

MONGOLIAN BEKS UNDER UMARSHAIKH MIRZA

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Annotation: In this article, general comments are made about the Mongolian begs who served Umarshaikh Mirza, the father of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, and about their activities during the time of Babur.

Key words: Umarshaikh Mirza, Babur, Mongol begs, Samarkand, Andijan, Mahmud Khan

During the Timurid era, the power of mirzas and princes depended mainly on the strength, number and loyalty of their begs. Such begs served the Timurid princes or served him after their father, or were chosen by the princes and elevated to the position of beg. Such begs are persons who have a high rank within their clan and have a certain number of military troops. Therefore, during the Timurid era, they played an important role in determining the power of the prince they served.

A number of begs also served under Umarshaikh Mirza, the grandson of Amir Temur's son Mironshah Mirza, the grandson of Abu Said Mirza, and the information about this is mainly given in "Baburnama". The begs who served Umarshaikh Mirza can be divided into Turkic and Mongolian. Although earlier, tribes such as Kavchin and Arlot were part of the Mongolian tribes, but in the period under discussion, these tribes were completely Turkified. In "Baburnama" the term "Mongolian" is used only for the peoples in the territory of Mongolia. That's why in this article we mentioned the names of Mongolian begs in two different situations, that is, those who were originally Mongols in the service of the Timurids and Mongolian begs who came for temporary military purposes.

The begs, who came from the Turkic tribes, are understandably representatives of the local noble dynasty. They achieved this status by serving Timurid princes like their ancestors. Although it was considered one of the usual cases for Mongolian begs to serve around Timurid mirzas at that time, the Mongolian begs of Umarshaikh Mirza are also related to the fact that his wife, Babur's mother Qutlugh Nigorkhanim, was of Mongolian descent.

Qutlugh Nigorkhanim was the second daughter of Yunus Khan from Chigatai lineage. After Mirza Abu Said marched to Mongolia and defeated Esan Buga Khan, he brought Yunus Khan, who was previously sent to Iraq by Ulughbek, around 1457 [3:286] and made him Khan of Mongolia. According to the historian Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat's "Tarikhi Rashidi", the old enmity between the two great dynasties, Timurids and Chingizids, turned into friendship. He noted that such a sincere relationship between Abu Said and Yunus Khan is rarely met by fathers and sons. [2:155] After that, there was closeness between them, and later Yunus Khan's eldest daughter Mehr Nigorkhani was married to Abu Said's eldest son Ahmed Mirza, Sultan Nigorkhanim to Mahmud Mirza and Qutlugh Nigorkhanim to his younger son Umarshaikh Mirza. Therefore, some of the Mongol begs were permanent and some were sent by Babur's uncles Ahmad Khan and Mahmud Khan to serve Umarshaikh Mirza and Babur. However, it should be noted that Mongolian begs were often interested in loot. Therefore, treacherous actions were often encountered by them. For example, when Babur occupied Samarkand for the first time, there was a shortage of food in the city. In such a situation, all the

Mongol begs fled from Babur and Samarkand. Among them there were Mongolian begs such as Ibrahim Bekchik, Khonkuli and Bayonkuli.

Ali Dust taghoyi was a descendant of Babur's grandmother Eson Davlatbegim. Babur gave him a negative description and wrote that he claims yadachilik (the process of making it rain with blessing) [1: 37]. During the conflict between Jahangir Mirza and Babur he handed over Andijan to Ahmad Tanbal after hearing about Babur's serious illness. He was the governor of Marghilan. After Babur left Samarkand and Andijan Ali Dust sent someone to Babur and asked him to forgive him and told him to hand over Marghilan. There, he gathered some strength at the expense of Mongol begs and forces from the provinces who came as help from his uncle Mahmud Khan, and later in 1499, Babur regained Andijan. After Babur took Samarkand for the second time, Ali Dust died of anthrax.

Mir Ghiyos taghoyi is the younger brother of Ali Dust taghoyi. Babur described him: "There was no one greater among the Mongol nobles than him in the reign of Sultan Abu Said Mirza, the square seal of Abu Said Mirza was staying in it" [1:37]. After the death of Mirza Umarshaikh, he served Babur for some time, then in 1494, when Kason fell into the hands of Mahmud Khan, he also went to Mahmud Khan's side.

Babur wrote that Qanbar Ali was a horse breeder and was also called a butcher because his father was a butcher [1:37]. He was together with Babur for a long time and sometimes betrayed him. Khojand was given to him, and when Babur took Andijan, he also granted Konibodom and Isfara to him. He was the one who had the largest army and province among Babur's begs. When Babur attacked Jahangir and Ahmad Tanbal to take Andijan in 1499, the begs of Babur who advised Babur to make peace were Kanbar Ali and Ali Dust. Although Babur did not want it, he agreed to this truce due to the possibility that these great begs would betray him and go over to Mirza Jahangir. According to the peace agreement: the territories on the Akhsi side of the Khojand water belonged to Jahangir, and the territories on the Andijan side to Babur. Also, if Samarkand was occupied, Andijan should be given to Jahangir Mirza. After the defeat against Shaybani Khan in Saripul in 1501, Khanbar left Ali Babur and went to Khisravshah. Later, he became together with Babur during their wanderings.

Tulun Khoja was from the Borin clan, and Umarshaikh Mirza honored him by giving him a position. Later, Babur paid attention to him and took care of him. Babur said that he was one of the most trusted people among the Mongols [1:60]. When Babur captured Samarkand for the first time and some of his emirs turned away from him Ahmad Tanbal and Uzun Hasan killed Tulun Khoja.

Apart from these, there are also Mongol begs who served Umarshaikh Mirza, and later Babur Mirza, who helped only in certain situations and returned with loot. For example, when Babur recaptured Andijan in 1499, he allowed the Mongol begs sent by his uncle Mahmud Khan. As mentioned above, such begs fought for booty and there were cases of betrayal. For example, the Mongol begs who came to the aid of Mahmud Khan in the battle of Saripul, instead of fighting against Shaibani Khan, turned back by plundering Babur's residence. According to Babur, their habit is to take prey on condition both they attack and even when they are attacked, they plunder their own people. [1:81].

Although Babur spent some time among the Mongols in his hard times (when Tashkent belonged to Mahmud Khan) and was on good terms with the Mongols through his uncles, he brings negative thoughts about Mongol begs. It is said in "Baburname" that "Evil and depravity has always been caused by the Mongols. So far, they have messed with me five times. They



are not angry with me. They also repeated such actions against their Khans again and again” [1:67].

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