



## ŠOKUROV, MOḤAMMADJĀN

**ŠOKUROV, MOḤAMMADJĀN** (Taj. Muhammadjon Šokurov; also Šakuri), Tajik scholar and literary critic (b. February 1925, Bukhara; d. 16 September 2012, Dushanbe; [Figure 1](#), [Figure 2](#)).

Moḥammadjān Šokurov was born to the family of Šarifjān Maḵdum Šadr-e Zīā' (1867-1932), who had been a chief justice (*qāzi-kalān*) in the Emirate of Bukhara. Moḥammadjān received his formal education in modern schools in Soviet Uzbekistan. Following the persecution of his father by the Soviet regime, Šokurov immigrated to Dushanbe, the capital of the newly established Republic of Tajikistan, at the age of fourteen. From 1941 to 1945, he received his higher education at the State Pedagogical Institute in Dushanbe, and from 1948 to 1951 he was a post-graduate student in the same institute (Akbarov), where he prepared and submitted a thesis on the work of the Samarkandi intellectual and poet Sayyed Aḥmad K̄'āja Šeddiqi 'Ajzi (1865-1927).

The thesis, as Šokurov write in his autobiography, was rejected by the committee of examiners, composed of 'Abd-al-Ġani Mirzāev, Bābājān Ġafurov, and others, on the ground that 'Ajzi was portrayed as an enlightener (*rušangar*, *ma'ārefparvar*), whereas in the examiners' opinion he was to be described as a bourgeois nationalist (Šokurov, "Zindaginoma"). In 1953, Šokurov started another doctorate, this time at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union in Moscow, where he finally obtained his doctoral degree in 1955 with a thesis on the *Yāddāsthā* (Reminiscences) of Šadr-al-Din 'Ayni (*ibid*). Šokurov's admittance in 1957 to the ranks of the communist party of the Soviet Union can be understood as a



measure of name clearance on the part of the Soviet authorities regarding his familial attachment to the ancient régime.

Having taught Tajik Language and Literature at the Pedagogical Institute of Kulab (1945-46) and Pedagogical Institute in Dushanbe (1951-53), soon after the [Tajikistan Academy of Sciences](#) was opened, Šokurov began his long career there, at the Rudaki Institute of Tajik Language and Literature, where he served as the head of the Department of Modern Tajik Literature (1959-90). Šokurov was a member of the Writer's Union of the USSR from 1956 until its closure in 1991, and of the Union of Tajik Writers from 1991. He was a full member of the Tajik Academy of Sciences from 1986, and an honorary member of the [Farhangestān](#) of Iran from 1992.

Šokurov's contribution to the Tajik language and literature is substantial. He authored hundreds of books, articles, essays, reviews, and translated from Russian to Tajik. He is considered a founder of the school of modern literary criticism in Tajikistan, with a focus on the period from the late 19th through the 20th century. Among his most notable contributions is the supervision over the compilation of *Farhang-e zabān-e tājiki* (Dictionary of the Tajik Language, 1969). His book *Har sukan joevu har nuqta maqome dorad* (Every word and every point have their own proper place; Dushanbe, 1968, 1985) gained wide readership in his home republic. He was the general editor of the collectanea *Jašnnomai Aynī* (11 issues, Dushanbe, 1960-2010), entirely dedicated to the life and work of Šadr al-Din 'Ayni, to whom Šokurov devoted a considerable part of his research activity.

From the late 1980s, in the milieu of *glasnost*, he cultivated an interest in the theory of modern Tajik culture, and he published copiously on the issues of the history and contemporary conditions of Tajik language, literature, and culture during the independence period after 1991. This period of his intellectual life is best reflected in his books *Zaboni mo, hastii most* (Our language is our existence, 1991), *Istiqlol va kudšinosii ijtimoi va ma'navi* (Independence and social and spiritual identity, 1999) and *Qorāsān ast injā/Kuroson ast injo* (Here is Khorasan, published in Persian in 1996 and in Tajik in 1997). Soon after the independence of his country, Šokurov dropped the Russian suffix *-ov* from his surname and began to use Šakurii Buqoroī and Šakuri-ye Boqārā'i in his writings. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and untying of its ideological grip, Šokurov devoted himself to the editing and publishing of his father's work, which until then was available in manuscript sources only: Sadri Ziyō, *Navodiri Ziyoiya*, Dushanbe, 1991; Šadr-e Žiyā',



*Nawāder-e Žiā'iyya*, Tehran, 1998; *Ruznāma-ye Šadr-e Žiā*, Tehran, 2003 (English translation by E. A. Allworth, R. Shukurov, S. Tadjbakhsh, as *The Personal History of a Bukharan Intellectual. The Diary of Muĥammad-Sharīf-i Šadr-i Ziyā*, Leiden, 2004).

Among the latest of Šokurov's contributions are the monographs *Nigohe ba adabiyoti tojikii sadai bist* (A look at the Tajik literature of the 20th century, 2006) and *Ravšangari buzurg* (The great enlightener, 2006), devoted to the life and work of Šadr-al-Din 'Ayni. His last monograph, *Panturkizm va sarnavišti ta'riķii tojikon* (Pan-Turkism and the historical destiny of the Tajiks, 2010), mostly revolves around the cultural history, intellectual revolution, and social riots in Bukhara in the first decades of the 20th century, and intimately alludes also to Šokurov's own destiny.

An Internet site devoted to Šokurov as a scholar ([shakuri.tj](http://shakuri.tj)) makes available some of his books and articles, as well as articles by various scholars on his life and work, and poems dedicated to him.

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Works.

A bibliographical list of 501 items was published in the booklet titled *Muĥamadzhan Sharifovich Shukurov* in the series *Materialy k bibliografii uchenykh Tadzhiķistana* (Materials for bibliography of scholars of Tajikistan) XXXIV, ed. D. S. Leyvi et al., Dushanbe, 1986. Following are his selected works in addition to those given in the text.

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"Elements of Rhyming Prose in the *Yoddoštho* of S. Aynī," in J. Bečka, ed., *Yādnāme-ye Jan Rypka. Collection of Articles on Persian and Tajik Literature*, Prague, 1967, pp. 219-24.

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*Iran. Lit.*, pp. 483-605.

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*Pisateli Tadjikistana*, Dushanbe, 1981.

A. Sattorov, “Guzorišgari korgohi sukan,” in A. Sattorov, *Nuqtai payvand*, Dushanbe, 1982.

(Habib Borjian and Evelin Grassi)