could teach, and any literate person with the proper credentials of *adab* and piety could teach. The maktab seldom had a building of its own: It could be housed in a mosque, the house of the teacher, or that of a wealthy resident of the neighborhood. A teacher seldom had more than a dozen or so pupils in his charge. He did not receive a regular salary but was supported by gifts from parents, which took the form of weekly donations of food, and occasionally money (*payshanbalik*), given every Thursday. In addition, the teacher received gifts of clothes on annual holidays or when a child finished a book.²⁷ The maktab was ubiquitous in the sedentary parts of Central Asia, especially the towns. As a relatively informal institution, without formal admissions or enrollments, the maktab was not reducible to the kind of census-taking that various tsarist statistical committees strove for. Numbers provided by nineteenth-century travelers should also be treated with the greatest caution, since they were invariably based on hearsay or on reports by local "informants," who usually provided mythical numbers. Nevertheless, O. A. Sukhareva's ethnographic data indicate that at the turn of the twentieth century almost every residential neighborhood in the city of Bukhara had its own maktab.²⁸ Maktab were also common in rural areas of sedentary population; in 1903, nine of the fourteen villages of Chapkulluk volost in Khujand uezd had a maktab.²⁹ Among the nomads, the situation was rather different. In-struction for the children of nomads was generally provided by itinerant

26. "Risāla-yi chār-wādārlik," in *ibid.*, 63.

27. Rakhimov, "Traditsionnoe nachal'noe shkol'noe obuchenie," 118-119, 122.

28. O. A. Sukhareva, *Kvartal'naia obshchina pozdnefeodal'nogo goroda Bukhary* (Moscow, 1976), 256-257.

29. N. Lykoshin, "Chapkullukskaia volost' Khodzhenetskogo uезда," *Spravochnaia knizhka Samarkandskoi oblasti* 8 (1906): 157-158.

mullas from either the settled areas of Central Asia or from among the Volga Tatars. For a fixed salary (paid either in cash or kind), the mulla traveled with the family and taught the children; he was free to take on any other students from the aul.³⁰ Hiring a mulla from Bukhara or Kazan was a status symbol. Once a Türkmen fellow student offered to get Ayni's elder brother a summer job as teacher in a Türkmen village. Ayni's brother hesitated, because he knew no Turkic: "That doesn't matter," said the student to reassure my brother. "The Turkmenian bays don't maintain teachers to teach their children to read and write. The main thing is that people should say: "Such and such a bai has had a teacher brought from Bukhara.""³¹ Concerns about civility and markers of respectability were differently defined among the nomads, and the maktab accordingly occupied a different place in nomadic society.

Of course, not every student stayed in the maktab for the duration; in an agrarian society with very low levels of surplus, few families could afford to remove their boys from productive labor for such long periods of time. Those who stayed to the end had only rudimentary literacy skills, but they had acquired basic norms of cultured behavior, of gesture and posture, and an ingrained attitude of deference to older men—in short, cultural capital that was a marker of social distinction in their society. They had also acquired an implicit knowledge of Islam as faith and practice, without which membership in the community was unimaginable. They had not acquired literacy, or skills such as arithmetic, or general knowledge such as history or geography, because these were transmitted elsewhere in society, in appropriate dialogic contexts.

Maktab for girls existed and in many ways paralleled the boys' maktab. A very similar kind of instruction was provided by the *ātin*, who would teach young girls from the neighborhood in her house in return for presents from the parents or, possibly, help with housework. It was not unknown for some women to teach both boys and girls, since segregation by sex was not mandatory before puberty.³² *Ātins* were often wives and daughters of imāms and other educated men, but they were respected members of the community in their own right. As Marianne Kamp has argued, "Women and girls formed their own chains of knowl-

30. T. T. Tazhibaeu, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka* (Alma Ata, 1962), 57.

31. Sadriddin Aini, *Pages from My Own Story*, trans. George H. Hanna (Moscow, 1958), 34.

32. Ayni's father moved him to a girls' maktab (run by the imām's wife) when he realized that the teacher at the regular maktab was incompetent. "Eski maktab," 130.

edge transmission, without formal male instruction. In gatherings involving religious practice, . . . women's separation from men allowed the creation of women's religious authority. Separate spaces and separate knowledges reproduced gender-based networks."³³

MADRASAS AND THE REPRODUCTION OF ISLAM

The transmission of knowledge beyond the maktab was diffused throughout society. Knowledge and skills were acquired in practical contexts of work. Artisans received their training in craft guilds, whose structure, admittedly very loose, incorporated a sacralized hierarchy: the apprentice was subordinate to a master (occasionally this relationship was mediated by a *khalifa*), who in turn was subordinate to an *āqsāqqāl*, the leader of the craft organization in the whole city; the *āqsāqqāl* was ultimately subject to the symbolic authority of the patron of the guild, usually a pre-Islamic prophet. The master (*ustād*) would take the apprentice, usually at age twelve, into his house and over the next several years teach him the required skills of the trade. The master was also responsible for teaching the child rules of proper behavior (*adab*) and, if he was literate, knowledge about Muslim law (*ulum-i shariat*) and mysticism (*ulum-i tariqat*). Initiation into a guild revolved around the memorization of the *risāla*, often in verse, that laid out the rules of initiation and proper conduct to be followed by members. An apprentice was, for example, expected "to be well-bred and affect humility before the master, not to be rude to him, not to walk in front of him, not to sit down without his permission, [and] not to address him by his name."³⁴ In order to complete their education, apprentices were required to know the *risāla* for the guild by heart. Beyond the world of artisans, even chancery practices were similarly endowed with sacred origins and intent, as is clear from a late-eighteenth century manual of accountancy.³⁵ The connections to the tradition of *adab* are quite obvious here.

33. Marianne R. Kamp, "The Otin and the Soviet School: The End of Traditional Education for Uzbek Girls," paper presented to the annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slav Studies, Boston, 1996, 3.

34. *Risāla-yi Chitgari*, ms., cited by R. G. Mukminova, "Remeslennye korporatsii i uchinichestvo (po sredneaziatskim pis'mennym istochnikam XVI i XIX vv.)," in *Materialy po istorii Uzbekistana* (Tashkent, 1973), 26; on *risālas* in general, see M. Gavrilov, *Risolia sartovskikh remeslennikov: izsledovanie predanii musul'manskikh tsekhov* (Tashkent, 1912).

35. Mirzā Badī' Diwān. *Majma' al-arqām*, ed. and trans. L. M. Epifanova (Moscow, 1976), 27-33.

It is in this context that the place of the madrasa in Central Asian society is best understood. Rather than being an institution of higher learning in the modern sense of the word, the madrasa was the site for the reproduction of one class of professionals, those concerned with various aspects of Islamic law. It was a place where, in dialogic interaction with a recognized scholar, the student acquired mastery over a number of authoritative texts of the Islamic tradition as understood locally. Although this knowledge existed in written form, it was transmitted orally. As numerous scholars have noted, the Islamic tradition of learning was marked with a profound distrust of the ability of the text to convey the author's intention. That could only be learned from the author himself, or through a chain of transmission going back to the author. Knowledge could be authoritative only if acquired through a recognized chain of transmission.³⁶ Further, the proof of mastery of knowledge lay not in a transcript of courses taken at an institution but in the *ijāza* (license) issued by the master in his own name, which signified a link in the chain of transmission.

A student entered a madrasa when a mudarris allowed him to listen to his lectures; there was no formal matriculation. A gift, usually but not necessarily of money, called the *iftitāhāna*, signified the beginning of a teacher-student relationship.³⁷ As in the maktab, progress through the madrasa was marked by successful completion of books; each student proceeded along the curriculum at his own pace. Attendance at lectures coincided with more informal peer learning in study circles organized by students. Members of a circle studied the same book, and those with a better command of the material helped others in return for food or clothing, since it was considered "a kind of vileness" to receive money in return for knowledge.³⁸ Some texts were studied only in such groups, and others were prepared thus before students listened to lectures on them from the mudarris. When a student had satisfied the professor of his command of a book (which often involved memorization), he could

36. Eickelman, "Art of Memory," 492; Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, new ed. (Berkeley, 1991), 148-154; Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley, 1993), 25-26, 92-94.

37. Further gifts were given upon completion of each book. The more renowned teachers, who could have dozens of students, acquired a sizable fortune from their presents. (Aini states that in the 1890s, teachers' income only from their students could amount to 1,500 rubles, which could buy 2,500 puds [more than 40 tons] of grain; *Yāddāshthā*, 171.) In addition, a teacher received a portion of the endowed income from the waqf, as well as from any other posts (mufti, qāzi, etc.) he might hold.

38. Ayni, *Yāddāshthā*, 537-540; for a discussion of similar "peer learning" in Morocco, see Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power*, 98.

pass on to the next book by joining another study circle, possibly with another teacher.

Life in the madrasa began with the private study of several brief tracts: *Awwal-i 'ilm*, a short tract that covered the essential requirements (*zururiyāt*) of Islam in question-and-answer format; *Bidān*, an exposition of the basic rules of Arabic grammar in Persian; and *Ādāb-i muta'allimin*, which covered the *adab* of the student. After that, the student read *Sharh-i Mullā*, a commentary on Ibn Hājib's *Kāfiya* (which the student had already studied) by Abdurrahmān Jāmi, the Timurid poet; written in Arabic, this was the first book studied with a mudarris. At the same time, the student started studying formal logic with an assistant teacher, using the *Shamsiya* of Najmuddin Qazvīnī (d. 1276); when he was ready, he moved on to the *Hāshiya-yi Qutbi*, a commentary on *Shamsiya*; concurrently with the *Hāshiya*, the student was introduced to theology (*'ilm-i kalām*) through the *'Aqā'id* of Abū Hafs Nasafī (d. 1142), which he read with an assistant teacher. Later, the student moved to various glosses on this book. These were followed by the *Tabzib ul-Mantiq wa'l kalām*, a tract on logic and dogma by Sa'duddin Taftāzānī (d. 1381); *Hikmat ul-'ayn* by Qazvīnī, a tract on natural science and metaphysics; *Mullā Jalāl*, a commentary by Jalāluddin Dawwāmi (d. 1502) on the *'Aqā'id ul-adūdiyyat* of Abdurrahmān b. Ahmad al-Ījī (d. 1356), a tract on Muslim beliefs.³⁹ There was no formal termination of studies in the madrasa, and many students lingered on for decades. The core texts could, however, be mastered in nineteen years.

Formal lessons took place four days a week. The entire study group assembled; a designated reader (*qāri*, elected by the students) read out the passage to be discussed; the mudarris then translated the passage (if necessary) and proceeded to explain and comment on it; a disputation involving the students concluded the lesson.⁴⁰ There was no compulsion to take courses at the madrasa of residence; indeed, at many madrasas no lectures were held at all.⁴¹ A student was free to learn from any pro-

39. The foregoing is based on Bečka, "Traditional Schools," 39: 296–299; 40: 135–136; Ayni, *Yaddāshthā*, 163–165; A. Mukhammadzhanov, *Shkola i pedagogicheskaya mysl' uzbekskogo naroda XIX–nachala XX v.* (Tashkent, 1978), 26–28.

40. The description of madrasa life in Ayni, *Yaddāshthā*, passim, is unique in both its substance and its sensibility; see also Eugene Schuyler, *Turkistan*, 2 vols. (New York, 1877), 1: 162–165; V. Nalivkin and M. Nalivkina, *Ocherk byta zhenshchiny osedlogo tuzemnogo naseleniia Fergany* (Kazan, 1886), 61–65.

41. Sukhareva (*Bukhara*, 72–73n) counted eighty madrasas existing in Bukhara at the turn of the twentieth century; lectures were held at only those twenty-two whose waqfs provided for hiring a mudarris.

fessor in the city. This was especially the case in Bukhara. During the reign of the pious Shāh Murād (r. 1785–1800), many madrasas in the khanate were in such bad repair that the amir issued an edict giving property rights to whoever repaired or rebuilt *hujras* in a madrasa.⁴² As a result, the *hujra* became immovable private property and madrasas turned into hostels. Ownership of a *hujra* brought with it the right to receive a portion of the madrasa's endowed (*waqf*) income. The price of a cell therefore depended on the size of the madrasa's endowment. In the nineteenth century, many cells in the madrasas of Bukhara were occupied by men who had little connection with learning. Many individuals owned cells as a form of investment and leased or donated them to students in need.⁴³ Residents of madrasa cells were free from taxation and for much of the nineteenth century also received scholarships from the amir. During the reigns of Shāh Murād and Mir Haydar, large sums of money were set aside for the use of madrasa teachers and students.⁴⁴ This custom lapsed in mid-century as Nasrullah diverted funds toward defense, but at the end of the century, the amir still handed out pensions (*dehyak*) to students annually.⁴⁵ In this situation, a student's only connection with the mudarris of the madrasa where he lived was that they both derived income from the same *waqf*.

The madrasa was the site of the social reproduction of Islamic legal knowledge and its carriers, the ulama. The method of instruction was connected to this basic concern. It aimed to explicate the meaning of the text and to convey that meaning dialogically. At the same time, it inculcated in students a certain *habitus*, which allowed them to construct meaningful social action in the world. Students acquired the basic skills needed to practice their trade—literacy, a knowledge of canonical texts of Islamic law, and some command of Arabic. Successful completion of the madrasa opened up various possibilities of employment in the legal-administrative nexus of power. A madrasa education was necessary to

42. Ayni, *Yaddāshthā*, 161–162.

43. Ibid.; see also F.M. Kerenskii, "Medrese Turkestanskogo kraia," *ZhMNP* 284 (1892): 45–47.

44. Several travelers of the early nineteenth century state that large portions of government revenue from *zakāt* and customs were earmarked for support of madrasas and their students and teachers: Meer Izzut-oollah, *Travels in Central Asia in the Years 1812–13*, trans. P.D. Henderson (Calcutta, 1872), 58; Georges de Meyendorff, *Voyage d'Orenbourg à Boukhara fait en 1820* (Paris, 1826), 301; Alexander Burns, *Travels into Bukhara, together with a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus*, vol. 1 (London, 1834), 306.

45. On the *dehyak* and its corruptions, see Ayni, *Yaddāshthā*, 774–779.

work as *mufti* (jurisconsult), *qāzi* (judge), or mudarris, and truly eminent figures could hold several positions at the same time.

The madrasa was not concerned with other fields of knowledge, or, indeed, with the nonlegal aspects of Islam. We know little about Sufism in nineteenth-century Central Asia, but it is clear that most adult men had a spiritual guide (*shaykh*, *ishān*, *pir*). However, the madrasas were not involved in the initiation and learning of Sufi practices, which took place in the *khānqāh*. This was true even when many mudarrises seem to have been Sufi adepts and many *ishāns* possessed madrasa knowledge. A rough survey commissioned by a Russian administrator at the end of the nineteenth century in Tashkent revealed that a number of *ishāns* in Syr Darya oblast had attended madrasas in Bukhara.⁴⁶ Far from being mutually exclusive, *shariat* and *tariqat* were often paired as sources of proper conduct and understanding in Central Asian Islam; they remained parallel phenomena entrenched in different social spaces. Similarly, while many mudarrises as well as students wrote poetry, as befitted any cultivated individual, poetry itself was not a subject of study in the madrasa. Instead, poets gathered in literary circles to write and study poetry. Princely courts patronized many such circles, but they also existed autonomously.⁴⁷ The madrasas were not concerned with teaching literature or poetry.

Attendance at lectures was open, as Ayni remarked sourly, to "anyone who, having finished the maktab, was seized by the desire to 'become a mulla' . . . whether he be literate, semiliterate, or completely illiterate."⁴⁸ But opportunities were not equal to all: The initial investment of traveling to the madrasa, setting up house there, and providing the *iftitāhāna* for the mudarris was considerable and thwarted many aspiring students. Thereafter, the rate of attrition was high, as many students struggled to make ends meet. Ayni tells of the various jobs he held in order to pay for his keep, from cooking for a circle of his brother's friends, to working as a *mirzā* (clerk) for a merchant, to tutoring wealthy fellow students. The school year, lasting from September to March, was short, allowing students to work productively in the summer. Indeed, many stu-

46. I. Geier, "Ishany," *Sbornik materialov dlia statistiki Syr-Dar'nskoï oblasti*, 1 (1894): 70.

47. Ayni, in his *Yaddāshthā*, describes such literary activity at length. According to A. Abibov, *Doirahoi adabii Bukhoroi sharqi* (Dushanbe, 1984), at the turn of the twentieth century, literary circles existed in such provincial towns as Hisār, Kulāb, Qarātegin, and Darwāz.

48. Ayni, *Yaddāshthā*, 163.

dents left Bukhara for their villages in October to gather the harvest.⁴⁹ At the same time, sons of ulama began madrasa education with a distinct advantage in cultural capital, and wealthy students could always hire others to tutor them. Ayni came from a poor family but possessed cultural capital, for his father was literate and concerned with poetry and letters. Once in Bukhara, the patronage extended to him by Sharifjān Makhdum, scion of a notable Bukharan family, was crucial in ensuring that Ayni complete his education.

The madrasa did not only reproduce the learned elite, it also reproduced a certain understanding of Islam. The description above of the texts around which madrasa education centered in Bukhara is revealing. Students did not study the Qur'an and its exegesis, the traditions of the Prophet, or even jurisprudence, although they could do so if they could find a teacher willing to give them private lessons. Rather, instruction revolved around commentaries and supercommentaries, some of post-Timurid provenance. Moreover, students studied a given text (usually itself a commentary) individually or with a khalifa; the mudarris lectured on a commentary. Students aimed at expertise in the interpretation of the texts that connected them to the Islamic tradition as it was understood in Central Asia. "Islam" did not reside in certain scriptures that spoke for themselves; rather it was embedded in the social practices of transmission and interpretation, from which it could not be abstracted. Much the same process was evident even among the ulama, for whom access to the Islamic tradition lay through layers of authoritative interpretation and commentary carried out locally. This Islam was consequently not scripturally "pure." Motivated by a new vision of the world, latter-day critics such as the Jadids were to take the ulama to task on this account as they set about purifying Islam; but their critique arose from assumptions that were inconceivable in the nineteenth century.

The parallels between the madrasa, the craft guild, and the Sufi order point to the madrasa's place in society. The transmission of knowledge was embedded in everyday social practices and consequently diffused throughout society. The madrasa was one institution among many, transmitting one kind of knowledge among many. It was imbricated in the social reproduction of the learned elite and their social distinction, and it could not have been otherwise in the absence of the disciplinary apparatus of the modern state. The logic of cultural reproduction that

49. *Ibid.*, 165-166.

underlay the madrasa accorded very well, however, with the vastly decentralized political and social order in which it existed.

STATE, SOCIETY, AND KNOWLEDGE

The political order of nineteenth-century Central Asia carried the legacy of the decentralization of the preceding centuries. Shaybāni Khān's conquest of Transoxiana created a confederation of tribes that shared in the sovereignty of the Chinggisid khan, to whom they paid nominal allegiance. This was formalized in the division of the realm into a number of "appanages," usually centered on a town, which were the loci of real political power. The authority of the khan, for all its aura of Chinggisid descent, remained tenuous, since a number of potential Chinggisid rulers existed at any given time. The resulting decentralization of effective political power meant that even revenue extraction and local administration were the domain of appanage holders, in contrast to the unitary, hierarchical bureaucracies of the Mughal and (especially) the Ottoman empires of the same time.⁵⁰ The khan's authority included the customary prerogatives to mint coinage, to have his name recited during the *khutba* (sermon at the Friday prayer), and to receive tribute from the appanages. Individual khans could attempt to assert their authority more fully, but the tribes possessed enough power to thwart such attempts. This decentralization led to the secession of Khwārazm from the Shaybanid domains in the middle of the sixteenth century, but elsewhere, too, political authority remained fragile and deeply contested. In the early eighteenth century, decentralization reached such an extreme that the authority of Abulfayz Khān, ruler of Bukhara, came to be limited to his fortified palace. Some of the reasons were, to be sure, external; the expansion of the Jungar empire in Inner Asia set in motion one last wave of nomadic migration across the Eurasian plain, which resulted in the invasion of Transoxiana by Qazaq tribes from the Qipchaq steppe, who united with disaffected Uzbek tribes against the khan in Bukhara. The impact was felt by the entire sedentary population of the area; an Indian Muslim traveler to Central Asia in 1812 heard accounts of how Samarqand "had fallen into such utter ruin and decay, that tigers and wolves had actually taken up abode in the colleges . . . which are situated in the centre of the

50. R. D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889* (Princeton, 1992), 59-60.

city."⁵¹ Balkh and Ferghana seceded from even nominal allegiance to the Bukharan khan at this time. The unrelated invasion of Nādir Shāh Afshār, fresh from his sack of Delhi, sounded the death knell of the Ashtar-khanid dynasty in Bukhara itself, where a power struggle ensued for the right to nominate the ruler, in which the Manghit beat out the Keneges, even though the latter had better Chinggisid credentials.

It took members of the new dynasty much of the rest of the century to assert their authority over other tribes. Beginning with Shāh Murād, however, the rulers of Bukhara (who had taken the title *amir*) began a struggle against the power of the tribes that was to continue until the Russian conquest. Shāh Murād's reign was characterized by constant warfare with Uzbek tribes in Transoxiana as well as Türkmen tribes who inhabited the desert between his domains and Iran, but it was only under Nasrullah (r. 1826-1860), who gained notoriety in Britain for his execution of two British officers, but who also won from his subjects the epithet *amir-i qassāb* (the Butcher Amir), that the power of the tribal chiefs was broken.⁵² Similar developments took place in Ferghana, where over the course of the eighteenth century the Ming khans consolidated their hold as independent rulers. By the turn of the nineteenth century they had captured Tashkent, where urban notables had managed to retain a considerable amount of degree of autonomy under nominal Qazaq rule for much of the eighteenth century. At the same time, the new dynasty made inroads against Qazaq tribes on the steppe in the north. The city of Kokand saw considerable public construction during this period, and the court of Umar Khan (r. 1800-1820) became the center of a minor cultural renaissance.⁵³

The reasons behind this trend toward the greater assertion of power by rulers remain to be explored fully. It may have been rooted in an attempt to control increasing trade with both India and Russia,⁵⁴ but it was also connected with the gradual sedenterization of large parts of the population over the course of the previous century. Nevertheless, centralization had its limits: The struggle against the tribes was not moti-

51. Izzut-oollah, *Travels*, 56. A later Bukharan chronicler recorded that only two quarters of the city remained inhabited during this period; cf. Yuri Bregel, "Bukhara: III," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, IV: 518.

52. Bregel, "Bukhara: III," 518.

53. Susanna S. Nettleton, "Ruler, Patron, Poet: Umar Khan and the Blossoming of the Khanate of Qoqan, 1800-1820," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2:2 (1981-82): 127-140.

54. A. Z. V. Togan, *Bugünkü Türkili (Türkistan) ve Yakın Tarihi*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul, 1981), 212.

vated by any new notions of sovereignty, and it was not entrenched in new forms of organization or control. In both Bukhara and Kokand, rulers countered the influence of the tribal elites not by the creation of centralized institutions of government but by promoting to high positions persons (usually Iranian or Qalmuq slaves) personally beholden to them. Shāh Murād had begun his career by having the *qushbegi* (the highest state functionary, responsible for the treasury) and the chief *qāzi* of Bukhara murdered on accusations of corruption and oppression while his father still ruled.⁵⁵ The only institutional development connected with the attempted centralization was the establishment of standing armies (*sarbāz*) in both Bukhara and Kokand, although their size remained small.⁵⁶ Indeed, the political situation seemed anything but centralized to our Indian traveler, who enumerated eight major rulers in the region.⁵⁷ Shahr-i Sabz remained a Keneges stronghold in Bukhara down to the Russian conquest, its rulers (*hākims*) inheriting their authority from each other while maintaining the legal fiction of vassalage to the amir at Bukhara,⁵⁸ and the ascendance of urban power in Kokand proved short-lived, as Qipchaq chiefs successfully reasserted their power in the 1840s and all but overthrew the Ming khan.⁵⁹

Sovereignty was embedded in several levels of obedience and allegiance; it was exercised not through institutionalized means of dominance but rather through a series of personal bonds. A centralized bureaucracy existed in only the most rudimentary form, and then it revolved around the treasury (*diwān*). Soviet scholarship was fond of reconstructing stable structures in the khanates of this period,⁶⁰ but it is cru-

55. Abdulkarim Bukhārī, *Histoire de l'Asie centrale*, ed. and trans. Charles Schefer (Paris, 1876 [ms. 1818]), 54–55 (text), 123–125 (trans.); Ahmad Makhdum Dānish, *Traktat Akhmada Donisha "Istoriia Mangytskoi dinastii"*, ed. and trans. I. A. Nadzhafova (Dushanbe, 1967 [ms. ca. 1890]) 29–30; *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 3 (Tashkent, 1993), 152.

56. N. Khanykov, *Bokhara: Its Amir and its People*, trans. Clement A. de Bode (London, 1845 [orig. 1842]), 87, reported "500 regular troops of Bokhara." A. Madzhlisov, *Agrarnye otnosheniia v vostochnoi Bukhara v XIX–nachale XX veka* (Dushanbe, 1967), 38, puts the number at 800. The statement in the recent *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, III: 158, that the *sarbāz* numbered 40,000, is without foundation.

57. Izzut-oollah, *Travels*, 60–61.

58. T. K. Beisembiev, "Unknown Dynasty: The Rulers of Shahr-i Sabz in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *Journal of Central Asia* 15, no. 1 (1992): 20–22.

59. T. K. Beisembiev, "Ta'rikh-i Shakhrukhi" *kak istoricheskii istochnik* (Alma-Ata, 1987), 22, 76–77.

60. A. A. Semenov, *Ocherk ustroistva tsentral'nogo administrativnogo upravleniia Bukharskogo khanstva pozdneishego vremeni* (Dushanbe, 1954); N. A. Kisliakov, *Triarkhal'no-feodal'nye otnosheniia sredi osedlogo sel'skogo naselemiia Bukharskogo*

cial to realize the informality of power in the nineteenth century. Ranks and titles were granted by rulers as markers of status and authority, but they did not correspond to stable offices, which did not exist. The conduct of the state could not be abstracted from the practice of social elites, which in turn did not have access to formal institutions. This pattern of personal, face-to-face relationships was replicated at all levels of society, including the realm of cultural reproduction.

Social bonds and the activities that depended on them (trade, irrigation, cultural reproduction) survived the political instability and nearly constant warfare precisely because the state was not a significant node of social solidarity. Social solidarities were enmeshed in a series of bonds that created numerous localized, often cross-cutting allegiances defined in sedentary society by residential, professional, and genealogical bonds. The urban neighborhood (*guzar*, *mahalla*), formed around a mosque and a holy site (*ziyarat*, usually a tomb [*mazar*]), was the locus of close ties of mutual assistance. The neighborhood community was territorial and brought together people of various standings; the more notable residents were expected to support and protect their neighbors.⁶¹ The neighborhood community coexisted with craft guilds, each of which involved membership in a series of hierarchical relations headed by an elder.⁶² These hierarchies replicated in society the multilayered pattern of political power outlined above and provided a means for the mediation of relations between rulers and the ruled.

These hierarchies rested on differentials of wealth and status and existed because they were widely recognized as "natural." The maintenance and reproduction of this notability was crucial to the social survival of the notables (and of the social order as constituted). Notability could reside in a number of sources, among which wealth was one.

khanstva v kontse XIX–nachale XX veka (Moscow, 1962), 42–63; Madzhlisov, *Agrarnye otnosheniia*, 20–70.

61. O. A. Sukhareva, *Kvartal'naiia obschchina pozdnefeodal'nogo goroda Bukhary* (Moscow, 1976).

62. On the guilds of Central Asia, see M. Gavrilov, "O remeslennykh tsekhakh Srednei Azii i ikh statutakh—risolia," *Izvestiia sredne-aziatskogo Komiteta po delam muzeev i okhrany pamiatnikov stariny, iskusstva i prirody*, 3 (1928): 235–236, Tashkent; O. A. Sukhareva, *Pozdnefeodal'nyi gorod Bukhara kontsa XIX–nachala XX veka: remeslennaia promyshlennost'* (Tashkent, 1962) on Bukhara; R. G. Mukminova, "Remeslennye korporatsii i uchichestvo," on Samarqand; I. Dzhabbarov, "Ob uchichestve v remeslennykh tsekhakh Srednei Azii v kontse XIX i nachale XX v.," in *Materialy utorigo soveshchaniia arkhologov i etnografov Srednei Azii* (Moscow, 1959), on Khorezm; E. M. Peshchereva, *Remeslennye organizatsii Srednei Azii v kontse XIX i nachale XX v.* (Moscow, 1960).

Substantial merchants (*sawdāgar*) could enjoy influence in society and entrée at court. Equally important, though, were other less tangible attributes, such as claims to august lineage, the possession of sacred knowledge, or a reputation for piety or civility. For the most part, the various claims to notability were compatible and mutually reinforcing: merchants could acquire a reputation for piety through patronage of the learned or construction of pious sites, and the learned and the pious could (and did) accumulate considerable wealth. More broadly, knowledge and commonly decipherable codes of civilized behavior served as significant markers of status, whose cultivation in succeeding generations was crucial to the social reproduction of distinction that underlay the social order of nineteenth-century Central Asia. The maktab and (especially) the madrasa were significant channels for the production and reproduction of such social distinction.

The mediated nature of political power meant that the domain of law existed in the interpretive practice of legal experts at some remove from the power of the state. While appointments to the various offices of law were often made by the ruler, the prestige and authority of judges and jurisconsults was largely defined by peer groups. The decision of a qāzi carried authority not because he was a functionary of the state but because of his reputation for piety and the knowledge he possessed. This was symbolized by the seals used by qāzis, which carried the name of the qāzi and a ritual phrase in Arabic and nothing else. Madrasa education was an instrument for the reproduction of the social distinction and social position of the ulama as a group.

Social distinction did not automatically translate into political power, however. The relationship between the rulers and the ulama was dynamic. In times of weakness for the state, the ulama could exercise power in their own right. In fifteenth-century Samarqand, Khoja Ahrār played a very significant role in the social and political life of the city,⁶³ and the Juybāri khojas in Bukhara accumulated vast wealth and political influence in Bukhara in the Shaybānid period.⁶⁴ In Tashkent, the ulama ruled in their own right for much of the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ At other times, rulers honored the ulama and placed them in places of high influence,

63. Jürgen Paul, "Forming a Faction: The *Himāyat* System of Khwaja Ahrar," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1991): 533–548.

64. P.P. Ivanov, *Khoziastvo dzhuibarskikh sheikhov: k istorii feodal'nogo zemlevladieniia v Srednei Azii v XVI–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1954).

65. O.D. Chekhovich, "Gorodskoe samoupravlenie v Tashkente XVIII v.," in *Istoriia i kul'tura narodov Srednei Azii (drevnost' i srednie veka)* (Moscow, 1976), 149–160.

granting them tax exemptions as well as control of substantial endowed (*waqf*) property and patronizing madrasas and *khānqāhs*.⁶⁶ The Manghit amirs Shāh Murād and Mir Haydar seem to have formed especially strong alliances with them. Several ranks among the ulama came to be reserved for Sayyid Atā'i and Juybari Khojas. Shāh Murād had apparently been under the influence of a shaykh before ascending the throne, and his murders of the *qushbegi* and the qāzi of Bukhara were prompted, it was claimed, by his dismay as much at their moral turpitude in smoking water pipes, then a new habit in Bukhara, as at their propensity for oppression. Mir Haydar, described by a contemporary as having the temperament of a scholar (*mullā tabī'at*), spent a great deal of his time in learned discussions with the ulama (although that did not prevent him from also being enamored of women [*zan dost*] and contracting a great many marriages).⁶⁷ Both were generous in their support of the ulama, and as a result both acquired excellent reputations with chroniclers. In both Bukhara and Kokand, intermarriage between the ruling dynasties and leading Sufi families was widespread during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁸

But such deference or alliance did not come automatically. We are told that Alim Qul, khan of Kokand (r. 1800–1810) "did not believe in Sufis and shaykhs." Abdulkarim Bukhāri relates the unpleasant experience at his hands of a shaykh who claimed to possess miracles:

One day, seated by a pond, Alim Qul ordered a rope to be flung across it, and then asked for the said shaykh to be presented to him. The shaykh appeared along with a few disciples. Alim Qul said, "O Shaykh! Tomorrow, on the day of resurrection, you will lead your disciples across the bridge of Sirāt over the fires of hell. Today, why don't you cross this rope, so that I may witness one of your miracles." The shaykh began to preach admonitions and to recite hadith and the Qur'an, but the khan was inflexible and ordered him to walk the rope at once. No sooner did the shaykh step on the rope than he slipped and fell into the pond. Blows rained down on him from all sides until he died.

66. A.L. Troitskaia, *Katalog arkhiva kokandskikh khanov XIX veka* (Moscow, 1968); M.A. Abduraimov, *Ocherki agrarnykh otnoshenii v Bukharskom khanstve*, 2 vols. (Tashkent, 1970), II: 28–52.

67. Bukhāri, *Histoire*, 76 (text), 169–170 (trans.); Mir Haydar's reputation for piety was also noted by all contemporary travelers.

68. Beisembiev, "Dukhovenstvo v politicheskoi zhizni Kokandskogo khanstva v XVIII–XIX vekakh," in *Dukhovenstvo i politicheskaiia zhizn' na Blizhnem i Srednem Vostoke v period feodalizma* (Moscow, 1985), 37–46; Khanykov, *Bokhara*, 246; M. Abduraimov, *Voprosy feodal'nogo zemlevladieniia i feodal'noi renty v pis'makh Emira Khaidara* (Tashkent, 1961), 7–8; *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, III: 338–343.

[After that,] wherever [Alim Qul] saw a dervish or a man attired in Sufi robes [*khirqā-pūsh*], he had him arrested and turned into a camel driver.⁶⁹

In such cases, kingship was its own justification. As Devin DeWeese has recently shown us, popular understandings of Islam in post-Mongol Central Asia fully assimilated myths of conversion to Islam with the very origin of the community itself, which was often defined in terms of rulership.⁷⁰ Dynasts also claimed august lineages that tied them, through an Islamizing figure, to both the Prophet (through 'Alī) and Chinggis Khan, and these claims were constantly renewed through intermarriage with saintly families.

Thus the prestige of scholars of Muslim law did not mean that the states of Central Asia were theocratic or governed by an immutable Islamic law. The ideal was considerably different. Ruing the demise of the old order, Ahmad Makhdum Dānish, a disaffected Bukharan courtier writing in the 1890s, recalled the days when the world was right side up. During the reign of Shāh Murād, the son of an *akhund* killed a shopkeeper who was rude to him. The victim's father petitioned the amir for justice, but the amir was so outraged by the temerity of the victim that he imposed a fine on the father instead, exclaiming that if the victim had not been killed, he would have had him thrown from the Minār-i Kalān. "It is clear from the aforesaid," Dānish concluded, "how knowledge and its servants were in ascendance at that time, and how strong were the opinions of the ulama and the rulers."⁷¹ Shariat was honored because its carriers were honored.

As long as the old order continued to exist on its own terms, the madrasa made perfect sense and served crucial purposes in reproducing knowledge and the social order. The demise of the old order, however, cast everything in doubt.

THE LUXURY OF ISOLATION

Madrasas continued to be built and endowed and manuscripts continued to be written in the nineteenth century. If anything, the first half of the nineteenth century was a period of cultural florescence: A majority of

69. Bukhāri, *Histoire*, 94–95 (text), 211–212 (trans.).

70. Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, Penn., 1994).

71. Dānish, *Traktat*, 30–32.

the madrasas in existence in Tashkent and Kokand in the first years of Russian rule had been built in the nineteenth century.⁷² The khans of both Kokand and Khiva cultivated vast literary circles that produced numerous works of poetry and history.⁷³ Yet, this florescence was highly traditionalist, the central preoccupation being with writing poetry on the models of Timurid or earlier poets and writing commentaries on existing works. Central Asia's isolation contributed to this conservatism of local cultural practices and tastes. The shift of world trade routes from land to sea after the fifteenth century marginalized the economy of Central Asia; the political dislocation of the eighteenth century added to it.⁷⁴ As a result, Central Asia was little affected by the globalization of the world economy taking place in those centuries, which greatly affected other Muslim lands. The low levels of technicalization that obtained in Central Asia until the Russian conquest provide a measure of this isolation from the world economy.

The picture of Central Asian isolation can be overdrawn, to be sure. In the nineteenth century, Central Asian merchants conducted a vigorous trade with Russia, Afghanistan, India, and China. The reach of Indian trade was considerable. As Stephen Dale has recently demonstrated, an Indian world economy encompassed much of Eurasia in the early modern period.⁷⁵ Although its heyday was over by the nineteenth century, trade was still sizable. In July 1826, an Indian merchant arrived in Orenburg with a cargo of gold and silver coin, muslin, and silk brocades.⁷⁶ Khanykov reported in 1842 that the volume of trade with Afghanistan and India averaged 3,000–5,000 camel loads annually.⁷⁷ A substantial population of Indian merchants resided in the principal cities of Central Asia, where they enjoyed a near monopoly over moneylending.⁷⁸ Cen-

72. N. P. Ostroumov, "Madrasas v Turkestanskome krae," *ZhMNP*, n.s., 7, (1907): otd. nar. obr., 7–12; A. B. Vil'danova, "O sostoianii nauki v sredneaziatskikh gorodakh XVI-pervoi poloviny XIX veka," *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane*, 1989, no. 7: 32–36.

73. Umar Khan of Kokand and Rahim Khan of Khiva (r. 1864–1910) were both celebrated patrons and poets in their own right. For notices on the works of members of their court circles, see H. F. Hofman, *Turkish Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, 6 vols. (Utrecht, 1969), II: 87–90, IV: 144; see also Nettleton, "Ruler, Patron, Poet."

74. This latter point is made by Morris Rossabi, "The 'Decline' of the Central Asian Caravan Trade," in James D. Tracy, ed., *The Rise of the Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern Period, 1350–1750* (Cambridge, 1990).

75. Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600–1750* (Cambridge, 1994).

76. G. A. Mikhaleva, *Uzbekistan v XVIII–pervoi polovine XIX veka: remeslo, trgovlia i poshliny* (Tashkent, 1991), 74.

77. Khanykov, *Bokhara*, 221–228.

78. Meyendorff, *Voyage*, 176.

of local
connections

tral Asia still served as an entrepôt for trade between Russia and China, and merchants from Ferghana had acquired a dominant commercial position in Eastern Turkestan, where in 1826 Madali Khan obtained the right to levy taxes in Altı Shahr.⁷⁹ But the most extensive trade was with Russia, whose goods had come to dominate the Central Asian market well before the Russian conquest. Arminius Vámbéry, who traveled in Central Asia in 1863, wrote, "It is by no means any exaggeration to assert that there is no house, and even no tent, in all Central Asia, where there is not some article of Russian manufacture."⁸⁰ This trade was carried on through annual caravans that braved nomad territory on the way to Orenburg and beyond. Orenburg, founded in 1742, had a Bukharan colony, and Bukharan merchants had been allowed to trade at the Makariev fair (which later moved to Nizhnii Novgorod) since 1807.⁸¹ The return trade was in the hands of Tatars, however, and few Russians set foot in Central Asia.

There was also considerable circulation of people. The ulama retained contacts with India. In 1842, Kokand's embassy to St. Petersburg was headed by one Sāhibzāda Miān Fazl Khalil, a Sirhindi Sufi from Peshawar. His cousin headed the Naqshbandi order in Kokand from his arrival there in 1826 until his death in 1869.⁸² Those who could also traveled to Arabia for the hajj, although a Kokand notable found that it took him seven years to make the trip in the 1820s.⁸³ Similarly, the incipient modernization of the armies in the khanates was made possible largely by imported soldiers. Iranian soldiers, many of them slaves captured in war or by Türkmen tribes, provided most of the manpower for

79. Tōru Saguchi, "The Eastern Trade of the Khoqand Khanate," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, no. 24 (1965): 82–89; Joseph Fletcher, "The Heyday of the Ch'ing Order in Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10 (Cambridge, 1978), 360–395.

80. Arminius Vámbéry, *Travels in Central Asia* (London, 1864), 475–476; for an earlier expression of the same phenomenon, see Mohan Lal, *Travels in the Panjab, Afghanistan, and Turkistan* (London, 1846), 142. There is a considerable literature on trade relations between Russia and Central Asia; see M. K. Rozhkova, *Ekonomicheskie svyazi Rossii so Srednei Aziei (40–60 gody XIX veka)* (Moscow, 1963); G. A. Mikhaleva, *Torgovye i diplomatische svyazi Rossii so sredneaziatskimi khanstvami cherez Orenburg* (Tashkent, 1982); Kh. Z. Ziiiev, *Ekonomicheskie svyazi Srednei Azii s Sibir'iu v XVI–XIX vv.* (Tashkent, 1983).

81. Mikhaleva, *Torgovye i posol'skie svyazi*, 22–27.

82. T. K. Beisembiev, "Farghana's Contacts with India in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *Journal of Asian History* 23 (1994): 126–128.

83. W. H. Wathen, "Note of a Pilgrimage Undertaken by an Üsbek and His Two Sons from Khokend or Kokan, in Tartary, through Russia, &c. to Mecca," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 3 (1834): 379–382.

the newly organized standing armies.⁸⁴ Similarly, several Indian Muslims with experience in the armies of the East India Company served in Kokand, one of them rising to be governor of Tashkent for several years.⁸⁵ The maverick British traveler John Wolff was "most agreeably surprised" when a band of soldiers in Bukhara played "God Save the Queen" for him one evening in Bukhara in 1844.⁸⁶ Three decades later, the American diplomat Eugene Schuyler, visiting Kokand on the eve of its final annexation, found local troops being drilled with a mixture of English and Russian commands, many of them seemingly fully nativized into local Turkic.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, this reorganization of armies was directed primarily at regional struggles. The khanates of Central Asia were surrounded by deserts inhabited by nomadic tribes, and the concerns of rulers continued to focus on the shifting calculus of power involving neighboring khanates and the nomads; relations with outside powers, always sporadic because of the distances involved, were seen through the prism of local rivalries. The khans of Kokand had paid tribute to the Qing dynasty since the 1750s, but this relationship remained largely nominal. To the extent that the khans dealt largely with *ambans* in Kashgar (over the years, only eight Kokand missions were allowed to visit Beijing), this relationship too remained a regional one.⁸⁸ Russia was the only external power to have any significant presence in this regional theater of diplomacy, although as long as the steppe remained beyond Russian control, its power to act was limited. Successive embassies traveled to St. Petersburg over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a smaller number of Russian missions paid visits to Central Asia capitals.

The Ottomans maintained sporadic diplomatic contact, although again the vast distances separating the two realms made it impossible for either side to give these relations any substance. The Ottomans initiated relations with Bukhara in the aftermath of the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, in the hope of opening a second front against Russia. The pious Shāh Murād was distinctly unenthusiastic about the cause, informing the Otto-

84. Khanykov, *Bokhara*, 87; Vámbéry, *Travels*, 225–227; Semenov, *Ocherk ustroistva*, 59.

85. Beisembiev, "Farghana's Contacts with India," 126.

86. Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara, in the Years 1843–1845, to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly*, vol. 1 (London, 1845), 351–352.

87. Schuyler, *Turkistan*, II: 15–16.

88. Saguchi, "Eastern Trade," 49–52. According to Abdulkarim Bukhāri, the Chinese emperor had granted Alim Qul a pension (*'alūfa*) in return for making sure that the sons of Sarimsaq Khoja, the last ruler of Kashgar, did not cross Kokand territory to attack their father's lost domains; see Bukhāri, *Histoire*, 96 (text), 217–218 (trans.).

man envoy Alemdar Mehmed Said Ağa that it was "impossible to wage war on a power such as Moscow without cannon and armor," but asking instead for help against "our real enemy . . . Iran and the Rāfizis [Shi'is]." 89 In the ensuing decades, rulers of the three khanates sent a steady succession of envoys to Istanbul, seeking help in religious as well as military matters. Yet it was clear to the Porte that even when Central Asian rulers offered to swear allegiance (*bi'at*) to the sultan as caliph (as the rulers of both Bukhara and Khiva did in the 1810s), it was in the hope of gaining symbolic supremacy in local struggles rather than with the intent of subordinating their sovereignty to that of the sultan.⁹⁰

The same distances that isolated Central Asia also provided its rulers with a certain comfort and safety from colonial intrusion. Unlike the Muslim states of the Mediterranean, the khanates of Central Asia did not feel directly the military threat of modern powers until the middle of the nineteenth century. Central Asia's neighbors had similar levels of technology and did not therefore mount a significant challenge to its external security. No direct challenge arose from foreign powers until the 1830s, when expanding spheres of British and Russian influence threatened Central Asia. Even when this isolation was broken, the low level of institutionalization in the Central Asian khanates meant that the intensive reform from the top experienced by the Ottoman empire or Egypt could not take place in Central Asia. The result was a measure of freedom in isolation that was available to few other Muslim states in this period. The relative security of obscurity allowed the Islamic tradition unquestioned domination in Central Asian intellectual life. The Russian conquest, so rude in its abruptness, ended this isolation and put Central Asia and its civilization in a completely different situation.

89. Mehmet Saray, *Rus İşgali Devrinde Osmanlı Devleti ile Türkistan Hanlıkları arasındaki Siyasi Münasebetler (1775-1875)* (Istanbul, 1990), 21.

90. *Ibid.*, 28-53.

The Making of a Colonial Society

THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST

The gradual subjugation of the Bashkir and Qazaq steppe by the Russian state over the preceding century and a half had brought Russia into geographical contiguity with the khanates of Central Asia by the middle of the nineteenth century. In the confrontation that followed, the technological and organizational superiority of Russian forces proved to be its own justification for conquest, which was accomplished with great ease and rapidity. Although the motivation behind the Russian expansion has been a matter of much debate, it seems quite clear that the initiatives of willful and ambitious generals played significant and irreversible roles in the conquest of Central Asia.¹

1. Soviet historiography long focused on the economic impulse behind Russian expansion, asserting, not entirely convincingly, the necessity of a nascent bourgeoisie in Russia to find new markets. See the classic statement in N. A. Khal'fin, *Prisoedinenie Srednei Azii k Rossii (60-90-e gody XIX v.)* (Moscow, 1965). Much of Western historiography of Russian expansion into Central Asia, in positing a calculated Russian advance against India, is still hostage to the nineteenth-century British understanding of it; for a recent vulgarization of this theme, see Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game* (London, 1990). The assumption of a grand strategy behind Russian expansion has been questioned, quite convincingly in my opinion, by David MacKenzie, "Expansion in Central Asia: St. Petersburg vs. the Turkestan Generals (1863-1866)," *Canadian Slavic Studies* 3 (1969): 286-311; and Peter Morris, "The Russians in Central Asia, 1870-1887," *Slavonic and East European Review* 53 (1975): 521-538.