

THE ROLE OF GAVHARSHODBEGIM IN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL LIFE DURING THE TIMURID ERA

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Annotation: This article highlights Gavharshodbegim and her activities, her role in state governance, influence on economic policy, and cultural-educational legacy, emphasizing her prominence within the Timurid dynasty.

Keywords: Gavharshodbegim, Herat, madrasa, cultural heritage, seal, Oydin-Bog'-Bog'i-Safed, "Ona lochin vidosi".

Introduction. In the history of the medieval East, the Timurid era stands out for its high political, cultural, and economic development. During this period, significant achievements were made in state governance, science, architecture, and the arts, and in this advancement, not only commanders and scholars but also women played an important role. Among such historical figures, Gavharshodbegim deserves special attention. As the wife of Shokhrukh Mirzo, the son of Amir Timur, and the mother of the great scholar and statesman Ulugbek, she held an important position in the political life of the Timurid dynasty. Gavharshodbegim was one of the most influential women of her time, distinguished by her political wisdom, moral patronage, and constructive works. At her initiative, the city of Herat became one of the most beautiful cultural centers in the East. Mosques, madrasas, caravanserais, and libraries were established. Therefore, studying the figure of Gavharshodbegim is of particular importance for a deep understanding of the social, economic, and political life of the Timurid era.

Literature Review. In Fayziyev's *Temuriy Malikalar* [1], the political and social roles of Timurid women such as Gavharshodbegim are highlighted. In contrast, Sulstonov's novel *Alisher Navoiy* [2] provides a literary portrayal of historical figures and their eras, reflecting the lived environment of the time. The *Temur Tuzuklari* [3], as a primary source, presents insights into politics and governance, while Qodirov's *Ona Lochin Vidosi* [4] offers the emotional portraits of female figures within their cultural context. Abdurazzoq Samarqandi's *Matla us-sa'dayn va Majma ul-bahrayn* [5] provides reliable information on the politics and wars of the Timurid period. Fayziyev's *Temuriylar Shajarasi* [6] illustrates Gavharshodbegim's genealogical position and family connections. Andrew Petersen's *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* [7] supplies information on monuments and madrasa architecture, while Barthold's *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* [8] scientifically analyzes Timurid politics and regional issues. Together, these sources comprehensively depict historical facts, cultural context, and genealogical information in the article.

Research Methods. The article examines Gavharshodbegim's political, social, and cultural roles using historical-analytical and comparative methods. The historical-analytical method involved studying historical sources (*Temur Tuzuklari*, Abdurazzoq Samarqandi, Fayziyev, Barthold) and literary works (Sulstonov, Qodirov), while the comparative method allowed for the juxtaposition of various aspects of Gavharshodbegim's life and activities. As a result, her significance during the Timurid era, her role in state governance, and her cultural legacy are presented on a scholarly basis.

Discussion and Analysis. The Timurid period is recognized in the history of the medieval-East as an era marked by political power, as well as the flourishing of science and culture. Timur and the Timurid princes ruled from the second half of the 14th century to the first quarter of the 16th century. Among the Timurid women of the royal family, there were also talented politicians, orators, accomplished scholars, and sensitive poets.

These women left an indelible mark in historical records, which is confirmed by contemporary sources. In historical novels, female characters appear frequently, with the portrayals of Timurid women being particularly significant. Specifically, in the historical novel Gavharshodbegim, the narrative depicts the queen's life, interwoven with joys and sorrows, as well as fortunes and misfortunes.

Gavharshodbegim was the beloved wife of Shahrukh Mirza, the fourth son of Amir Timur. She was the daughter of Giyosiddin Tarxon, a member of the Chagatai nobility. According to historical accounts, Giyosiddin Tarxon's grandfather, Koshlik, once served under Genghis Khan and saved him from death during a battle. Since then, this family enjoyed high regard and respect within the Chagatai ulus.

Gavharshodbegim was born in 1379 and married Shahrukh Mirza at the age of fourteen. She bore him three sons and two daughters. Their eldest son was Ulugh Beg Mirza, followed by Boysung'ur Mirza and Muhammad Jochi Mirza. On the day of their wedding, Gavharshodbegim received golden earrings as a gift from her father-in-law, Amir Timur. Her mother-in-law, Bibikhonim, personally placed the earrings on her ears, emphasizing that the daughter-in-law should heed the advice of the household's head. However, it was not always easy for Gavharshodbegim to live by the authority of the household members [1; 8-10]. Shahrukh Mirza, destined to be Gavharshodbegim's husband, was not only a brave warrior who displayed courage on the battlefield but also a devoted scholar and a loyal family man. Like her mother-in-law, Gavharshodbegim enjoyed a prosperous life with Shahrukh Mirza. Together, they managed their affairs in an organized manner, overseeing governance and family matters. They raised their children with a sense of fairness and justice, and none of their offspring displayed discord among themselves or defiance toward their parents.

Historical sources attest that Gavharshodbegim was a woman of exceptional taste, intelligence, entrepreneurial skill, eloquence, and determination-unsurpassed in grace and dignity. While some contemporaries viewed her as a source of intrigue and discord, others drew positive conclusions about her character [2;432]. Her active participation in state affairs, her influence within the Timurid administrative system, and her high political authority are also reflected in her personal seal, which bears the inscription: "Great Sultan Lady Gavharshodbegim" [3;165].

By nature, Shahrukh Mirza was a devout man who devoted much of his time to prayer and study. The administration of the state and the divan was managed by his astute wife, Gavharshodbegim. Following the death of her father-in-law, Amir Timur, she gradually assumed full control over state affairs. Even Shahrukh Mirza himself acknowledged his wife's wisdom, often relying on her prudent and strategic counsel in governance. Consequently, many matters of state were entrusted to her oversight, including the appointment of provincial governors, the assignment of military commanders, and decisions regarding rewards and punishments. For example, in 1440, the renowned historian of Herat, Fasih Ahmad ibn Jaloliddin Muhammad Havofiwho later became the court historianwas subjected to Gavharshodbegim's anger and was twice briefly imprisoned by her decree.

Gavharshodbegim also participated in Shahrukh Mirza's military campaigns, staying informed about the conduct of the princes and military leaders. She even attempted to assert her will in the selection of the heir to the throne. Her persona combined the affection and wisdom

traditionally associated with women with the firmness and decisiveness characteristic of a statesperson.

The literary portrayal of Gavharshodbegim in Pirmqul Qodirov's *Ona Lochin Vidosi* further confirms her resilience and determination. In the work, the image of the "mother falcon" is modeled on Gavharshodbegim. She assumes the responsibility of leading the entire dynasty, caring for her grandchildren, and guiding successive generations toward moral and personal development. Like a mother falcon, she vigilantly protects her family, lamenting over their misdeeds when necessary. Throughout, she consistently sought to act with love and justice toward her children, successfully fulfilling her duties. Qodirov also notes that Shahrukh Mirza honored Gavharshodbegim to such an extent that palaces were constructed for her, exemplified by the Aydin-Bog'-Bog'i-Safed palace [4;69-70].

During Shahrukh Mirza's reign, Khorasan experienced significant social, political, and cultural growth. The country's capital, Herat, emerged as one of the most influential cities in the East in terms of both economic and cultural development. Naturally, Queen Gavharshodbegim played a substantial role in this progress. During this period, construction activities flourished in Herat and other regions, including mosques, madrasas, khanaqahs, mausoleums, tombs, guesthouses, hospitals, caravansaries, bridges, and cisterns. Patriotic, learned, and intelligent by nature, Gavharshodbegim tirelessly worked for the prosperity of the state. She prioritized cultural and educational life in her initiatives. Consequently, her children and grandchildren became ardent supporters of science and learning, with some even composing ghazals. Reflecting her inclination toward architecture and public works, a grand congregational mosque near the famous Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad was commissioned under her decree in 1418. Gavharshodbegim also oversaw numerous construction projects in Herat, personally commissioning two large madrasas. The Gavharshodbegim Madrasa in Herat functioned as a center of education and enlightenment, training specialists of the era and for future generations. It was also recognized as the Boysung'ur Mausoleum [5;330-350]. Adjacent to this site is the mausoleum of Shaykhzoda Abdulloh [6;308-310]. The madrasas, mosques, and khanaqahs established by Gavharshodbegim still stand today as significant architectural monuments in Herat. Historian Abdurazzoq Samarqandi provides detailed information about these constructions, noting that "during the era of Gavharshodbegim, Herat became a source of knowledge and learning, a gathering place for scholars and poets," and that "the Gavharshodbegim Madrasa, the jewel of the land of Herat, served as a hub for the learned" [7;111]. Abdurazzoq Samarqandi also highlights her philanthropic efforts, stating that Gavharshodbegim "patronized scholars and supported the poor and destitute." In 2003, a women's university was established in Kabul, named in her honor as a symbol of respect and tribute to her legacy.

Gavharshodbegim was one of the women who actively participated in political processes during the Timurid era and played a significant role in state governance. Known for her intelligence, political acumen, and wisdom, she was one of Shahrukh Mirza's closest advisors. Her political activity was evident not only in internal administration but also in foreign affairs. During Shahrukh Mirza's military campaigns, she oversaw state affairs in Herat. Some sources indicate that she acted as an important mediator in mitigating political conflicts in Transoxiana, Khorasan, and Iran. She also employed diplomatic measures to maintain peace and stability during periods of political uncertainty, demonstrating firmness and ingenuity in preventing internal disputes. According to certain accounts, Gavharshodbegim coordinated the social and cultural life of the state through loyal officials. Although Gavharshodbegim did not directly participate as a combatant in wars, she provided counsel on political decisions, advised before

military campaigns, and prevented numerous conflicts through diplomacy. Her advisory and patronage activities played a crucial role in ensuring the stability of the Timurid dynasty.

In 1444, Shahrukh Mirza fell gravely ill in Herat, and the court believed his death to be imminent. This news was sent to Muhammad Jochi Mirza, the ruler of Balkh. Upon reaching Herat, Muhammad Jochi Mirza learned that, by the order of his mother, Queen Gavharshodbegim, the military commander Jaloliddin Feruzshah had pledged allegiance to the heir Alouddavla Mirza. Shortly thereafter, however, Shahrukh Mirza recovered. In the later years of Shahrukh Mirza's rule, Gavharshodbegim often managed both internal and external state affairs.

After Shahrukh Mirza's death, she was at the forefront of succession struggles among the princes. When Sultan Abu Sa'id Mirza ascended the throne of Khorasan, Gavharshodbegim, despite being over 80 years old, engaged in secret negotiations with her grandson Ibrahim Mirza against Sultan Abu Sa'id. Upon learning of this, Sultan Abu Sa'id Mirza ordered her execution. Consequently, Gavharshodbegim was executed in 1457 and buried in the khanaqah adjacent to the madrasa she had commissioned [8;147].

Conclusion and Recommendations. In conclusion, Gavharshodbegim was a historical figure who left a profound mark on politics, culture, and education during the Timurid era. As one of the learned, intelligent, and proactive women of her time, she actively participated not only in court life but also in state governance. The madrasas, mosques, and architectural monuments constructed under her patronage reflect the high cultural achievements of the Timurid period. Gavharshodbegim's political wisdom, her efforts to maintain peace and stability, and her attention to science and the arts established her as a remarkable woman in the history of the East.

As a recommendation, it is important to highlight the social, economic, and political contributions of female figures from the Timurid era more extensively in educational curricula and cultural-educational events.

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