



MJBAS

Vol 9 Iss 1 2025

Mediterranean Journal  
of Basic and Applied Sciences

# Bukhara Silk Bazaar as a Symbol of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Trade and Architectural Heritage

Bobojonov Shavkat Ulugbekovich<sup>1</sup> & Turdiev Bekhruz Sobirovich<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Associate Professor, <sup>1</sup>Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizami, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. <sup>2</sup>Department of Social and Political Sciences, Bukhara State University, Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Email: bekiuz0302@yahoo.com\*



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46382/MJBAS.2025.9111>

Copyright © 2025 Bobojonov Shavkat U. & Turdiev Bekhruz S. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Article Received: 19 January 2025

Article Accepted: 24 March 2025

Article Published: 28 March 2025

## ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the reasons behind the construction of the large 16<sup>th</sup>-century covered market of Bukhara—the Abdullahkhan Tim, its significance in international trade, its role in the development of craftsmanship, especially in the production of silk fabrics, as well as the construction style, architecture, and decoration of the oriental bazaar, based on scholarly literature and historical sources. The article highlights the construction activities of Bukhara Khan Abdullahkhan and his significant contributions in transforming the capital into a major commercial center.

**Keywords:** Merchants; Architecture; City; Traders; Monument; Bricks; Ornaments; Handicrafts.

## 1. Introduction

Located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, Bukhara has long been a place of friendship and commerce, not only a place of cultural exchange, but also a link between the East, Ruma and the Chinese Empire. Every ruler who governs the blessed city was determined to turn it into an elegant place of the West and the East, also the center of merchants. The incomparable architecture of Shaibanid Abdullakhan II, who considered being the great builder in history, is a cause for surprise for people from all over the world as well. The Abdullahan shopping area, known as a large shopping complex, is a rare example of architecture that has erected the image of a glorious city.

### 1.1. Study Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

- to examine the historical context and reasons for the construction of the Abdullahkhan Tim in 16th-century Bukhara, focusing on its role as a central component of the city's commercial and cultural identity.
- to analyze the architectural and structural features of the Silk Bazaar, including the use of materials, design, and ornamental elements that reflect the aesthetic values of the Shaybanid era.
- to explore the significance of the bazaar in the development of local and international trade networks, particularly in the silk industry, along the Great Silk Road.
- to highlight the contributions of Abdullakhan II in transforming Bukhara into a major trading and cultural center through visionary urban planning and monumental construction.
- to assess the lasting cultural and economic legacy of the Abdullahkhan Tim and its relevance to the historical heritage of Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

## 2. Discussion

Abdullahon II's trading rows, the dome-high mountain between Toki Telpakfurushon (dome of hats traders) and Toki Zargaron (dome of gold merchants), was built in 1577 by the ruler of Sheibanid Abdullahon II. The

construction of the monument personally the ruler himself took over his control, which for three centuries is known as the silk bazaar of the East, served to make it exquisite and charming. It should be noted that the architecture of Bukhara as the capital, the elevated trading streets and domes, the madrasa and the chapel date back to the times of the Shaybanid dynasty. Large-scale construction, which radically changed the appearance of the city, turned Bukhara into a rare medieval city. In particular, the huge building - the trade row of Abdullakhan contributed to the development of trade and commerce glorified the city in the world as “Madina ut-tuzhor” - the city of traders.

The largest indoor shopping area near the monument was a square plan - 39x42 meters. The walls of the building were made of baked bricks (22x27x3.5 cm), and the walls of the building were plaster stuck, but the ornamental decorations on the walls were almost not preserved.

Whichever side of the three gates you enter to the west side of the monument, like the boiling markets of the East, you hear the commotion of people, and the wind gusts of silk fabrics beat your nose. Flaming shades of colorful fabrics, their magic shelter make your consciousness in the world of fairy tales. When you enter the gate, decorated with beautiful ornaments, the corridors lead you straight to the middle courtyard. The middle courtyard was covered with a dome with a diameter of 10 meters, with eight ropes. It forms a remarkable geometry when the pink arches passing between the ropes intersect with each other. In the gray patterns under the dome, Arabic inscriptions are preserved. The middle courtyard has four-way roads, which gives you the opportunity to stroll through 30 stores in the malls. 4 of the shops are made for selling garments, 4 more shops for carpets, in 6 other stores fabrics and other products are sold.

Thanks to the opportunities created in the closed market of Abdullahan, we are happy to acknowledge that our modern “hypermarkets” were invented by our ancestors six centuries ago. The light from the four corners through the small domes with six windows equally illuminated exactly half of the market, and the wind rotating in it constantly replaced the air and also served as an air conditioner. Especially if the sunlight from the holes sparkled “burned” banorases (artisan silk fabric) and bekasamy (a sort of artisan silk fabric; it goes mainly on top bathrobes) and made these silk fabrics woven, not surprisingly.

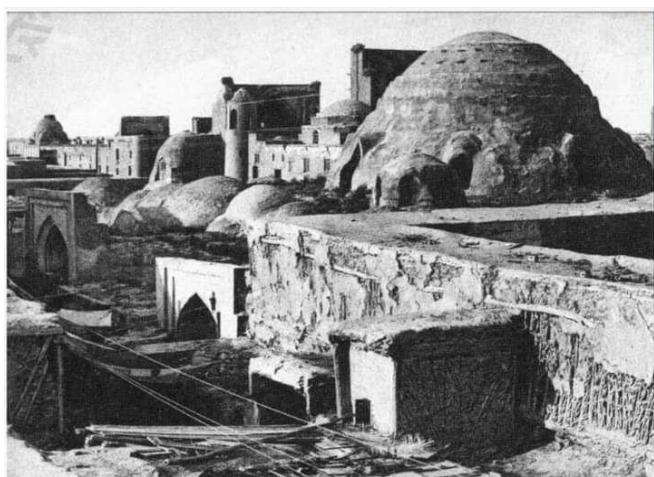
In the galleys under the numerous dome-shaped trade stalls, a number of commercial shops were represented, where trade deals were concluded and sold throughout the Great Silk Road. That is why it was not easy to rent a store from a mall that turned into an international bazaar. Every cloth merchant had to give a large amount of rent to Abdullahan’s palace for this place.

### 3. Results

It is worth noting that the construction of architectural structures, Abdullakhan II defined as the main direction of the state. There is a legend that each time before going to any country, Abdullakhan ordered his soldiers to bring two bricks into their bags on the way home to Bukhara. Returning from a military campaign, he collected all the bricks and built a unique monument in Bukhara - a mosque, a madrasa, a caravanserai or a mall. The wisdom and learning of the ruler is commendable. In fact, the 16th century was a time of architecture and prosperity for

Bukhara, and this is not an exaggeration. The most vivid evidence of this is the thought given in the works of the historian Khofiz Tanish Bukhari “Sharafnomai shoiy” or “Abdullahon” the following: “Wise architects and powerful builders built hanging buildings that look like paradise in good happy times. Every morning, when the sun, the architect of the globe, stepped onto the wall of heaven, to light the country on the earth, every artisan, craftsmen and day laborers showed their skills in their work”.

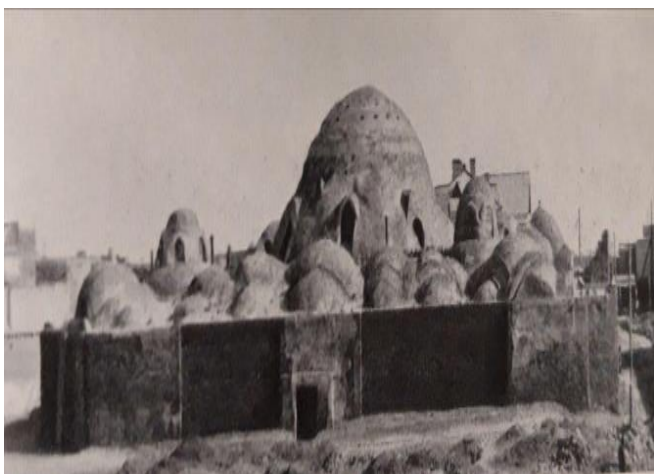
All the obstacles for trading with other countries of the world were abolished by the noble Abdullakhon during this period in glorious Bukhara. For the development of commercial development, caravan routes were repaired, trade routes were guarded by troops, and slabs (caravanserai, inn) and sardabas (reservoir; reservoir (artificial structure for the conservation of rainwater) were built. Even in worst floods, two large bridges caravans to cross the river safely was a unique opportunity created by Bukhara merchants to travel to all parts of the world.



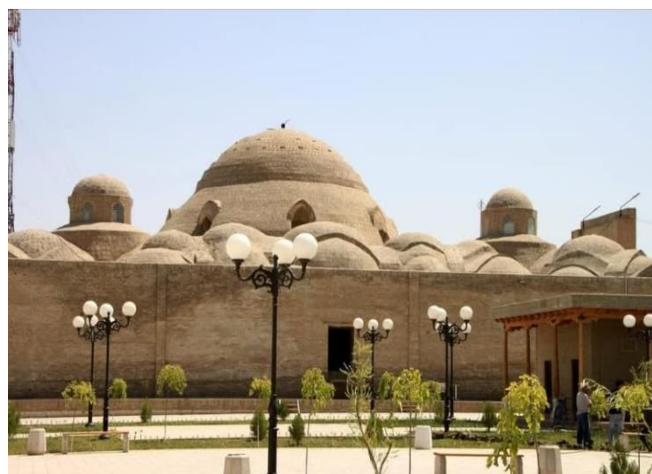
**1927 year. Bukhara.**



**2021 year.**



**1965 year. Bukhara.**



**2024 year.**

History has shown that the efforts of Abdullahon on the prospects of interstate trade and economic relations are not in vain. Bukhara trade relations with Russian tradesmen grew steadily. Only in 1558 the collaboration of embassies between Ivan Grozniy and Abdullakhan II, strengthening cooperation and relations sent by representatives between Moscow and Bukhara testify of many realities. Moreover, during this period three times, in 1572, 1577 and 1585, there were exchanges of ambassadors between Abdullakhan II and the Baburid ruler

Akbarshakh, indicating that the Baburids and the Bukhara Khanate established closer cooperation. This indicates that in the trading rows of the covered bazaar of Bukhara there were rare items from India.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Today in the covered bazaar of Abdullakhan, weavers and carpet-weavers continue their activities; handicrafts demonstrate the magic splendor. Looking at the carpets that are made of magical hands, unwittingly recall those legendary carpets from fairy tales. Sometimes, you want to go back in those times with a time machine, fly on magical carpets and enjoy the amenities of Timi Abdullakhan. Although several centuries have passed, the unique heritage of the descendants of the unique monument sealed Abdullakhan in the eternal history, and the Holy Bukhara was turned into the center of world merchants, raised to the world terrace of glory.

In order to further enrich the academic and historical understanding of Bukhara's silk trade and architectural heritage, the following areas are recommended for future research:

1. A comparative architectural analysis of covered bazaars across the Silk Road, with a focus on identifying shared and unique design features.
2. Detailed studies of trade records and archival documents related to merchant activities within the Abdullakhan Tim, to better understand economic patterns and international relations.
3. Ethnographic research on contemporary artisans working in the bazaar today, exploring how traditional crafts have been preserved or transformed over time.

#### **Declarations**

##### **Source of Funding**

This study did not benefit from grant from any non-profit, public or commercial funding agency.

##### **Competing Interests Statement**

The authors have declared that no competing financial, professional or personal interests exist.

##### **Consent for publication**

Both the authors contributed to the manuscript and consented to the publication of this research work.

#### **References**

- [1] Bukhari, H.T. (1999). Abdullanoma (Sharafnomayi Shohiy). Book One, Tashkent: Sharq.
- [2] Anonymous (1997). Insoniyatning ilmiy va madaniy merosi uchunchi ming yillikka. International Symposium Proceedings, Tashkent.
- [3] Muhammadjonov, A. (1999). Gorodu Bukhare — 2500 let. Tashkent: Fan.
- [4] Naimov, N. (1997). Bukhoroyi Sharif. Holy Bukhara (Tarikhiy ocherklar), Bukhara.
- [5] Pugachenkova, G.A. (1958). Vydaiushchiesya pamyatniki arkhitektury Uzbekistana. Tashkent.

- [6] Pugachenkova, G.A. (1969). Bukhoro tim va toqlar. Bukhara, Torgovye kupola, Tashkent: Uzbekistan.
- [7] Rempel, L.I. (1981). Dalekoe i blizkoe: Stranitsy zhizni, byta, stroitel'nogo dela, remesla i iskusstva Staroi Bukhary. Bukharskie zapisi, Tashkent: Gafur Gulyam Literature and Art Publishing House.
- [8] Turdiyev, B. (2021). Bukhara-center of islamic spiritual and culture. Центр Научных Публикаций (buxdu.uz), 6(6).
- [9] Bobojonov, S. (2017). Sharif shahar yodgorliklari.
- [10] Бобожонов, Ш.У. (2020). Бухорони зиёрат қилган Англия жосуси. Oriental Art and Culture, (3): 416–421.