



THE ROLE OF UZBEK LODGES IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF CENTRAL ASIAN KHANATES (Late 19th and early 20th centuries)

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ABSTRACT

In the early days, the lodges were a place of worship, religious ceremonies, and mystical upbringing, but later, as a result of the emergence of Islamic literature and art, it also became an important cultural place. By the 19th century, the lodges began to play an important role in history, not only religiously and culturally, but also socially and politically.

Uzbek lodges which was in Istanbul, hostel for uzbek pilgrims from Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent, Kokand, Namangan, Margilan. This article examines the active role of the Uzbek khonaqahs in diplomatic relations of Central Asian khanates with others in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

KEY WORDS: *Uzbek lodge, Istanbul, Bukhara Uzbek lodge, Central Asian khanates, Martin Smith, Sheikh Mehmed Efendi*

DISCUSSION

The Lodges, also known as dargah and khanaqah, were mostly located on the pilgrimage routes and served as hotels, places of worship, and classrooms for foreigners. They were first built in the VIII century. By the 13th century, lodges had become the centers of activity of certain sufi ordens. While Shari'a sciences such as tafsir, fiqh, and hadith were taught in madrasahs, moral and spiritual education was taught in lodges¹.

It is known that during the reign of the ninth Ottoman ruler Sultan Yovuz Salim (1470-1520), as the Ottoman state expanded to the south and east - to Anatolia, Damascus, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, important caravan routes came under Ottoman control. As the holy circulations of the Islamic world, Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, became part of the Ottoman Empire, the routes of pilgrimage came under the control of the Sultanate.

From the late 18th century to the early 20th century, most pilgrims from Central Asia and the Caucasus traveled by ship from the Mediterranean to Egypt via Istanbul, then to the Red Sea and Jeddah, and to the holy circulations of Mecca and Medina. As a result, many lodges were built along the road from Istanbul to Mecca and Medina. These lodges provided an opportunity for passengers to relax both

spiritually and physically. Originally common lodges, in the XVII-XIII centuries began to become a place of residence for merchants, foreigners and dervishes from certain nations and regions. Among these lodges, along with Indian, Afghan, Kazan and Iranian lodges, Uzbek lodges can also be found.

These lodges which known as Uzbek lodges were mostly spent by foreigners from Central Asia. Here is a brief summary of the lodges that operated in Istanbul, one of the most important pilgrimage routes, until the beginning of the twentieth century.

1. Uzbek lodge in Sultantepe district of Uskudor, Istanbul
2. Uzbek lodge in Bulbuldara district of Uskudor
3. Uzbek lodge in Mehmetposho Yokushu mahalla in the Sultan Ahmad part of Istanbul
4. Uzbek lodge in Ayyub district of Istanbul
5. Uzbek lodge in Beylarbeyi district of Istanbul
6. An Uzbek taxi at the port of Kadirga in Istanbul

As mentioned above, these lodges have played an important role in history not only religiously, but also socially and politically. In particular, politically and diplomatically active lodges are mainly located in Istanbul.

By the end of the Ottoman Empire, there were about five hundred lodges in Istanbul.

¹ See: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/tekke>



Depending on the location of these lodges in the city, it is possible to find out their political and social influence. Among them Uzbek lodges are located in the center of the capital, Istanbul. This is due to its proximity to the state arch and its importance in the Ottoman relations with the Central Asian khanates [1: 239].

Also, delegations and ambassadors from the Central Asian khanates, who visited from time to time, stayed in these lodges [2: 205].

Among these lodges, we will focus on the active relations of two politically and diplomatically active lodges in Istanbul:

1. Uzbek lodge located in Sultantepe district

The Uzbek lodge, located in the Sultantepe district of Istanbul's Uskudar district, was one of the most important lodges of its time. In fact, this lodge served as a more politically important place than a socio-religious one.

Martin Smith, a western researcher, explains why the lodge was built: Until the 18th century, pilgrims from Turkestan stayed in Istanbul for a few days and pitched their unique silk tents at Sultantepe in the Uskudar district of Istanbul. One day, one of the Ottoman sultans (the sultan's name is not mentioned) as he travels through Istanbul as an ordinary citizen attracts the attention of embroidered silk tents and talks to Uzbek pilgrims. Satisfied with the conversation, the sultan promised Sheikh Naqshbandi, the leader of the pilgrims, to build a lodge for Uzbeks in the future. [3: 131]. According to Martin Smith, at the entrance to the Uzbek lodge mosque in Sultantepe, a complex of lodge and mosque was built in 1757 during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Mustafa III (1757-1774) [3: 132].

Uzbek lodges were led by sheikhs from Central Asia. In particular, the sheikh of the Uzbek lodge in Sultantepe was ruled by Sayyid Abdullah Al-Akbar (d. 1776), a native of Samarkand. Lodge was ruled by his descendants after the death of Sheikh Sayyid Abdullah. Also, in other lodges of Istanbul, lodge was administered in the same way, that is, after the death of the lodge sheikh, by his descendants. This Uzbek lodge in Uskudar served mainly as a place of residence for Naqshbandi dervishes and foreigners [4: 425].

This lodge has also served as a destination for pilgrims from Turkestan. Guests visiting Lodge have always been recorded. For the records, there were two notebooks called "Kunya Notebook" and "Official Guest Book" which contain the names, places of birth and dates of visits of the visiting guests. In addition to the names of the guests, Kunya's notebooks also contained brief information about their shape and appearance [3: 135].

Most of the registered visitors were from Tashkent, Kokand, Samarkand, Bukhara, Margilan, Andijan, Namangan, Karakul and Osh [3: 136].

2. Bukhara Uzbek lodge.

The Sultan Ahmad section of Istanbul is one of the crowded spots in the city. It is known that Istanbul was the capital of the Ottoman state, the part where the Sultan Ahmad Mosque is located is the central part of the city and the area closest to the palace. From this central region there were important institutions of the Ottoman sultanate, one of which is the Uzbek lodge in Mehmet Pasha Yokushu mahalla. Lodge was once known as Bukhara Uzbek Lodge, Uzbek Dargah. Lodge was built in 1692-1693 by Ismailbey, the bookkeeper of Istanbul. In addition to serving as a destination for pilgrims from Central Asia, Lodge had contributed to the development of socio-cultural and scientific life with dormitories, classrooms and libraries for students. The lodge also provided various assistance to foreigners, students and businessmen from Turkestan [3:137].

In the early years, the Bukhara Uzbek lodge, like other lodges, served as an ordinary guest house, but later, during the reign of Sheikh Mehmed Efendi (d. 1861) of Bukhara origin (50s of the XIX century), it began to play an important role in the cultural and political life of the Ottoman Sultanate.

All the wishes of Sheikh Mehmed Efendi were met with special attention by the Ottoman Sultans. In particular, Sheikh Mehmed Efendi appealed to the Ottomans Sadria'zam² to create conditions for his aunt Sharifa Fatimah to stay in Madinah on the occasion of her pilgrimage. The sheikh's appeal was approved and Sadria'zam sent an order to the sheikh of Haram and the head of the city of Madinah to make the necessary preparations [5: 188.48].

After Sheikh Mehmed Efendi, the lodge was led by the following sheikhs: Sheikh Abdullah Efendi, Sheikh Yahya Efendi, Sheikh Mehmet Said Efendi, Sheikh Abdullah Efendi, Sheikh Suleiman Efendi, Sheikh Mirza Alim Muhammad, Sheikh Buyuk Abdulmajid Efendi, Sheikh Abdurrahman Efendi.

The Uzbek lodge under Sultan Ahmad, ruled by Uzbek-born Naqshbandi sheikhs, served as a diplomatic mission regulating political and cultural relations between the Central Asian khanates and the Ottoman Sultanate. In turn, the sheikhs, who were the rulers of the lodge, acted as representatives of the diplomatic mission of the Central Asian khanates in Istanbul [6: 35].

During the reign of Sheikh Suleiman Afandi, the sphere of influence of the Bukhara Uzbek lodge expanded again. Sheikh Suleiman Efendi was also born in 1821 in the city of Karakul near Bukhara. The sheikh, who is fluent in Turkish, Persian and Arabic, went to Hijaz in 1844 with the intention of performing the Hajj and lived there for three years. In

² In the Ottoman Sultanate, the sadri'azam was the prime minister (Author's note).



1847, by order of the Emir of Bukhara, he came to Istanbul and Bukhara became the sheikh of the Uzbek lodge [7: 248].

During the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), one of the Ottoman sultans, special attention was paid to the development of lodge activity. Sources say that Sheikh Sulayman Efendi of Lodge and Sultan Abdulhamid II also had close friendships. In addition to his cordial relations with the Sultan, Sheikh Suleyman Efendi also had close contacts with the ambassadors of European countries in Istanbul. In particular, he held talks with the British ambassador in Istanbul on the Russian march to Central Asia [2: 205]. Sheikh Suleiman Efendi also headed a delegation to the Turan Congress in Budapest, Hungary in 1877 and returned on behalf of Sultan Abdulhamid II [8: 225].

It is clear from similar examples that Sheikh Suleiman Efendi played an important role not only as a lodge sheikh but also as a high-ranking diplomat between the Ottomans and the Central Asian khanates.

It is known that the second half of the XIX century was the first stages of the invasion of Central Asia by Char Russia. By this time, the Central Asian khanates were sending various ambassadors to the Ottomans to hold various negotiations. In particular, a group of ambassadors from Turkestan, accompanied by Sheikh Suleiman Efendi, held talks with representatives of the Ottoman Empire and the British government in Bukhara [5: 517.37].

Sultan Abdulhamid II also responded positively to Sheikh Suleiman Efendi's proposal that a lodge should be built in Jeddah for Muslims coming from Turkestan for Hajj, and an Uzbek lodge was built in Jeddah between 1876 and 1877.

It is known that after the disintegration of the Ottoman Sultanate, its territory was reduced and the Republic of Turkey was founded by Mustafa Kemal on the Asia Minor Peninsula. After the establishment of the republic, religious institutions were sharply reduced. In particular, most of the lodges were closed and the waqf property was transferred to the state, but this Bukhara Uzbek lodge continued its activirelations until 1980 by a special order of Mustafa Kemal. The Lodge building has been used as a Design Center by the Istanbul Emino District Administration since 2008 [9: 144].

In general, these lodges played an important role in strengthening relations between countries and peoples, and in due time also served as a kind of consulate in solving various problems of pilgrims. For example, a representative of a nation from a distant land was accompanied by his compatriots and compatriots who understood their customs, traditions and language, and continued their travels without difficulty in foreign lands.

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