# ORIGINS OF THE MANGIT DYNASTY AND THEIR ASSUMPTION OF POWER IN BUKHARA

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***Abstract:*** *This article examines the long-standing aspiration of the Uzbek people to achieve independence, restore national and historical statehood traditions, and establish a just, lawful, democratic society characterized by peace and stability. The study explores the emergence of the Mangit dynasty and analyzes the historical circumstances that enabled its rise to power in the Bukhara Khanate. It also presents interpretations regarding the dynasty's origins and its role in shaping Bukhara's political landscape.*

***Keywords:*** *Mangit dynasty, Bukhara Khanate, Nadir Shah, Abulfayz Khan, Muhammad Hakimbiy, Iran, Daniyalbiy, Abulghazi, "the infallible amir," Amir Shokhmurod, Russian Empire.*

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## Introduction

Throughout its history, Uzbekistan has endured numerous invasions and periods of foreign domination. Among these, the history of the Russian Empire's conquest and its associated challenges holds a particularly significant place. In this context, the study of the khanate period is of paramount importance. Independence has opened broad avenues for the nation to flourish, reaffirm its identity, engage with the world, and revive and develop its rich historical heritage. It has also placed new scholarly responsibilities before researchers. Histories written under Soviet influence no longer meet

contemporary academic standards and requirements. Consequently, there is a clear and urgent need for fresh interpretations and renewed analysis.In 1998, during a meeting between the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I. A. Karimov, and a group of leading historians and journalists, this issue was discussed at length. The meeting outlined the principal directions for the development of historical studies in Uzbekistan, marking a decisive shift toward modernizing the national historical narrative.

During that meeting, our First President stated: **"It is necessary to restore our true history and arm our nation with that history."** Today, Uzbekistan is rapidly modernizing and, in line with the times, considers it a pressing priority to raise a generation that is independent in thought, highly educated, and patriotic. Consequently, a people who do not know their history, national identity, ancient traditions, and customs—and cannot understand them—quickly lose not only their freedom but also the national statehood and independence that were built over centuries through the arduous labor, suffering, and bloodshed of their ancestors.

Therefore, we all understand that the history of the Uzbek people includes complex periods and severe trials. Over the past fifty years, numerous studies have been conducted on the medieval history of Central Asia. The scope of scholarly work published based on manuscript sources is significant, and these works stand out due to their rigorous and well-founded research. However, the complexity of the issue lies in the fact that research conducted before independence often approached historical topics from a class-based perspective. Events were narrated in a way that aligned with communist ideology, and researchers followed the prevailing traditions of period historiography rather than adopting an objective approach. In particular, scholars faced many challenges when studying the periods of khanates and emirates. Since gaining independence, our country has devoted increasing attention to many fields, especially to science and scholarship. Interest in

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historical research has grown, and researchers now enjoy favorable conditions and financial support. Today's scholars approach history with greater objectivity and scientific rigor.

Let us now turn to a detailed examination of the dynasties that ruled the Bukhara Khanate, with a particular focus on the Mangit dynasty.

**Research Methodology**

To study the history of the Mangits, a wide range of literature and primary sources related to the topic were utilized. Particular attention was given to chronological analysis and periodization in the scientific research.

**Results and Discussion**

The Mangit lineage is connected to Tumina Khan, who belonged to the Nirun branch of the Mongols. He had nine sons, the eldest of whom was Chaqsu. Chaqsu had three sons: the first was Tuyokin, the second Urut, and the third Mangit. These three sons became the progenitors of three distinct lineages.

Tumina Khan conducted military campaigns against several cities in the Turkistan region that were not under his authority. He had two wives, from whom he had seven children with the first wife and two children with the second. The eldest son of Tumina Khan, Chaqsu, had three sons—Tuyokin, Urut, and Mangit—whose descendants constitute the entire Mangit tribe.

The term "Mangit" originally derives from **"Mangut,"** which means "may it be blessed" or "may it be prosperous." It reflects the traditional wish for prosperity and blessing that people express toward their friends, relatives, and children.

The Mangits are divided into three groups: **White Mangits, Tuq Mangits, and Black Mangits** (Khanikov, 1843). In his work *Gulhan al-Mulk*, Muhammad Yaqoob Bukhari lists six Mangit lineages, but H. Daniyorov (1968) rightly points out that the lineages of Harduri, Qora Qon'girot, Irani, and Chupqon do not belong to the Mangits. For many years, Amir Edigey

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maintained power in the Golden Horde, Khwarezm, and Crimea. He belonged to the White Mangits. After Amir Timur conquered the Golden Horde in 1395, many khans emerged from this lineage. Notable figures such as Vaqosbiy, Muso, Yomgirchi, Ghoziboy, and Muborakshoh were descendants of the Mangit tribe and represented the famous Amir Edigey's lineage.

The renowned Edigey (Idikubiy) held full control over the Golden Horde during the period of 1396–1411. During this time, his son Ghazibiy became the leader of the Mangit tribe (B. Akhmedov, 1962, *Uzbek Atamasi*). At that time, the Mangit ulus was located between the Ural and Emba rivers. This occurred during the reign of Tokhtamysh Khan (1380–1396).

Edigey's brother, Isabik Khan, served as the commander-in-chief, and during the reign of Fulad Khan (1409–1411), he also held the position of "amir of amirs" (supreme commander). The Mangit amirs maintained constant relations with the Chagatai rulers, i.e., the amirs of Mawarannahr (Transoxiana). Idikubiy Mangit sought refuge from Urus Khan (during the years of his rule over the White Horde and the Golden Horde) in 1375–1376 and came to the great conqueror Amir Timur seeking protection. During the era of Amir Timur and the Timurid dynasty, diplomatic relations were maintained through the exchange of envoys and gifts between Shahrukh, on the one hand, and Edigey Mangit and the Isabeks, on the other. In fact, Shahrukh (the ruler of Khorasan) even requested Edigey to marry his daughter to Shahrukh's son, Muhammad Juki.

In the first quarter of the 15th century, a state of Uzbek nomadic tribes was established in the White Horde. This state was led by Abulkhair Khan, who united a large number of nomadic tribes living in the region. During his efforts to unite these tribes, the Mangit clans played a leading role. In the early 16th century, many individuals from the Mangit lineage served in the army of Shaybani Khan. In the 1720s, the Mangits sought to gain dominance in the

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Qarshi oasis. Muhammad Rahimbiy Otaliq (1753–1758), the first ruler of the Mangit dynasty, ascended to the throne of Bukhara.

In the 13th century, the Mangits lived in the Dasht-i Kipchak, while a large part of them also resided between the Volga and Ural rivers. Under Kipchak influence, they gradually lost their original language and adopted the Turkic-Kipchak language. By the end of the 14th century, they formed a separate ulus (Mangit ulus). In the mid-15th century, the Mangits became known as "Nogai" (Noga) and their ulus was called the "Nogai Horde." By the mid-16th century, the Nogai Horde was divided into the Greater Nogai and the Lesser Nogai. Later, the Mangits within the Greater Nogai were integrated into the ethnic composition of Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, and partially Kazakhs. In the 16th century, they migrated to the territory of present-day Uzbekistan. Under the influence of the Uzbeks—who had long been engaged in agriculture—some members of the Mangit tribe gradually settled down and became sedentary, while others continued to live in a semi-settled state until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, engaging mainly in livestock breeding. They raised Karakul and Jaidar sheep. The Mangits were also involved in farming and various crafts, including carpet weaving—especially the production of long-pile carpets such as *gilam-julkhirs*, which were highly renowned—as well as textile production, *boz*, *alacha*, *kalami*, and other traditional crafts.

In the Mangit village of G'uzor district, descendants of the Mangit tribe have continued to live to this day. Mangit descendants also reside in Bukhara, Samarkand, and Karakalpakstan, and are fully integrated into the Uzbek nation. In the northern part of the Republic of Afghanistan and partially in southern regions of Uzbekistan, Turkic-Mongol tribes also include Mangit lineages. In 1740, Iranian forces under Nadir Shah launched another invasion against Bukhara. The khans of Bukhara and Khiva were unable to unite against their common enemy. Moreover, treason occurred within Bukhara itself. The ruler of Qarshi, Muhammad Hakimbiy, who was determined to seize power,

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defected to Nadir Shah's side. Abulfayz Khan failed to organize resistance against the Iranian invasion and was forced to surrender.

Nadir Shah sent the terms of surrender to Abulfayz Khan through Muhammad Hakimbiy. To sign the treaty, Abulfayz Khan was compelled to go to the Chorbakr fortress on the Zarafshan River, where Nadir Shah was present. According to the agreement, the Bukhara Khanate was required to deliver 200,000 *harbor* of wheat and barley—enough to sustain Nadir Shah's army for eight years. In addition, 10,000 soldiers were to be recruited from the population of the Bukhara Khanate and sent under Nadir Shah's command. Muhammad Rahim, the son of Muhammad Hakimbiy, was appointed commander of this army. Thus, Bukhara became a state subordinate to Iran, and Abulfayz Khan effectively became a puppet ruler. Muhammad Hakimbiy was appointed *qoshbegi* (chief minister) and held de facto power over the entire administration.

The collapse of the Ashtarkhanid rule had become inevitable. During the reign of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty in Bukhara, the Mangit and Qongirot tribes held significant influence among the Uzbek tribes. These two clans loyally served the Ashtarkhanids while true power remained in their hands. However, over time, the Mangits began to struggle intensively to gain a separate and independent influence in Bukhara. They achieved this goal during the rule of Muhammad Hakimbiy.

Muhammad Hakimbiy died in 1743. His son, Muhammad Rahimbiy, took advantage of his command over a regular army and began to claim a distinct position of power, similar to that of his father. The last Ashtarkhanid ruler, Abulfayz Khan, was compelled to appoint him as Grand Vizier, and ultimately the central authority came under his control. After Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747, internal conflicts in Iran created an opportunity for Muhammad Rahimbiy to seize the throne of Bukhara. Under his orders, Abulfayz Khan was also killed in 1747. Muhammad Rahimbiy then placed

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Abulfayz's son, Abdulmumin, on the throne and married him to his daughter. Soon after, Muhammad Rahimbiy had his son-in-law Abdulmumin executed as well. With the support of Bukhara's nobility and clergy, Muhammad Rahimbiy declared himself Khan in 1756.

However, since the Mangits were not descendants of Genghis Khan, subsequent Mangit rulers did not call themselves khans but rather used the title of **amir**. They were recognized as the religious rulers of the Bukhara region and were known as **Amir ul-Mu'minin** (Commander of the Faithful). Thus, in 1756 a new dynasty—the Mangit dynasty—came to power in Bukhara and ruled the state until 1920. From that point onward, the Bukhara Khanate became known as the **Bukhara Emirate**. The Mangits were one of the 92 Uzbek tribes.

Mangit ruler Muhammad Rahim Khan (1756–1758) pursued a policy of establishing absolute authority and ending internal conflicts in the country. The aim of this policy was to restore a centralized state. Muhammad Rahim Khan resolutely set out to implement this policy. He summoned all local rulers to his court, presented his true objectives, and explained his governing program. He emphasized that ongoing internal conflicts and wars were destroying the country, disrupting economic and commercial activities, and that if these processes continued, the state's collapse would be inevitable. He warned that any local ruler who refused to submit to the central authority would be subjected to severe punishment.

Muhammad Rahim Khan brought the principalities of Miyankol, Nurota, Qubodiyon, Boysun, Shakhrisabz, and Urgut—whose rulers had claimed independence—under his authority over the course of four years. At the same time, he pursued a policy of forcibly relocating tribes that refused to submit to central rule. For example, this policy was applied against the Burqut, Kipchak, Yetti Urug', Bahrin, Yuz, Kenagas, Saroy, and other tribes. Muhammad Rahim Khan succeeded in significantly reducing the long-standing interference of

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large landowners in state governance. Nevertheless, he was not fully able to secure the recognition of the central authority by all the principalities. After Muhammad Rahim Khan's death, his uncle Daniyalbiy Otaliq and Amir Shokhmurod assumed power. Daniyalbiy Otaliq did not adopt the title of Khan and placed Abulghazi, the grandson of Abulfayz Khan, on the throne. Daniyalbiy retained both the position of Otaliq and effective control over the state. He attempted to strengthen his military forces and act based on his power base. He granted large estates and land holdings to Mangit beks. He also increased taxes levied on the population. During his rule, the principalities of Balkh, Hisor, Kulob, and Uratepa intensified their attempts to gain independence. However, he was unable to suppress the autonomous actions of the large landowners, the Qoshbegi, and the Qozikalon (regional governors). One of his sons, Shokhmurod, led a simple, ascetic life. Under the advice of a sheikh, he worked as a shepherd in the market. Later, he made and sold knives, earning a living through this trade. Because of his strong prestige among the people, Daniyalbiy transferred power to him.

**Amir Shokhmurod (1785–1800)**

Amir Shokhmurod was the eldest son of Amir Daniyalbiy Otaliq. From an early age, he was known for his piety and modesty. After graduating from a madrasa, he became a devout adherent and promoter of the Sufi way of life. Shokhmurod removed Abulghazi from power, declared himself the Amir of Bukhara, and seized the throne. The people respectfully bestowed upon him the title **"Amiri Ma'sum"** (the Innocent or Pure Amir). In his rule, Shokhmurod relied heavily on the support of the people and strictly adhered to the principles of justice. He lived a highly ascetic life. For example, in one year he wore only a single *alacha* coat and a single *boz* robe. On his head he wore a six-cubit *boz* turban, and on his feet he wore sandals made of goat leather and *kavush* (a type of footwear).

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Amir Shokhmurod carried out major construction works in the city of Samarkand. In the city center, he built a six-sided bazaar known as **"Toqi Musaddas."** He personally appointed imams, muezzins, and mudarris (religious teachers) to every madrasa in Samarkand. He allocated waqf lands and properties to provide salaries for students and teachers. Through several reforms, Shokhmurod strengthened the state. He reduced all taxes except *boz* and *khiroj*. He introduced the position of *rais* and established the office of **qazi askar** within the military structure. Shokhmurod's monetary reform was of particular importance for stabilizing the economy. During the Ashtarkhanid period, the silver content in minted coins had been reduced, and Shokhmurod corrected this by reforming the currency.

According to the law introduced by Shokhmurod, anyone who committed fraud or embezzlement against public property was to be severely punished regardless of their social rank. This measure prevented violations against the interests of the people.

**Sulukī** — a unit of weight used for measuring loads carried by donkeys.

In 1747, the Mangit dynasty effectively assumed power in Bukhara, although this event was officially recognized in 1756. From 1756 onward, the Bukhara Khanate became known as the **Bukhara Emirate**. The Mangit dynasty ruled Bukhara until 1920.

**Historical Background and Emergence of the Mangit Dynasty**

Historical sources indicate that the Mangits were a Turkic people. In the 12th century, they lived in the Dasht-i Kipchak, while a large part of them resided between the Volga and Ural rivers. During this period, they came under the strong influence of the Kipchaks. As a result of this influence, some Mangits gradually forgot their native language and began speaking the Kipchak language.

Among the Mangits who later lived in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, some gradually became sedentary under the influence of Uzbeks

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who had long practiced agriculture, while others continued to engage in livestock breeding until the early 20th century. They raised Karakul and Jaidar sheep. In addition to agriculture and animal husbandry, the Mangits were also engaged in crafts and produced carpets and various textiles. In particular, their long-pile carpets known as *gilam-julkhirs* became famous.

The Mangit people were divided into sub-branches such as White Mangits, Black Mangits, and Tuq Mangits. The Mangit dynasty that ruled the Bukhara Emirate from 1756 to 1920 belonged to the Tuq Mangit branch of the Mangit tribe.

By the 1740s, political and economic crisis had intensified in the Bukhara Khanate. As a result of the arbitrary policies pursued by the last representative of the Ashtarkhanid (Janid) dynasty, Abulfayz Khan (reigned 1711–1747), the material conditions of the people deteriorated. The Fergana Valley separated from the Bukhara Khanate and an independent Kokand Khanate was established. The threat of the country being divided into feudal principalities increased.

Moreover, the invasion of the Bukhara state by the Iranian ruler Nadir Shah (reigned 1736–1747), and the subsequent capture and looting of the key cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, further complicated the political situation. During this critical and sensitive period, when the fate of Turkestan was being decided, a new political force—the Mangit dynasty—emerged on the historical stage.

**The Rise of the Mangit Dynasty: Key Figures and Political Context.** It should be emphasized that in the late 17th century and the first half of the 18th century, the influential Mangit beys (tribal leaders) belonging to the **Tuq Mangit** branch—namely **Khudoyorbiy Otaliq** and his son **Muhammad Hakimbiy Otaliq**—were among the most respected Mangit leaders. They were prominent officials at the court of the Bukhara Khanate, which was then ruled by the Ashtarkhanid dynasty. At this point, it is useful to briefly consider the

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roles of Muhammad Hakimbiy Otaliq (late 17th century–1743) and his son Muhammad Rahimbiy Otaliq (1715–1758), as this clarifies how the Mangit dynasty came to power. Muhammad Hakimbiy initially served at the Ashtarkhanid court in the positions of **mirokhwar** and **parvonachi**. In a short time, he became the leader of the Mangit tribe in the Bukhara Khanate, and during the reign of Abulfayz Khan his influence increased significantly. Relying on numerous Mangit clans and tribal leaders, he carried out a harsh and uncompromising struggle to strengthen the central authority in Bukhara. In particular, he fought against the Katagan and Kenagas tribes, including the Shakhrisabz-based Ibrahim Kenagas and his followers. Soon he attained the position of **divanbegi** (chief administrator). Around 1720, Abulfayz Khan officially recognized Muhammad Hakimbiy as the head of all princes' otaliqs at the court and granted him the title of **otaliq**.

During Nadir Shah's invasion of Bukhara in 1740, Muhammad Hakimbiy called on the population not to resist the invading army. For this service, Nadir Shah appointed him as the **full authorized ruler of Bukhara**, making him the court's **qoshbegi** (grand vizier). In short, Muhammad Hakimbiy, as both otaliq and qoshbegi, created the necessary conditions for the Mangit dynasty to ascend to power in Bukhara. He fought relentlessly against emirs and tribal leaders who refused to submit to the central authority.

Muhammad Rahimbiy had already occupied important court positions during his father's lifetime. As the son-in-law of Abulfayz Khan, he became the de facto ruler of the Bukhara Khanate from 1745. In 1747, on his orders, Abulfayz Khan—who had taken refuge in one of the cells of the Mir Arab Madrasa—was killed. For nearly a decade, Muhammad Rahimbiy ruled Bukhara as *atalik* by installing a succession of so-called "puppet khans" on the throne, including Abdul-Mu'min Khan (r. 1747–1751), Ubaydullah Khan III ibn Abdul-Mu'min Khan (r. 1751–1754), and Sherghazi Khan (r. 1754–1756). Only on 12 December 1756 did Muhammad Rahimbiy formally ascend the

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throne and proclaim himself Khan of Bukhara. The new Manghit dynasty that came to power in Bukhara consolidated its authority through violence and the force of arms. From 1756 to 1920, the Bukhara Emirate was ruled by the Manghit dynasty. Over a period of 164 years, ten Manghit emirs governed the Bukhara state, beginning with Muhammad Rahim Khan and ending with Said Alim Khan.

Historians have offered divergent assessments of the Manghit emirs of Bukhara. While many rulers are portrayed as despotic and cruel, just governance has been rare throughout history. Nevertheless, such rulers were not entirely absent from the Manghit dynasty. Amir Shahmurad—widely known as the "Innocent Amir"—and his son Amir Haydar are frequently cited as examples of comparatively just rule.

At this point, it is appropriate to turn briefly to the figure of Amir Nasrullah Khan. Numerous studies, both during the Soviet period and in the post-Soviet era, have addressed his reign; however, most present his life and activities in a one-sided manner, depicting his image almost exclusively in negative terms.[5] In fact, a historian does not have the luxury of relying solely on black-and-white judgments or on purely positive or negative evaluations. Rather, any historical figure must be portrayed impartially within the context of the historical events of their time. When assessing historical personalities, the historian must avoid anachronism and hold firmly—and with great caution—to the scales of justice.

Today, many authors put forward various claims and superficial judgments about Nasrullah Khan; however, these assertions often consist of one-sided and excessively harsh opinions. It is particularly noteworthy that most of those expressing such views are not professional historians, but journalists, writers, literary scholars, or representatives of other fields. This circumstance itself points to the seriousness of the problem and underscores the urgent need for the full historical truth about this figure—who played a

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distinctive role in the history of Uzbekistan and Bukhara—to be presented to the public specifically by professional historians.

In 2011, my historical monograph *Nasrullah Khan* was published, although the work itself had been written earlier, between June and October 2006.

Nearly 150 years have passed since the lifetime of Amir Nasrullah. During this period, profound transformations have taken place not only in the history of Bukhara but throughout the entire Turkestan region. By the end of the twentieth century, the territorial unity of Mawarannahr and Khwarazm—once envisioned by Nasrullah Khan—was restored. In our view, the place and role of Nasrullah Khan in the history of Turkestan may be defined by the following factors.

First, Amir Nasrullah pursued a policy of strict centralization within the Bukhara state. He suppressed the resistance of the Shahrisabz and Kitab beklik that refused to submit to central authority and put an end to separatist tendencies.

Second, the Amir sought to unite the entirety of Mawarannahr and Khwarazm under a single state authority. Although he was unable to fully realize this ambition, for a short period he succeeded in governing all of Mawarannahr as a unified political entity. The incorporation of the territory of the Kokand Khanate into the Bukhara Emirate, in essence, represented an attempt to unite two Uzbek state formations within the region.

Unfortunately, these actions of Nasrullah Khan were interpreted in a fundamentally different manner by representatives of the Kokand historiographical school, Jadid reformist intellectuals (such as Ibrat, Fitrat, and Ayni), and historians of the Soviet period in Uzbekistan. Over many years, they shaped public consciousness by promoting images of Nasrullah Khan as a "terrifying and bloodthirsty ruler," a "brave butcher," or "the butcher's hero."

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Third, as a result of the various reforms implemented by Amir Nasrullah in the Bukhara Emirate, the state's economic and military strength increased to a certain extent. Administrative reforms facilitated the involvement of individuals from diverse social strata in state governance. Reforms in the military sphere proved particularly effective. It was precisely these military reforms that later enabled the Bukhara Emirate to offer the most determined and resolute resistance among the three Uzbek states to the aggression and invasion of the Russian Empire. Although the Bukhara Emirate ultimately suffered defeat in its struggle against Russian expansion, it nevertheless succeeded in preserving a portion of its territory.

Fourth, through an active foreign policy, Nasrullah Khan achieved a number of successes, returning to the control of the Bukhara state such regions as Balkh, Merv, and other provinces regarded as integral parts of the emirate. However, these territories were later lost again for various reasons. This development significantly influenced the socio-political processes that unfolded in the Turkestan region during the final quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, including the national–territorial delimitation carried out in Central Asia. As a result of these geopolitical transformations in the recent past, the borders of the present-day Republic of Uzbekistan were formed within a considerably reduced framework of its historical homeland and have remained so to this day.

At the same time, Amir Nasrullah also committed a number of serious political mistakes during his rule. Among these were the appointment of foreigners—rather than members of Turkic Uzbek tribes—to key state positions; the growing influence of Shiʿa Iranian slaves in state administration; the process of Persianization within the Manghit dynasty; and the decline in the status of the Uzbek language. In addition, the execution of Nodirabegim on the orders of Amir Nasrullah had a negative impact on his public reputation.

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**"Could Amir Muzaffarkhan, Amir Abdulahadkhan, and Amir Said Olimkhan have offered effective resistance to the imperial invasions of the Russian Empire in the Turkestan region, including the Bukhara Emirate?"**

"Yes, they could have. However, Amir Muzaffarkhan was unable to provide such resistance. The reasons were far more serious than you might imagine, and the consequences were catastrophic. Let us continue our discussion around this painful topic." Expressing bitter reflections on the personality of Amir Muzaffarkhan (1819–1885), his tragic place in the history of Bukhara, and the process by which the tragedy of the emir became the tragedy of the Bukhara state is not easy for me. During the reign of Amir Muzaffarkhan, the independence of the Bukhara state was irretrievably lost. During the reign of Amir Nasrullah Khan, his son Sayyid Muzaffariddin Khan served as governor of Karmana as crown prince. He was the Amir's only son. Yet, before his death (Amir Nasrullah Khan died on 21 October 1860 at the age of fifty-six), he bequeathed the crown and throne of Bukhara not to his only son, Sayyid Muzaffariddin Khan, but to one of his many grandsons. Perhaps Amir Nasrullah Khan—who had demanded the longest reign among the rulers of the Manghit dynasty and had extensive experience in state administration—did not see in his only son Muzaffariddin Khan (who was forty-one at the time) the qualities of a ruler or the capacity to govern. However, events developed somewhat differently than the late Amir had anticipated. Just as the great Conqueror Amir Temur's will was violated by his grandson Khalil Sultan and other reckless emirs after Temur's death in February 1405, so too—455 years later, in September 1860—Amir Nasrullah's will was disregarded. In both cases, the failure to honor the testament led to severe consequences. The renowned scholar and statesman Ahmad Donish (1827–1897), in his treatise *Risola yoki Mang'itlar xonadoni saltanatining qisqacha tarixi* ("A Brief History of the Manghit Dynasty"), describes this event—of which he was an

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eyewitness—as follows: "Nasrullah Khan had no child other than Amir Muzaffar. He observed malice and cruelty in his son's character. Because he cared for his subjects and the army, he did not wish for his son to ascend to the throne after him. Therefore, he appointed one of his grandsons as heir and instructed several amirs to transfer the state to him. After Amir Nasrullah's death, the amirs and notables were divided on whether to transfer power to the grandson or to the son. Some argued that 'the state is inherited from the father,' while others insisted that 'the will must be carried out.' Eventually, the group supporting the son prevailed, and Amir Muzaffar was summoned from Karmana. On the seventh of Rabi' al-Awwal 1227 (23 September 1860), he ascended the throne of the Bukhara Emirate."

Once Amir Muzaffar consolidated his rule, he eradicated the supporters of the will. Those labeled as heirs immediately fled Bukhara. Those who failed to escape, along with their families and descendants, were executed by the Amir. He dismissed all the officials, amirs, and ministers who had held office during his father's reign, confiscated their property, and replaced them with his own relatives and supporters. The army and the populace suffered severe oppression. The newcomers sent from Karmana to serve the Amir were vile men, because Amir Nasrullah had sent those he rejected to Karmana, saying, 'Let them serve you and understand their worth.'

Having unexpectedly been elevated to high office and authority, they began to spill the blood of the people, behaved rudely, and showed no regard for even the smallest grievances. In this regard, the people of Karmana became widely despised among the people of Bukhara."

What events does this description remind you of? Perhaps it evokes memories of the distant past—the Samanids, Timurids, Shaybanids, Baburids, and Ashtarkhanids, and the bloody wars and power struggles of those eras. Yet similar historical phenomena are also densely present in the recent and modern history of Uzbekistan and the world.

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When the people and religious scholars heard that the troops of the Russian Empire were entering the territory of the Bukhara Emirate via the Sirdarya steppe, they fell into a state of anxiety. Internal turmoil, uprisings, and appeals forced Amir Muzaffar to mobilize an army.

Muzaffarkhan marched with a force of thirty thousand men under the command of his commander-in-chief, Allo-yor Devonbegi, to confront General Romanovsky's army along the Sirdarya.

He himself encamped near the village of Rogun, close to Uratepa, and began indulging in feasting and pleasure. He ordered that Allo-yor Devonbegi's ten-year-old daughter, who was arriving at the camp, be brought to him. As a result of the Amir's vile behavior, the child was killed that very night. Upon hearing this horrific news, Allo-yor abandoned the battlefield.

In those critical moments, when the fate of the country and the people was being decided, and the enemy was approaching, who could still view a ruler who had violated the honor of his own commander-in-chief as anything other than a disgraceful tyrant? In my view, this was the decisive turning point, the most fragile and dangerous moment in the collapse of the state.

"During the first year or two of his rule, relying on the state inherited from his father, he led an army toward Hisor and Kokand, seizing certain areas through force and cruelty. He did not grant safety to the local population, but subjected them to slaughter; thus, the situation returned to the old pattern of hostility and corruption. After two or three victories in battle, the Amir's arrogance became like that of Pharaoh, and he began to recognize no one but himself in the world, adjusting the dictates of sharia according to his own wishes.

In this way, he executed the majority of officials who had served during his father's reign, confiscated their properties and reduced their lands to ruins, and raised immoral men and slaves to positions of power among the people."

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This situation continued until the beginning of the Russian invasion of Mawarannahr. The army was subjected to abuses from all sides; the commanders were weak, unmotivated, and inexperienced. The soldiers regarded serving as slaves as dishonorable and increasingly chose to flee, thus allowing all provinces to fall under Russian control.

The reason was that the salary allotted to one soldier was reduced to the amount previously given to four, and the pay of a commander was cut in half.

The administration of Bukhara was in the hands of Muhammadshah Qoshbegi. This man was narrow-minded, illiterate, and foolish; he was constantly ill and could not even convey the correct message to the ruler. No one dared to speak for the benefit of the state, and as a result, the affairs of the nation and the state fell into complete crisis, and peace between the army and the people was lost. In reality, the prosperity of a state depends on the intelligence, decisiveness, and sound judgment of its vizier. If the vizier is thoughtless, then the condition of such a state is pitiable.

I have reflected deeply on Ahmad Donish's remarks about the ruler of Bukhara and his prime minister. Reading the great scholar's writings repeatedly, I feel that he not only described the harsh history of the Uzbek people in the nineteenth century, but also foretold their future fate. Indeed, even if the ruler is just, there can be no blessing for the country if the vizier is cruel.

In conclusion, by the mid-nineteenth century the strategic interests of two great colonial empires—the Russian Empire and Great Britain—had collided in Turkestan. Russian politicians and military leaders were deeply alarmed by the prospect of British control over the Turkestan region and the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. Under such circumstances, the threat of the conquest of the Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire intensified. The Russian Empire began to send numerous spies, informants, military specialists, and covert agents to Turkestan under the guise of various expeditions, scientific groups, travelers, and scholars. In short, the Russian Empire began large-scale military

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and political preparations for the conquest of the khanates. Before the Russian Empire began its conquest of the Turkestan region, it developed a comprehensive plan. The plan focused its primary blow on the weakest and territorially smallest state in the region—the Kokand Khanate—while simultaneously preventing the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate from forming a united front with Kokand. To this end, the plan aimed to incite various disputes between them and intensify existing conflicts so as to make joint military action among the Uzbek khanates impossible. Within the Russian military ministry, the costs of military operations were calculated, including the number and type of troops, the units participating in the campaign, the land and naval transport required, and the quantity and reserves of arms and ammunition.Thus began the period of crisis for the Manghit dynasty's rule.

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